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from the editor

E. Gary Hill

EVEN THOUGH THE USA hosted the first-ever World Indoor Championships, the planet's most powerful track nation has never sited the outdoor version of the meet. Eugene is seeking to end that drought in bidding for the '19 version of the meet, fresh off a most successful staging of the World Juniors this past July, but is facing formidable opposition (see p. 46).

The Seniors and the Juniors are two vastly different propositions, of course, and while by all

accounts the Oregonians carried off a wonderfully successful meet for the kids, will the IAAF follow through by choosing historic Hayward Field to host the pros 5 years down the road?

Did I already use the word "formidable" in discussing Eugene's competition? That would be to understate the task at hand.

'92 Olympic host Barcelona now has the legacy of a stunning collection of athletic infrastructure to front its bid; '10 World Indoor host Doha, omigodness, may have a collection of modern athletic facilities unmatched anywhere on the globe, and is, incomprehensibly, planning on doubling its size in the next 5 years.

Add to that Barcelona's wealth of high-end accommodations and Doha's stunning collection of major new hotels and back that up with each having an imposing modern international airport and the question becomes an elemental one: how can Eugene compete?

The home of the Ducks is, after all, is a bucolic college town with a population of some 250,000. Doha can claim close to a million and Barcelona a million and a half.

Can Eugene possibly win the impossible bid holding that hand?

Here's my simple (simplistic?) formula for success: by Eugene's promising, with a guarantee that nobody can possibly doubt, that the meet will have something that few other World Champs have ever delivered. And that's a stadium full of rabid fans enjoying every moment of every session, and a host city actually consumed by the meet.

What a concept. Athletes performing in front of capacity/knowledgable crowds, and in a locale where even those not at the meet actually care.

It's my take that there hasn't been a WC where every evening session played before a full house since Stuttgart '93 (Helsinki '05 would have if not for rain). That's a long succession of meets where it hasn't been the case. As to those who were in the seats, in too many places, with patent obviousness, many of those in the seats were not ticket-buyers, but kids trucked in for the occasion.

Anybody who was there can tell you how embarrassing it was for the IAAF at Athens '97, where IAAF head Primo Nebiolo actually went public and lambasted the Greek public for having the audacity to take their normal vacations while his WC was in town!

And we won't even get into the acres of vacant real estate at Daegu '11 and Moscow '13 (any bets on how many "spectators" show up as empty seats in Beijing's cavernous Bird's Nest next August?), with tarped-off sections of the stadium to improve the look and feel. One hopes the IAAF voters were paying attention at the Continental Cup in September, when the Marrakech Express pulled out of the station with nobody aboard. The look and feel couldn't have been worse.

Other than the trio of Scandinavian hosts (Helsinki '83 & '05, Göteborg '95) and the Canadian version (Edmonton '01), the World Champs have gone off virtually unnoticed in the host cities in general. Mostly because of the large cities in which they have been staged, but also because the sport just isn't on the map there.

But in Eugene, visitors will find that be it the guy who pumps your gas or the one who checks out your groceries at the market, if track is in town, they know about it. It's the big show.

As the *Eugene Register-Guard* says, "To a greater degree than anywhere else, track & field is in the city's DNA."

Can the IAAF ask for anything more?

**Eugene's biggest
strength for a WC bid?
The locals actually care**