



from the editor

E. Garry Hill

THE OLYMPIC GAMES & OLYMPIC TRIALS don't have any kind of qualifying-competition setup. One's "eligibility" for being on the program basically depends on meeting a certain standard of excellence in a defined period before the meet. It's crucial, then, that these Q-standards are as fair and all-inclusive as possible. It's not an easy task to come up with good numbers, and as 2016 rolls around, I'm thinking that neither the IAAF nor USATF have it quite right this time round.

The OT & OG qualifying standards aren't doing athletes any favors

The IAAF, after decades of using an A-B system for the World Champs and Olympic Games, this year went to a "simplified" A-only system for Beijing. The new single standard fell a long way short of filling some fields.

The IAAF's plan was to then come up with the rest of the qualifiers by plucking them from

the performances lists. The problem was, not all the fields got filled. As blogger Martin Bingisser pointed out, 6 of 8 throwing events in China didn't reach the desired 32.

A big part of the problem, Bingisser continues, is that some nations—powers like Britain, Canada, Germany and Russia among them—set higher internal standards for their teams, so even if they have athletes who are eligible, they don't accept the invitation. With only a couple of weeks between the close of qualifying and the start of the meet, there apparently just wasn't time for the IAAF to get it all worked out.

The old A-B system was at times rather Byzantine in its workings, but after so many years the concept was well understood. When the new system was introduced, I had the feeling that it was the solution to a problem that didn't really exist.

The IAAF recently eased the standards in 17 events, but will it be enough? Next month's Super Preview Issue will look at the subject in more depth.

One 2016 problem at the USATF level is that the left hand didn't talk to the right in coming up with OT standards. Specifically, the men's and women's committees appear to have been operating from different playbooks, as the numbers in the accompanying box show.

Olympic Trials Standards	
To save space, event names are not given. The numbers are qualifying standard, number who made that level in calendar '15 and in parentheses, field size desired.	
Men	Women
10.16.....33 (32)	11.32.....37 (32)
20.50.....33 (30)	23.20.....42 (30)
45.40.....15 (28)	52.20.....33 (28)
1:46.00.....16 (32)	2:03.00.....37 (32)
3:38.00.....18 (30)	4:09.50.....21 (30)
8:32.00.....9 (24)	9:53.00.....15 (24)
13:28.00.....13 (24)	15:25.00.....13 (24)
28:15.00.....12 (24)	32:25.00.....17 (24)
13.52.....15 (32)	13.00.....20 (32)
49.50.....12 (28)	56.95.....22 (28)
2.28 7-5¼.....11 (24)	1.85 6-¾.....18 (24)
5.65 18-6½.....8 (24)	4.40 14-5¼.....20 (24)
8.05 26-5.....10 (24)	6.50 21-4.....19 (24)
16.66 54-8.....10 (24)	13.40 43-11¼ 15 (24)
20.50 67-3¼ ..10 (24)	17.60 57-9.....14 (24)
62.00 203-59 (24)	57.00 187-0 ...19 (24)
72.00 236-28 (24)	67.00 219-9 ...12 (24)
77.00 252-79 (24)	54.00 177-2 ...15 (24)
7900.....6 (18)	5900.....14 (18)

It's important to note that the qualifying period for most events didn't start until May 1, so many of the "qualifiers" here aren't really. And some of the events generate bigger fields because the USOC says OT standards can't be tougher than OG ones.

Having said all that, during calendar '15, note that only 259 men made standard compared to 403 women (road events not included).

No women's discipline had fewer than 12 reach standard, but 10 men's events did, with 6 in single digits and the poor decathlon all the way down at 6.

But even if the men's parameters were pulled up to the women's a lot of people will be left in limbo until very late in the game as to whether or not they're headed to the big dance. And last-minute flights and housing (keeping friends & family in mind as well) aren't always easy to find. Or affordable.

The athletes deserve better.

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