



# from the editor

**THE FOLLOWING IS NOT A COMMERCIAL.** Even if it might read like one. I'm here to sing the praises of the NBC Sports Gold package. After decades of watching the World Championships from the press tribune as a journalist, or in the stands as a fan or from the announcing booth, this one I watched from the comfort of home.

No, not on my TV set, although I could have done so. Rather, I willingly gave myself over to the modern joys of e-entertainment by commandeering most of the space in our home office so I could spread out and become a computer-monitor junkie.

**Heretical thought: is it more fun watching track on your computer?**

I did have the option of adding a second laptop screen to the mix, but ended up making do with one laptop and a pair of desktop machines all running the NBC

programming at the same time. When all was said and done I was left with the heretical thought: "Is it more fun watching track on your computer?"

Another longtime acquaintance—one who is among the hardest of all hardcore fans—was forced by circumstance to skip traveling to London and after following the proceedings in the same mode as I, he wrote me, "I think I have a better sense of what happened at the meet than if I'd been there and been constantly distracted by chatter and questions. Not the best thing to discover, perhaps, as I'd hate to create an excuse to stay home in the future. But..."

The Gold setup, if you're not familiar with it, has different packages for different sports. Track (\$69.99) was added this year, beginning with the Boston Marathon, moved on to the London Marathon, Drake & Penn Relays, the World Relays and the Diamond League and USATF Champs. I didn't watch any of those, but signed on just for the World Champs coverage. And it was well worth it.

Don't think of this as a TV show, because that's not what I watched (although that too was an option). What I watched, *simultaneously*, were multiple live feeds. Every field event had its own dedicated feed and there was an overall "track" feed.

So on the first Saturday evening (afternoon in the U.S.), for example, I put one monitor on track (watching the men's 100 semis/final and women's 10K final), one on the men's long jump final and the third one on the men's discus final. And then to enhance things farther, I opened the IAAF's life-results feed for each of those events as a second window on the appropriate monitor.

I also used other windows on the monitors to open both the *T&FN* forums on the meet—where the chatter was of a generally high level of enthusiasm and understanding—and the event's all-time list to be hip to the statistical significance of things.

Now here's the best part: no commercials and no talking heads. These were just raw feeds, with a microphone pickup inside the bowl of the stadium. It was just like sitting there, but with all the bad parts of TV removed.

And here's an even better part: all these things are archived as separate bits, and you can go back and summon them up and watch again on-demand.

Are there downsides? Yes. The field and track event feeds aren't synchronized, so when you're watching live, you'll get a disconnect on the sound... The feeds are delayed relative to the live results, so you can find out the results a bit before they happen before your eyes... In the field qualifying, they only showed one of the two pits/rings. Small price to pay.

The downsidiest part is that watching the WC action—action from any meet—is just one part of the overall track-fan experience. Sitting in the stands with friends old & new, dissecting what has happened and guessing what will come next is something that all the monitors in the world can't replace. This came rather close.

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