

Track & Field News
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Founded by Bert & Cordner Nelson

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from the editor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Garry Hill".

DURING THE JUST-COMPLETED Winter Olympics, one figure skating fan on our message boards tried to simplify the scoring system for the non-cognoscenti. His analysis included this:

“Regarding a landed double vs. a fallen triple, here is how it works. A triple toe loop (the easiest triple) is worth 4.3. If you fall, you get -2.1 for Grade of Execution (GOE) and another -1 for the fall. So it gets 1.3. For a triple Axel (worth 8.5), the minimum you could get is 4.5. The maximum you could get for a double Axel is 3.3 (base value) + 1.5 (GOE) for 4.8. So this is still better than the worst triple Axel.”

When a record isn't a record... or is only sort of a record

Are your eyes glazed over yet?

But consider the bigger picture: is that any more difficult to follow than what can happen with recordkeeping in track? Look at what happened with Christian Coleman's 6.37 in the 60, reported in the January issue.

It was the fastest 60 ever run, yet failed on two counts for World Record ratification: it didn't have no-false-start blocks and the requisite dope testing wasn't conducted under the right conditions. So no WR, but it would have been OK as an AR, because USATF conditions were met.

Fortunately, the speedy youngster then ran 6.34 at USATF under IAAF-acceptable conditions. But if you're a hardcore stat-nut, you don't consider that the “real” record either because it came at high altitude. Maybe he can do us all a favor and run 6.33 at the World Indoor.

Sydney McLaughlin has just set a new WJR in the 400, but it too appears doomed to non-ratification by the IAAF for the same two reasons that doomed the first Coleman mark. Maybe she'll do us all a favor and run faster at the NCAA Indoor.

Then there's the convoluted circumstances surrounding Mondo Duplantis, the greatest teen vaulter ever.

Last winter he produced history's highest indoor mark by a Junior, but testing circumstances meant it got ratified as an AJR but not a WJR. This winter he apparently set another WJR, but it turned out that the standards were using the longer pegs permitted in prep competition, so it could be an HSR but not a WJR or AJR.

But that's not where the controversy ends. Duplantis is a dual citizen, U.S. and Sweden and has chosen to represent the latter. He's still eligible for American Records however, because current rules don't say you have to be eligible to represent the country internationally, just that you be a citizen. There's a move afoot to remove that loophole, so no more American stuff.

I won't even get into the “absolute” controversy, whereby the IAAF will accept roof-over-head marks for overall records, but USATF now will not (after briefly doing so). That makes it possible for an American to hold the WR, but not the AR.

Bartender, make mine a double Axel with a triple Salchow chaser.