

**2010 Australian Combined Events Championships**  
Domain Athletics Centre, Hobart  
February 13-14, 2010

**OPEN & U23 MEN**

Despite there being a full two weeks left of summer, conditions at the Domain Athletic Centre for the start of the decathlon competition fell far short of the description 'summery'. Rain had fallen earlier in the morning, and despite the 11.20am start time, track suit jackets and windcheaters were all still being worn during the warm ups. Conditions were overcast and the dark clouds around threatened rain at some time during the day's proceedings. However, when the men were called to their starting blocks, it was an impressive sight for Australian Open men's decathlon championships. The ten lanes available in the front straight were all filled – a great line up for what would turn out to be an enthralling contest.

In a Commonwealth Games year, athletes would be vying for places on the team. First target would be the 'B' standard of 7500 points. Our three competitors from the 2006 Melbourne Games – Jason Dudley, Richard Allan and Matthew McEwen – were all no longer on the scene. Dudley and McEwen had retired, and Allan is living in the Czech Republic, training under former world record holder Tomas Dvorak. The scene was set here in Hobart for one of the new breed of local decathletes to assume the mantle as Australia's best.

**100m**

The gun fired for the start of the 100m, and then the recall gun! Victorian Aaron Page had gone early. One of the local Tasmanian athletes sitting near me turned to her friend and said "He's disqualified". Of course that wasn't the case, as the new rule for the combined events is not the same as the rule for individual track events. There was now one break on the field as the athletes settled into their blocks yet again.



The field got away well from the gun, but by midway through the race, the tall figure of Queenslander Cam Crowley started to move away from the pack. Crowley ([pictured above](#)) continued to increase his lead to the finish line, crossing in a tick under 11 seconds. The wind was a barely noticeable 0.3m/s following breeze. The lack of breeze and the damp track contributed to most athletes being about 0.1 to 0.2 second slower than they would have hoped. Crowley's 10.93 was quite acceptable given the conditions, and he was followed across the line by those who would most likely be his major rivals over the two days of competition – Mathew Harris (11.21), Jarrod Sims (11.32), Stephen Cain (11.35) and Kyle McCarthy (11.55). However, the rest of the field was not far behind, all finishing under 11.90 – Daniel Bailey (11.62), David Kinnersley (11.68), Brendan Peeters (11.70), Michael Barber (11.78) and Aaron Page (11.83).



Pictured above: *Decathletes warming up on a summer's day in Hobart*

### Long Jump

The second event was another for the speed and explosive power athletes. Some brought solid credentials to this discipline. In the time following his representing Australia at the World Youth Championships in Ostrava in 2007, Victorian Daniel Bailey spent a couple of seasons concentrating on this horizontal jump before returning to the decathlon about 12 months ago. Crowley, Cain, Sims, McCarthy, Page and Kinnersley also all have good horizontal jump credentials, and it would not surprise to see some of these give the 7m mark a good nudge.



In the competition proper, Bailey (*pictured left*) did indeed produce the best mark – 6.95m.

Again the runway was a little dead, and the winds varied from head to tail but were for the most part almost non-existent. Cain was only a toe length behind his training partner, hitting 6.92, while McCarthy (*pictured right*) was the next best on 6.73m.



Page (6.64) and Crowley (6.62) both exceeded 6.50m, while Kinnersley only just fell short of this mark with his 6.49m.

Jarrold Sims best mark of 6.35m was well below par for him, but given that he was still recovering from a grade 2 hamstring tear only a few weeks before, it was understandable. The question mark over Sims' head would be whether he could survive the weekend's competition without re-damaging the hamstring.

Michael Barber (6.02) whose take off knee gave way on one of his attempts, and Brendan Peeters (5.93 – *pictured right*), who brought a sore Achilles in his take off leg into the meet, both gave away a lot of ground in this event.

After two events, the placings were:

Crowley 1601, Cain 1579, Bailey 1530, Harris 1496, McCarthy 1492, Sims 1455, Page 1414, Kinnersley 1410, Barber 1286, Peeters 1282



### Shot Put

From the speed-strength event of long jump, the athletes moved to the strength-speed event of shot put. While the 'big unit' Kyle McCarthy of Queensland took out the event with a 13.95m effort, the much smaller Victorian Stephen Cain put paid to the saying that 'you can't shoot a cannon out of a canoe' by launching the seven and a quarter kilo ball out to a more than acceptable 13.52m. Both McCarthy and Cain were a little disappointed with their efforts, hoping to throw into the 14 metre range. Brendan Peeters regained some lost ground with a PB effort of 12.72m, just ahead of fellow Queenslander Cam Crowley (12.64m). Jarrold Sims was the only other to exceed 12 metres with his best of 12.21m. Matt Harris (11.72), Aaron Page (11.59) and Michael Barber (11.53) all finished on the upper side of 11.50m, while the two youngest in the field, 1990 born Victorians Daniel Bailey and David Kinnersley threw 10.11m and 9.55m respectively.

After three events, Cain had moved into the lead 32 points ahead of Cam Crowley, with McCarthy lurking a further 29 points further back.

Cain 2278, Crowley 2246, McCarthy 2217, Harris 2085, Sims 2074, Bailey 2022, Page 1996, Peeters 1932, Kinnersley 1869, Barber 1864

### High Jump

Off to the elastic recoil event...

Cain, McCarthy, Crowley and Sims would all have been hoping to jump in the mid 1.90s or better, but only Sims, whose left leg take off was not the damaged one, managed better than 1.95m. Sims' 1.97m gave him two heights and 53 points more than the 1.91m clearances of Crowley and the power flopper Aaron Page. McCarthy had problems with his take off position. Despite generating a lot of height, he could not put his highest point on top of the bar, and repeatedly dislodged the bar on his way down. McCarthy had to settle for a best of 1.88m, the same as Daniel Bailey. Steve Cain also had problems, clearing only 1.85m, when he clearly had more spring in him than that. David Kinnersley also bowed out with a best effort of only 1.85m. Matt Harris had looked good technically at the lower heights, but managed a best of only 1.82m. Peeters once again suffered from the inability to fully extend at take off, and was well below par with 1.73m. In comparison, Michael Barber also cleared 1.73m, but was happy with his effort as it constituted a PB.



*Pictured above: Jarrod Sims*



After four events, Crowley had regained the lead by 21 points from Steve Cain. McCarthy remained in third. Sims moved ahead of Harris, with Page and Bailey edging to within a dozen points of the young New South Welshman. Kinnersley held a narrow 38 points buffer over Peeters, with Barber a further 68 points back.

Crowley 2969, Cain 2948, McCarthy 2913, Sims 2850, Harris 2729, Page 2719, Bailey 2718, Kinnersley 2539, Peeters 2501, Barber 2433.

#### **400m**

The field for the 400m was split into two groups of five. The top five at this stage of the competition were seeded into the first heat, with the remaining five in the second. The big news from the first heat occurred when Sims pulled up at around the 200m mark. He had felt a twinge in the suspect hamstring and decided against pushing the odds.

Meanwhile the race around him continued on. Crowley once again reached the finish line first, in a tick over fifty seconds (50.02). McCarthy was right on his hammer (50.20), with Cain not far behind (50.78). Harris rounded out the finishers in 51.64.

In the second heat, it was Daniel Bailey who took line honours. His 51.41 turned back the challenges of Aaron Page (51.65) and Michael Barber (51.84). A few seconds in arrears, Brendan Peeters finished in 54.55, ahead of David Kinnersley (55.15).

At the end of an absorbing Day One, there were nine athletes remaining, and they had been divided into three distinct groups.

The top three were all in the 3700 points bracket, the second three in the 3400 points bracket, and the bottom three in the 3100 points bracket. It had become like three separate, but very close, competitions within the overall competition! Only 65 points separated the first three, the second three were within 11 points of each other, and there were only 47 points between the first and the third of the final trio!

After Day One:

Crowley 3783, Cain 3727, McCarthy 3718, Harris 3470, Bailey 3469, Page 3459, Barber 3165, Kinnersley 3132, Peeters 3118, Sims DNF

#### **DAY TWO**

Once again there had been rain overnight. Once again the air temperature was cool, and once again there were dark clouds threatening.

## 110m hurdles

The hurdles race was run into a relatively strong 1.8m/s wind, which made the going just that bit tougher.

McCarthy and Cain fought out a close race between them. Cain, the shorter of the two, left a number of tumbled hurdles in his wake, costing him valuable time.

McCarthy capitalised, crossing first in 15.26, with Cain close behind in 15.55. Harris, a talented former schoolboy hurdler, is still learning to negotiate the full men's height of 106.7cm, but managed a reasonable 16.30 for third, closely followed by Bailey (16.41), Crowley (16.60) and Page (16.74). Barber lost time over the final two, while Peeters clocked the eighth and had to 'five-stride the last two. They finished in 17.29 and 17.97 respectively. Kinnersley, still a novice at this event, pushed home in 18.35.

For the first time, McCarthy had taken the lead in the competition. Cain remained in second place, but Crowley had been shunted down into third. In the second tier, the relative placings remained the same, but Harris edged slightly further away from Bailey, with a slight gap back to Page. In the final grouping, Barber moved out to 114 points ahead of Peeters, who had overtaken Kinnersley by 22 points.

McCarthy 4536, Cain 4511, Crowley 4450, Harris 4169, Bailey 4156, Page 4111, Barber 3759, Peeters 3645, Kinnersley 3623



*Pictured above:* With ominous dark clouds in the background, McCarthy (lane 5) leads Cain (lane 4) into the last. Harris (lane 3) and Bailey (lane 9) clear the ninth while Page (lane 8), Barber (lane 7), Crowley (lane 2) and Peeters (lane 1) approach the ninth. Kinnersley (lane 6) is negotiating the eighth. Cain leaves a trail of hurdles (some still bouncing) behind him.

## Discus

Once again, the heavier weights involved in the Open men's decathlon proved to be a bit of a stumbling block for some of the younger athletes in the field. Steve Cain again surprised the field with his throwing ability. He produced the best throw of the competition, with a 42.40m effort. Queensland's Brendan Peeters was next best, throwing just less than forty metres. His first round effort sailed just outside of the right sector line and hit the top of the metal "Warning. Throws in Progress" sign, adjacent to the 40m indicator. The resultant resounding clang jolted both spectators and competitors. His second round effort was a 'safety' 38m hurl, before he produced his best of 39.88m in the final round.

McCarthy (39.43), Barber (38.23) and Matt Harris (37.07) were the best of the rest. David Kinnersley produced a 34.66m throw, with left-hander Aaron Page (34.06) also beyond 34 metres. Young Daniel Bailey managed to heave the 2kg plate out to 33.69m, but Queenslander Cam Crowley had an unhappy competition in this discipline, experiencing foul trouble early. His first two efforts sailed out of the left sector, putting pressure on him for his final throw. He managed to land a wobbly effort at 33.09m to at least earn some points.

Cain had leap-frogged McCarthy to regain first place, with a narrow lead of 35 points. Crowley now trailed McCarthy by 113. The remaining places in the competition remained the same – only the points spread had altered.

Cain 5224, McCarthy 5189, Crowley 4976, Harris 4774, Bailey 4694, Page 4656, Barber 4388, Peeters 4307, Kinnersley 4180

## Pole Vault

There was only one pit available for competition and the U17, U18, U20 & Open competitions were all held concurrently. This made for a long event, with the better vaulters having to wait a considerable time before being able to enter the competition. Barber (3.20), Peeters (3.40), Bailey (3.60) and Crowley (3.80) followed each other out of the competition at 20 cm intervals.

Harris (pictured above right) and Page each managed 4.10m before exiting. David Kinnersley (pictured below right) picked up valuable points with his 4.20m effort. McCarthy looked to have a big jump in him, with some massive clearances at his earlier heights. However, he couldn't manage to control his take off sufficiently to put his highest point over the top of the bar. He had to settle for 4.40m – a disappointing result when he had promised so much.

Like McCarthy, Cain had demonstrated good vaulting ability on his earlier heights, again with some huge clearances. He cleared 4.60m with ease and had his next attempts at 4.80m. However, this height proved his undoing, with three successive failures.

Cain's efforts had pushed him past 6000 points, with McCarthy 94 points behind. Crowley had completely lost touch with the leading two, now lying almost 400 points behind McCarthy.

Harris had moved to 119 points behind Crowley, and would exert further pressure on him in the upcoming javelin event. Page was almost 100 points ahead of Bailey. Peeters had closed to within 30 points of Barber, but Kinnersley's had vaulted past both of them to lead Barber by 59 points.



After 8 events: Cain 6014, McCarthy 5920, Crowley 5538, Harris 5419, Page 5301, Bailey 5203, Kinnersley 4853, Barber 4794, Peeters 4764.

### Javelin

The javelin would once again pit the two leaders against each other head to head. Both Cain and McCarthy had good credentials with the spear, and would be looking for efforts around the sixty metre mark.

McCarthy put together a good series with a best of 57.31m, but Cain (*pictured right*) once again went even better, with his 59.80m falling just short of that 60 metre target.

Daniel Bailey was the only other over fifty metres, with his best touching down on the turf at 51.47m.

Matthew Harris (47.94), Aaron Page (45.91 - *pictured right*) and Brendan Peeters (45.18) all managed throws in the mid to high forty metre range, while Michael Barber (*pictured right, below*) just snuck past forty metres with his 40.92m.

Cameron Crowley (still recovering from a shoulder injury) and David Kinnersley demonstrated their inexperience with this particular implement, throwing just 39.63m and 39.31m respectively.

With only one event remaining, Cain now held a 132 point advantage over McCarthy. Matt Harris had snuck to two points ahead of Cameron Crowley, moving into third spot at Crowley's expense. Aaron Page was now a mere 16 points ahead of Daniel Bailey. Kinnersley led Peeters by only 3 points, and Barber trailed the field by a further 23 points, but his best event, the 1500m, was still to come.

With 9 disciplines down, and only the 1500m left in which to make an impression on the overall competition, the standings were:

Cain 6749, McCarthy 6617, Harris 5977, Crowley 5975, Page 5829, Bailey 5813, Kinnersley 5285, Peeters 5282, Barber 5249

### 1500m

Just prior to the start of the 1500m, Kyle McCarthy heard the on-ground commentator announce the points. He believed that he heard that he was only 32 points behind Cain, rather than the reality of 132 points. He told me later that at this point he thought "Gee, I'd better run this!"

All in the field knew that Michael Barber would run a quick time, so in the early going, McCarthy stuck with Barber as best he could. For the first two circuits, McCarthy managed quite well, but



then Barber slipped from third gear into fourth and moved steadily away. However, he had pulled the field along to a rhythm where it appeared likely that quite a few would produce good times.

While McCarthy was trying to tag onto Barber, Cain and Crowley were trying to maintain contact with McCarthy. Page was travelling quite well back in fifth place. Peeters, after sitting behind Bailey in the early going, had moved past him in the second lap and despite showing some discomfort from his sore lower legs, was still moving quite well around the track.

Harris kept Bailey in his sights, but Kinnersley fell so far behind that he was running on his lonesome, with no-one within cooee to latch on to.

Barber continued his magnificent run to the finish line, crossing in an impressive (for a decathlon) 4:26.72. This equalled his personal best. McCarthy was a good fifty metres behind but still managed to run a strong 4:34.71. As Barber had been nearing the line, Cain and Crowley were coming off the last curve into the straight. Crowley had been sitting just behind Cain's shoulder for most of the race, but moved out as they entered the home straight, and opened out his long stride to cross in 4:39.58, just ahead of Cain (4:40.36). In quick succession followed Page (4:43.63) and Peeters (4:48.92). Bailey (4:54.87) held out Harris (4:56.52). The first four across the line had run 4:40 or better, and the first EIGHT finishers had all run under five minutes. Kinnersley struggled on through his own laps of pain, eventually reaching the finish line in 5:41.99.

In the final wash up, Cain had fallen just 73 points short in his quest for a Commonwealth 'B' qualifier, scoring 7427 points. He had had an even two days of competition, scoring 3727 points on Day One and exactly 3700 points on Day Two. McCarthy, while failing to reach the 7500 point standard, has the comfort of knowing that he has already achieved a legal score in excess of 7500, when he tallied 7522 in Densenzano last year. Of course, posting a 'B' standard performance will by no means guarantee selection for the Commonwealth Games. Those with aspirations to travel to India later in the year will have the 'A' standard in their sights.

Like Cain, McCarthy had also had a very even competition. His total of 7331 was made up of a Day One score of 3718 points coupled with a Day Two score of 3613. In contrast third place getter Crowley, who scored 6658 points overall, had tallied 3783 on Day One but could manage only 2875 on the second day. Crowley's sterling effort in the 1500m put paid to fellow U23 athlete Matt Harris' quest to wrest the Open bronze medal from him. Harris, with 6557 points held on to fourth, 70 points ahead of Victorian Aaron Page (6487). Final scores for all competitors are given below.

Cain 7427, McCarthy 7331, Crowley 6658, Harris 6557, Page 6487, Bailey 6403, Barber 6015, Peeters 5907, Kinnersley 5627



#### Men's Open Decathlon

*Left to right:* Matt Harris (4<sup>th</sup>),  
Brendan Peeters (8<sup>th</sup>), Daniel  
Bailey (6<sup>th</sup>)

*Left to right on dais:* Kyle McCarthy (2<sup>nd</sup>),  
Stephen Cain (1<sup>st</sup>), Cam Crowley (3<sup>rd</sup>)

*Left to right:* Aaron Page (5<sup>th</sup>),  
Michael Barber (7<sup>th</sup>), David  
Kinnersley (9<sup>th</sup>)

In the Men's U23 competition (held concurrently with the Open men's competition), the medals went to Crowley (6658), Harris (6557), and Bailey (6403), with Kinnersley taking fourth position (5627).



#### **Men's U23 Decathlon**

*Left to right:* Matt Harris (2<sup>nd</sup>), Cam Crowley (1<sup>st</sup>), Daniel Bailey (3<sup>rd</sup>), David Kinnersley (4<sup>th</sup>)

Once again, Hobart had turned on a friendly, well-run competition. The officials toiled seemingly tirelessly from Friday night (Briggs Athletics Classic) through the weekend, which not only had the Australian Combined Events Championships, but also the Tasmanian Relays Championships.

I'm sure the athletes would join with me in extending a huge "Thank You" to all the organisers and officials who contributed to making the weekend of athletics a success.

**Peter Hannan**

**Athletics Australia National Youth Event Coach – Combined Events**

Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2010