

2010 Australian Combined Events Championships

Domain Athletics Centre, Hobart

February 13-14, 2010

U17 MEN

Only two athletes registered to compete for the Australian 2010 U18 decathlon title – Victorian Luke Cann and local Tasmanian athlete Patrick Lanau-Atkinson. Why were there no others? Was it the timing of the championships - NSW, for example, had their State under age Championships on this same weekend? Was it the venue – a little difficult/expensive to reach from some of the mainland States?

Yet 2009 had attracted five competitors. Whatever the reason, only two protagonists would vie for the 2010 title.

100m

There was an obvious mismatch in size when the boys appeared for the 100m sprint. While Luke Cann was only of average height and weight, his opponent Patrick Lanau-Atkinson was jockey-sized. The two U17 boys ran with the U18 lads, and it was perhaps fortunate that Lanau-Atkinson wasn't drawn in the lane adjacent to U18 athlete Morgan Ward. The top of Lanau-Atkinson's head might possibly have just reached Ward's shoulder.

Cann proved the quicker in the 100m, finishing in 11.82, a little under half a second ahead of Lanau-Atkinson (12.22).



Pictured above: Luke Cann (lane 6), Patrick Lanau-Atkinson (lane 5), Joshua Zeitzen (U18-lane 4), Lindsay Newton-Smith (U18-lane 3), Morgan Ward (U18-lane 2)

After the first event:

Cann 687, Lanau-Atkinson 608

Long Jump

In the second event, the long jump, Cann once again was able to use his superior strength and speed to outperform Lanau-Atkinson. However, Lanau-Atkinson was not overwhelmed by Cann. He jumped 5.59m to Cann's best of 5.89m.

After two events:

Cann 1250, Lanau-Atkinson 1108

Pictured right: Luke Cann



Shot Put

In the shot Cann, who has shown good throwing form throughout the summer season (particularly in the javelin), blew Lanau-Atkinson out of the water. His excellent throw of 14.60m was almost seven metres better than Lanau-Atkinson's best (7.67m)! The points Cann earned for his effort (765) reflected his dominance over Lanau-Atkinson (247 points) in this event.

After three events:

Cann 2015, Lanau-Atkinson 1455

High Jump

While young Cann could not yet be described as tall, he definitely had a height advantage over Lanau-Atkinson. Although his technique could be described as 'rather agricultural' he managed to clear 1.58m, while Lanau-Atkinson could only throw his body over 1.49m

Cann now had a clean sweep of the first four events, and Lanau-Atkinson sat over 600 points behind.



Pictured above and centre:
Patrick Lanau-Atkinson
Pictured far right: Luke Cann

After four events:

Cann 2464, Lanau-Atkinson 1836

400m

In the 400m Lanau-Atkinson managed to peg one back. Even though his time of 56.45 was not particularly quick, it was enough to carry him to the line ahead of Cann (57.75) and whittle 49 points from Cann's massive lead.

Final Day One scores:

Cann 2957, Lanau-Atkinson 2378

DAY TWO

110m hurdles

Despite his more diminutive stature, Lanau-Atkinson actually negotiated the 91cm barriers better than the taller Cann. Again, his time of 17.20s was not all that quick, though it was sufficient to have him reach the line ahead of Cann (18.03) and chop another 83 points from his lead.

Were we witnessing the beginning of a fight back from the young Tasmanian? In the space of two events he had reduced Cann's lead from over 600 points to less than 500.

However, with two of the remaining four events being Cann's favoured throwing events, and one (the pole vault) being a speed-power event, Lanau-Atkinson's chances looked decidedly slim.

After six events:

Cann 3478, Lanau-Atkinson 2982

Discus

Lanau-Atkinson's best chance in the discus would be for Cann to throw three fouls. Unfortunately Cann was not willing to oblige. Lanau-Atkinson earned 199 points for his 16.04m best, but Cann was a man on a mission, hurling the 1.5kg implement a prodigious 44.54m. This effort earned 757 points, only 8 points less than his huge shot put on Day One.

After seven events:

Cann 4235, Lanau-Atkinson 3181

Pole Vault

Cann's lead going into the pole vault was over 1000 points. Any hope that Lanau-Atkinson had of reducing this deficit in the pole vault were dashed when he could only clear 2.50m, while Cann went 20cm higher with his 2.70m clearance, adding another 44 points to his lead in the process. For Lanau-Atkinson to overtake Cann from here would be a greater challenge than for Hercules to clean the Augean stables.

After eight events:

Cann 4521, Lanau-Atkinson 3423

Javelin

If Lanau-Atkinson did not know of Cann's spear-throwing prowess before the javelin, he would have become quickly aware during the warm up.

In the competition proper, Cann threw a prodigious 64.35m with the 700g implement. Athletes at any level in the decathlon circles would be quite pleased with a throw in the 60m-plus range.

Cann earned his highest points of the competition in this event – 803!

Lanau-Atkinson's 36.40m earned only 390 points and now saw him 1511 behind.

With one event remaining:

Cann 5324, Lanau-Atkinson 3813

1500m

The 1500m provided plucky Lanau-Atkinson with the opportunity to peg one event back. With his lighter frame better suited to the longer distances, he finished the metric mile in 5:12.48. While this time was nothing outstanding, it was almost two-thirds of a minute ahead of Cann, who clocked 5:50.05.

Pictured near right: Patrick Lanau-Atkinson

Pictured far right: Luke Cann (U17-336) leads Morgan Ward (U18-334)



Lanau-Atkinson's effort took over 180 points out of Cann's lead, but the horse had well and truly bolted. Cann had still managed to defeat Lanau-Atkinson in the overall competition by over 1300 points.

Lanau-Atkinson, while well-beaten, had now joined that rather small group of athletes who can say they have completed a decathlon!

Final standings Men's U17 Decathlon:

Cann 5630, Lanau-Atkinson 4303

Post script

It is difficult to assess the quality of a performance in a two man contest, when one person dominates the other. What basis of comparison could be used to determine the relative worth of Cann's performance?

In 2009, the talented trio of Lindsay Newton-Smith, Kade Jennings and Morgan Ward had won the medals in the U17 age group. Newton-Smith had taken gold with 6002 points. Jennings was second with 5727, and Ward had placed third with 5423. Obviously Cann would have been very competitive in this company, and who knows whether he would have scored even more highly had he had competitors close to him throughout. What a great contest it could have been had Jake Stein (NSW), Jack Bangel (NSW) and Jake Grevsmuhl (Qld) been fit and available for this competition.

I look forward to the day that those four athletes meet head to head in a championship event, with only three medals on offer!

Peter Hannan

Athletics Australia National Youth Event Coach – Combined Events

Thursday, 25th February, 2010

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U16 MEN

The difficulty when there is only one competitor in an event – in this case Brendan Lee from Victoria – is that it is hard to know whether he is performing well when there is no one to compete against.

One way of addressing this problem would be to compare Lee's performances in 2010 with last year's main U16 competitors.

Jake Stein did not compete at the Nationals in Hobart last year, but he did win the NSW Championships in Campbelltown on the first weekend of January. Bangel had finished second to Stein at those Championships, and was then second again, this time to Queenslander Jake Grevsmuhl, at the Australian Championships. Taking into account that conditions could be very different it would still give some indication of Lee's effort by making some comparisons with last year's best performers. Using Stein's performance in Campbelltown, and the performances of Grevsmuhl and Bangel from Hobart, we can provide some sort of comparison for Lee's efforts.

It must also be considered, of course, that Lee had only to complete the event to win the gold so, without others to push him, his final score may not accurately reflect what he could have been capable of given strong competition.

DAY ONE

100m hurdles

The tall figure of Brendan Lee, with the rather gangly appearance of a boy who had grown quickly recently, ran over the hurdles with the benefit of a 2.4m/s wind. His time – 15.32.

In the hypothetical competition, the placings would be Grevsmuhl (13.93), Bangel (14.27), Stein (14.36), Lee (15.32).

Points: Grevsmuhl 984, Bangel 940, Stein 929, **Lee** 811

High Jump

In our hypothetical high jump competition, Grevsmuhl was best with 1.78m. Lee would have finished second with 1.73m. Stein third on 1.71m, and Bangel fourth with 1.57m.

After two events:

Grevsmuhl 1594, Stein 1481, Bangel 1381, **Lee** 1380

Shot Put

Grevsmuhl would have been the winner of the shot with a best of 13.30m. Stein was not far behind with 13.14m. Lee would have finished third with his 12.58m, while Bangel brought up the rear with 10.87m. Lee would have moved into third place in the competition.

After three events:

Grevsmuhl 2280, Stein 2157, **Lee** 2022, Bangel 1919

200m

Lee had the same wind for the 200m in 2010 as Grevsmuhl and Bangel had experienced in 2009 – a 0.9m/s following breeze. Stein, however, had the benefit of a 2.5m/s wind behind him in his 2009 competition. Lee, with a 25.30 performance, would have trailed Grevsmuhl (23.40), Bangel (24.15) and Stein (24.81).

With Day One completed, Brendan Lee would have been sitting in third place, just four points ahead of Jack Bangel.

Final Day One scores:

Grevsmuhl 3028, Stein 2779, **Lee** 2603, Bangel 2599

DAY TWO

Long Jump

Grevsmuhl moved further ahead in the long jump. His 6.42m would easily account for Stein (5.70). Bangel and Lee would retain their same relative positions with both sailing 5.50m.

Pictured right: Brendan Lee

After five events:

Grevsmuhl 3707, Stein 3302, **Lee** 3084, Bangel 3080

Javelin

Stein would take out the hypothetical javelin competition with his best throw of 46.99m. Lee would be next with 44.77m. Grevsmuhl would also land the spear over 40m, while Bangel would be relegated to the final spot with a best of 38.96m.

With one event remaining:

Grevsmuhl 4162, Stein 3846, **Lee** 3596, Bangel 3507



1500m

In the 1500m, Bangel took out the hypothetical event with a time of 5:01.75. Lee (*pictured left*) was next with 5:14.43, ahead of Stein (5:17.98). Grevsmuhl cramped badly, and struggled around for a time of 6:04.29.

Overall result

Grevsmuhl would have held on for the win, with Stein in second and Lee in third. Bangel would have been forced out of the placings.

Final scores:

Grevsmuhl 4409, Stein 4307, **Lee** 4075, Bangel 4057

While all can appreciate that there are dozens of factors which contribute to putting together a decathlon score, and that the above result could only be considered speculative at best, it does give an indication of the potential young Brendan Lee shows for this event. Despite having to compete by himself, he turned in a national class performance for his age – truly a very commendable effort.

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