

## US Decathlon Championships Hayward Field, Eugene, Oregon

Friday, 26 June 2009

### Hardee holds slim four-point lead over Eaton at the halfway mark in Clay-less US Decathlon Champs, Day 1



Trey Hardee competing in the 100m on the first day of the Decathlon at the 2009 USA Champs (Getty Images)

Eugene, USA - Even before the start of the **Decathlon** competition at the **US Championships** yesterday (25) - a competition which offers points scoring opportunities in the **IAAF World Combined Events Challenge** - the focus suddenly shifted away from Bryan Clay and moved to Trey Hardee when the Olympic champion was forced to withdraw from competition due to a strained hamstring suffered on Tuesday (23).

Given the procedure used by the US for selecting its teams for international competitions, this removes any chance for Clay to appear at the **12th IAAF World Championships in Athletics, Berlin, Germany (15– 23 Aug)**.

Clay had arrived in Eugene on Tuesday, and went to Hayward Field for a light training session after a five-hour automobile ride from Seattle. While jogging on the long jump runway, Clay sensed some pain. "I felt two little pops in my left hamstring. I wasn't right at the start of training. It was on about my fourth sprint," he explained.

The severity of the injury was not immediately apparent to Clay. "I didn't feel bad at first. But then I got back on the runway and felt tight."

"Time was not on my side with this injury," Clay admitted. "If this had happened a week ago, I could probably hobble through the two days and make the team, after which I would have six weeks to recover."

"I came here with the feeling I was in mid-8600 shape," he continued. "I was quite surprised how quickly I recovered from the rigours of the Beijing Olympics."

"My coaches and I will try to figure out the rest of the season," he said with an air of resignation. "My ultimate goals in the coming years are to get the world record indoors, as well as the world record outdoors. And I'd like to be the only American to win medals at three Olympic Games [after silver in Athens and gold in Beijing]."

"But for right now, my full support is behind Trey Hardee to represent the US well in Berlin in August. I'll be here at the stadium both days cheering him on. He knows he has my complete backing."

### **Hardee rises to the challenge**

Hardee, who finished second to Clay in last year's US Olympic Trials, wasted no time in picking up the torch dropped into his lap by Clay. The 25-year-old Texas resident exploded to a 10.43 in the **100 metres**, aided by a 3.6 (but decathlon-legal) wind to lead the fifteen other competitors.

Running close in Hardee's heat was America's top young prospect in the Decathlon, 21-year-old Oregon native Ashton Eaton, who won the last two NCAA Championships and who here clocked 10.53 to stay within 24 points of leader Hardee after the opening event.

Following the leading pair at a distance were Joe Detmer (10.94) with 874 and Michael Marsh (10.96) at 870.

The **Long Jump** is an event in which Hardee has significantly improved in the last year, but his 7.41 best attempt in the Decathlon's second discipline - about 30cm off the consistent level of his last three competitions - gave Eaton a chance to jump into the overall lead with a 7.60w leap, the day's best, for a 23-point advantage, 1928 to 1905.

The top pair began to see their advantage grow over the field as Detmer held third with a 7.23 jump for an aggregate 1743, while Lysias Edmonds parlayed a 7.07 leap into a fourth-place total of 1691.

Hardee regained his earlier advantage with a 14.38 throw in the **Shot Put**, his best in a decathlon since the 2006 Texas Relays. The 752 points he earned pushed him to 2657, which, when juxtaposed with the 12.63 toss of Eaton for 2573, created a 84-point cushion for the Texan after three disciplines.

A 14.69 effort was enough to catapult Jake Arnold from fifth into the all-important third spot with an overall 2431, as another newcomer to the top echelon, Chris Randolph, moved from seventh into fourth with 13.76—his second-best put ever—with a composite 2367.

Paul Terek led all shotputters with a 14.75 mark, but his 2319 total left him in seventh place.

Hardee saw two-thirds of his lead vanish in the **High Jump** as he could manage only 1.99—and that on a bar-rattling third attempt. All the while, Eaton pushed the bar up to 2.05 and came away from the fourth event trailing only by 28 at 3451 to 3423.

The best jumper of the competition, Desi Burt, used a PB 2.17 to move into third place at 3250 while Arnold slipped to fourth with 3198 after a 1.96 best. Randolph's 2.02 allowed him to stay close in fifth with 3189.

The final event of the first day, the **400 metres**, saw a dramatic tightening of the top scores. After watching Hardee circle the stadium in 48.49, Eaton put on a dazzling display with a 47.99 in the final section to move within four points of the overall lead, 4337 to 4333.

Burt's 50.40 allowed him to barely hold third with 4046, just ahead of Detmer at 4044 after a one-lap 47.96 which led all competitors. Randolph and Arnold, at 4036 and 4032, held fifth and sixth in a close four-man race for the third spot as the first day came to a close.

**Ed Gordon for the IAAF**

## US Decathlon Championships Hayward Field, Eugene, Oregon

Saturday, 27 June 2009

### Hardee tallies 8261 to take first US Decathlon title



Trey Hardee on the way to his first US Decathlon title (Getty Images)

Eugene, USA - Trey Hardee scored 8261 points to win his first **US Decathlon championships title** in Eugene on Friday (26) - a competition which offers points scoring opportunities in the IAAF **World Combined Events Challenge**.

The competition took place without Olympic champion Bryan Clay, who was forced to withdraw one hour before the start of the first day because of a hamstring injury suffered in training on Tuesday. *(See day 1 report in 'Related Content' under the photo to the right of this text).*

Finishing second was 21-year-old University of Oregon student Ashton Eaton with 8075, his sixth consecutive Decathlon competition in excess of 8000 points over the last 13 months. Jake Arnold captured third with 7984, as these three athletes will form the US Decathlon team at the **12th IAAF World Championships in Athletics, Berlin, Germany (15– 23 Aug)**.

The morning of Day Two saw Hardee charge right from the gate as he needed to protect a microscopic four-point advantage over Eaton after the first day.

The Texan clocked a 13.95 in the **110m Hurdles** for the only sub-14 performance by the field. Running in the same heat, Eaton kept pace well with 14.03. That marginally increased Hardee's lead to 18 after six events, 5318 to 5304.

In the battle for the final team position, the places underwent a full scramble from the first day. Arnold, resting in sixth after Day 1, rode a 3.3 wind to a 14.17 hurdle time - the second-best of his career - and rose solidly into third place with a 93-point advantage (4989 to 4896) over Chris Randolph, who improved from fifth to fourth after a 14.88 race over the barriers.

Burt meanwhile dropped from third to ninth after a surprisingly weak 16.80 performance, while yesterday's fourth-place occupant, Joe Detmer, fell to fifth after a 15.13 time, which left him 111 points out of third.

The three team positions began to reveal themselves after the **Discus Throw**, although without specific names attached to the places. As expected, Hardee moved further ahead with a 44.76m throw, to which Eaton could reply with only 41.33m (though not far from his PB of 41.79m). It left Hardee with an 84-point bulge after seven events, 6080 to 5996.

Arnold consolidated his hold on third with a solid 45.75m effort and moved to an imposing 223-point lead over Randolph, whose 39.36m fling still kept him in a distant fourth, 5771 to 5548.

Paul Terek used a 44.61m throw to rise from 10th to fifth at 5430, as he led a quintet with scores in a 50-point range. The best effort of the day came from Daniel Kinsey with a PB 48.75m.

Even with a substantial aiding wind in the **Pole Vault**, 5.00m was the measure of excellence today, achieved by five of the competitors. Hardee was one of them, and juxtaposed with Eaton's sub-par 4.50m, he was able to take an eight-event lead of 234, 6990 to 6756.

The chase for the third team spot tightened as Arnold could scale only 4.70m, inferior to all of his Decathlon vaults the last five seasons save for one no-height. Randolph capitalized on the opportunity with an equal-PB 4.90m to move within 162 of a Berlin nomination, 6590 to 6428.

Both Terek - a 5.70m vaulter in open competition - and Lysian Edmonds posted 5.00m jumps to hold fifth and sixth with 6340 and 6320, respectively.

The **Javelin Throw** did nothing to alter the top six places, but it did serve to spread things out with only one discipline remaining.

Hardee led off with a PB 64.12m, the day's best, and he immediately passed his next two throws. Eaton, not a strong exponent of the spear, posted a 51.46m which shot Hardee to a 424-point lead after nine events, 7790 to 7366.

Arnold all but secured the third spot for Berlin at this point with a 57.82m throw, which left Randolph 204 points away from a team position after a 55.01m.

Hardee's considerable lead meant he could take a rest during the **1500m**, and he did just that. After the first 100 metres, he was running in last place, and he never moved from that position, clocking a glacial 5:16.01, the slowest he has ever closed a ten-eventer.

All the while, Eaton was doing what he could do to close the gap, knowing full well that the title was out of reach. Kicking strongly with 150 metres remaining, he crossed the line in 4:35.45, content to be traveling to Berlin in August.

Arnold ran in his usual range in the decathletes' 'most loathed event', coming home in 4:38.59 and achieving his second straight US World Championships team nomination.

To no surprise, Detmer—who owns the best-ever 1000m in the indoor Heptathlon at 2:29.42—was the fastest to run the 3¾ laps of Hayward Field with a 4:21.48.

A fatigued, smiling Hardee put things into perspective at the end. “These two days had lots of ups and downs,” he admitted. “But I was quite confident after Götzis (where he finished second, only six points behind Germany’s Michael Schrader)”.

“I knew I didn’t have to push here. I knew it would be there,” he continued. “Now I just need to get to the World Championships healthy,” indicating that he, like all decathletes, always has a list of minor aches and pains to contend with. “Little things, nothing really extremely important,” he explained.

A retrospective of the two days found him highlighting good performances in the hurdles, 400m and javelin. “The 400 was especially pleasing at the end of yesterday. It wasn’t the fastest I’ve ever run, but the way it felt was promising. I just jogged the first 200 and I felt relaxed.” Despite a PB in the javelin, Hardee said that “it wasn’t perfect, I just didn’t hit it right.”

But the 25-year-old did feel as if he were working alone much of the two days. “The guys I looked up to over the last four years—Bryan (Clay) and Tom (Pappas) —weren’t there. It’s just not as easy that way.”

**Ed Gordon for the IAAF**