

## Report from Steve Cain on his Desenzano performance 2011



*Luiz Alberto De Araujo maintains his overnight lead to take the win in Desenzano Del Garda. (Lorenzo Sampaolo).*

*Steve Cain is pictured on top of the hurdle in the right of picture*

DESENZANO, Italy. 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Day 1:

Weather was good regarding temperature though the wind caused some difficulties for all. It was exciting and somewhat overwhelming to be warming up alongside some very big and talented athletes, with some impressive decathlon and individual event PB's. I was excited and ready to go for my first international competition.

100m: with a standard warmup i was ready to go for the 100m and was in heat 1. Being last to move from the blocks wasn't the best start though the first 60m felt great, and a little tense over the last 40 so hoping to improve on that in upcoming comps. I won my heat into a -0.4 wind in a time of 11.47 so reasonably happy with the first event, knowing i could have run a much better race.

Long jump: Was feeling good after the 100m, and warmed up well for the long jump with a slight tailwind and had a few great pop ups. The wind turned around just as the competition was starting and we had headwinds from -1.0 to -5.0 which caused difficulty for most. No height on my first jump, though felt like 2 reasonable takeoffs followed my first attempt, just lacked speed at the board perhaps so was disappointed to finish with 6.59m

Shot Put: After a few standing throws and 4-5 glides in warmup, i felt very relaxed and confident with the competition ahead. Most warmup throws were good, and a great throwing series as my shot put has struggled thus far this season. I can't remember exact measurements, though high 13m throws in round 1 and 3 with a PB of 14.12 in round 2. Obviously happy with a PB and a solid 3 throws.

High Jump: with my aim of 1.95m in mind, my warmup and two first jumps weren't filling me with confidence. Starting at 1.80 and touching the bar to clear, followed by 1.86 and the same scenario. Then with clearances at 1.89, 1.92 and 1.95 i was happy with a season best and reaching my goal. Attempts at 1.98 were nothing special but with little jumping due to injury over the past few years it was great to have a pain free jumping comp.

400m: Again, sub 50sec was the goal though wasn't to be. Felt good and started well over the first 80m and tried to relax into a good pace. Was again stung in the home strait where i held some form but hit with fatigue i could only manage 50.69sec.

Overall day one was acceptable, obvious point letdown in the long jump and improvement to find in the 100m and 400m, though 3754 gave me the chance for an overall Decathlon PB with a solid day 2.

## DAY 2:

After doing some quick calculations the night before, the world uni qualifier of 7600 appeared very attainable with anything over 3846 for the second day, which would also be a PB. Recovered reasonably well from the first day and was ready to get moving for a big day 2!!

110m hurdles: With the B pool of races commencing early with great conditions, we were hoping for similar condition for our race an hour later. With a +3.3 wind for our race, the conditions were great and unfortunate the times weren't quite as fast as we had hoped. A pretty clean set of 10 hurdles by my standards was pleasing with a time of 14.73 the result. Definite room for improvement as this was almost identical to the time ran in Melbourne for the Aus Champs though that was a -1.3 wind. There is plenty of room to tighten up technically so eager for another race soon!

Discus: The second throwing event for the competition went well with improvement on each throw, starting with 39m, 40m on the second throw and as my timing and control improved, there was still more distance to be found than the 41.49 i finished with. There was a gusty tailwind which didn't seem to help the flight of the discus, though with most competitors well behind their best i was happy with my result.

Pole Vault: Looking forward to the pole vault after an improved pole vault season and good training session in the lead up to the competition, it was annoying to have such poor conditions. Strong and erratic side and head winds made warmup difficult. Also with the lack of a practise bar was out of the norm for most pole vault competitions. Opening with a clearance at 4.45 and following with a less than convincing clearance at 4.65 was a great start to the very long and hot competition. I then passed to 4.85 and a clearance there before finishing with a clearance at 4.95 on my first attempt. I didn't manage a good attempt at 5.05 so that must mean im saving the big jumps for the next competition!! With the condition as they were and finishing my jumping on the 16' 185" I cant wait to get onto the next pole and add some height to my PB!!

Javelin: The Jav was always going to be my worry event, moreso from an injury perspective than performance related. I was confident that i could fire up to throw high 50m, though with an elbow injury for the past year, my javelin competitions of late haven't been very impressive. With no throwing training for weeks, i decided not to have any throws in warmup as it would only aggravate my elbow, so instead taped it up and crossed my fingers for the comp. I was therefore happy and relieved with my first throw of 57m, whilst causing pain to the elbow. Deciding to continue with round two and three, i threw 60m and in the final round: 62.02 which i was very happy with. From this i assume the best plan moving forward is to preserve the elbow and hit the competition hard.

1500m: As always, some prior number crunching to see what times were needed for PB's and to climb the placing ladder basically suggested that i had to run fast, no surprises there! With the French athlete being a solid 1500m runner (4.20 in decath's) i tried to stay on him for most part of the first lap, getting a little confused with our pace as the clock at the finish line read 35sec as we crossed the finish line for the first time. With the first lap in 68, that pace was definitely fast enough if we could maintain something close to that which saw the French athlete run away. I went through two laps in about 2.24 i think and perhaps 3.40 for 3 laps, though was doing it tough as we all were so remembering lap times wasn't a priority. With the eventual competition winner and third place passing me with just over a lap to go, i tried to stick with them and had less than nothing left in the tank when we crossed in 4:34.25

Overall day 2 was great, a big day 2 PB with 3957 points.

DESENZANO summary: An awesome experience, great group of guys to compete with, and a solid comp throughout. Two PB's in total: 6cm pb in Shot Put and an overall Decathlon PB of 7711 (164point pb). I was also wrapped to get 4<sup>th</sup>, only 1 point in front of 5<sup>th</sup> and 20points behind 3<sup>rd</sup>. Was also 69 points behind 2<sup>nd</sup> place, an old junior rival and training/travel partner Brent Newdick (NZL).

Thanks to the coaches back home: Efim, Julian and Larisa for preparing me for this comp and to the training boys: Donk, Goliath, Dan, Russ, Brett, Chris, Timmy!! Danielle and the family, and also to NZL coach/athlete Steve Buckley who assisted me through all events.

From here..... I have been accepted into Gotzis, which is very exciting and very lucky to be on the start list with a 7711 pb. Hopefully we can score another big PB at the Mecca of Decathlon. I am training in Germany in preparation for Gotzis and will head to Prague thereafter to prepare for Kladno. Exciting times!!

Steve Cain