

Report from Steve Cain on his Kladno performance 2011

And so begins my third and final competition report for Europe 2011. It has definitely been quite an adventure and learning curve, and many thanks to all that have made this opportunity possible!

KLADNO, Czech Republic. 15th – 16th June 2011.

With a very unique preparation for this competition, guided by injury and the general fatigue of 2 previous decathlons, long road trips etc etc.... I was still motivated to produce another good score before I flew home. There was definite physical and mental fatigue in the week leading up, though was still confident that I could back up my score from Desenzano.

Kladno had a very impressive start list with the majority of the field having PB's over 8000points, not to mention the likes of several athletes having already scored over 8500, including World Record holder Roman Sebrle at 9026. In meticulous preparation for this comp, we (3 x NZL decathletes and I) managed to arrange a game of golf with Mr Sebrle at the best course in Czech. In case you were wondering, Roman is quite a handy golfer, and managed a score of 74 off the pro tees on the very challenging course! I, on the other hand, will have to blame my poor game on.....

Competition rundown

DAY 1:

Whilst nothing beats the prestige and atmosphere of Gotzis, Kladno definitely put on a show with a great competition, great crowds, and great weather (aside from the inevitable headwinds!!). My only major concern was my right achilles, which has caused me grief for a couple of years now. It prevented me from any fast or explosive training following Gotzis, though once the 100m started I managed to get through each event without toooo much concern.

100m: On the back of two average 100m races in my previous comps, I was very aware that it was the second half of my race that needed improvement if my time was to decrease. I had a great start with a 0.12 reaction from the gun, and had a near perfect race for the first 70m until I was passed just before the finish line. I attempted to relax the second half of my race in an effort to finish stronger, though perhaps it is just a lack of speed endurance at this stage which is preventing me from running much faster. Though with a headwind that appeared stronger than the measured -1.6m/s I felt I ran well for an 11.42

Long Jump: Yet to have a respectable long jump comp on my journeys, I worked on increasing my run-up speed which felt beneficial but still lacked height on all three jumps. With great foot placement on the board, I was happy to jump 6.90m on my first attempt and was fired up for two big jumps to follow. Unfortunately that was my best jump, yet with my other two jumps within 15cm of my first, it was slightly better jumping this time round. Long Jump is definitely my 'need to improve' event, and can't wait to finally learn how to jump well!!!

Shot Put: One of my most satisfying events of the meet, especially having had three great attempts. A very consistent and solid warm-up with a standing throw over 13m, I felt very comfortable and confident with the technique I was using and the focus I had on a couple of very useful cues. With an opening throw of 13.98 followed by a new PB of 14.22, I had nothing to lose with my third throw and decided to speed everything up a little (a lot) which caused a little loss of balance and a foul resulted, though the shot still flew far past my first two throws. Hopefully I can consolidate this feeling in the ring and have my shot put more consistent from now on! This is quite a relief as i was battling to throw over 13 for most of the interclub season.

High Jump: Another satisfying high jump competition, despite a little drizzle and a battling achilles. Satisfying being defined as a lack of pain and ability to walk after the competition! I took a more aggressive approach with my heights, starting with a foul on 1.80 first attempt. After clearing on my second, I went to 1.86 which I cleared before clearing 1.92 on my first attempt also. I cleared 1.95 on my second attempt and was utilising a faster and more aggressive run-up well but unlucky not to clear 1.98. I can definitely see HJ PB's coming in the near future, fingers crossed!

400m: After a very disappointing 400m in Gotzis, I was keen to finish off a successful first day with a great 400m. As we have done in training, I started out fast for the first 40-50m and relaxed into a steady pace following Dmitriy Karpov (pb-8725) in my outside lane. Through 300m I felt strong and confident of a good finish, and whilst carrying a well known bear on my back for the majority of the home strait, I was happy with my run and somewhat satisfied with the time of 50.39 Brian Roe called out to me as I tried to recover.

Overall DAY 1: Was very happy with the one event PB (all be it only 10cm) and excited for the second day, having scored a PB first day of 3856 points which I think had me in 21st place, though not sure.

DAY 2:

Feeling good for day 2, motivated knowing that an overall PB was on if I had 5 good events!

110m Hurdles: Was not the start to the day I had hoped for, with ambition of breaking my long standing hurdles PB. Upon viewing the race on local TV, it didn't appear to be quite as bad as it felt. With noticeable headwinds the race was definitely hard work though i felt strong throughout. Looking forward to a race where I can stay tall and execute my plan, as with this race I was low and most hurdles ended up tumbling... like old times. Definitely not happy with the run, or the time, though not a disaster to finish with 15.00 (-2.0).

Discus: Having had a couple of encouraging discus sessions in the week leading up, I was hoping and expecting a PB. Another great warm up with my 3 throws over 40m, and was very pleased to get a 10cm PB in the first round with 42.50m. With a good first throw and nothing to lose, I overcooked the following throws which weren't as far but still around 41m. These points didn't quite make up for the loss in the hurdles but was still well on track for a PB.

Pole Vault: My vault as come to be perhaps my most consistent event with over 5 comps recently over 4.95m therefore this was my natural expectation whilst 5.10m felt overdue. As I worked through several poles and against a slight cross wind, I successfully cleared my first two heights at 4.40 and 4.60 on my first attempts. I was a little lucky with my second attempt clearance at 4.80m and followed that jump with a miss at 4.90m. My second attempt at 4.90 was quite the messy jump, perhaps due to the pole being too soft. Whether it was the bar, my pole, my knee or something else.... I managed to cut open my lip and chin which dripped blood everywhere on my walk from the mats back to the top of the runway. Whilst being slightly distracted by the paramedics who were keen to close the wounds and stop bleeding, I was only focussed on what I needed to do to clear 4.90m but with a miss I had to settle for 4.80m.

Javelin: I was excited in the warm up as I was able to do a couple of very light throws without too much pain and felt a big throw was possible. Having done a few quick point calculations, I was after 60m+ to keep my hopes of another Decathlon PB in sight. I didn't quite get hold of a good throw and had to settle for the best of three similar throws at 59.88m on a day very few athletes threw well.

1500m: Following the Javelin, I knew that a PB was still achievable with a good 1500m. I don't often like to work out exactly what time I need, but rather a rough aim that I know will get me across the line with enough points. Despite this approach to the race, I was informed of the exact time I required to score over my 7711 PB. With 13 people on a small 6 lane start line I started quickly to assume a good position and avoid any hustle and bustle with the bigger and bulkier boys. With my lap targets in mind, I was in a great position going through 69sec for the first lap. Keeping on good time, and going through the 1km in just under 3mins I started to push quite hard to keep up with the group of 3 athletes in front with 500m remaining. In an attempt to keep up with leonel Suarez, it felt like a last lap sprint and with 100m to go I noticed the clock was at around 4:10. With the efforts in the previous 1400m, I was running on vapour coming into the straight and with 110% effort it still felt like I might not get to the finish line it was taking that long! Finishing in a new PB time of 4:32.75 confirmed a new Decathlon PB also, AND a world of pain for the following 15mins!!

DAY 2 Summary:

With Discus and 1500m PB's I was very happy to finish off strong enough for a new overall PB despite the disappointment in the hurdles and vault. Aside from the cut chin and the dented lip I have now, the body held up reasonably well for the second day's competition. Kladno day 2 was not quite as successful as Desenzano, but still finished off well with 3878 points.

FULL RESULTS at:

<http://www.iaaf.org/wce11/results/eventCode=4744/sex=M/discCode=DEC/combCode=hash/roundCode=10/summary.html#det>

KLADNO Summary: I was very happy to get through a 3rd competition in the space of 6 weeks, both mentally and physically. Considering the drop off in performance at Gotzis following my first comp, it was great to post another WUG qualifier and move up a couple of places on the Australian all time rankings list. Three new PB performances, however small the improvements, was very satisfying... not to mention being very happy with a new overall PB of: 7734 which placed me equal 10th with the leader of day 1, Darius Draudvila. It was also quietly satisfying to get one up on travel/training partner Brent Newdick, who admittedly had a niggling injury and I wish him all the best for his preparation for Daegu.

As I finish this final report of my comp/travels for Europe 2011 in Sydney airport, awaiting the ash to settle, I'd like to thank all the kiwi athletes for their help and support throughout my journeys, and congrats also to Scott McLaren and Sarah Cowley for their great results in Kladno. It's also great to see Oceania leading the way in the IAAF Combined Events Challenge! A big thanks to those that helped prepare me for my two month campaign, coaches Efim and Julian Shuravetsky and Larisa Turchinskaya. Thanks to Bruce Grey at Body World for his constant motivational help and conditioning/rehab support, and to physio's Stuart White and Aidan Rick for doing what they can to keep me in one piece. A big thanks also to Athletics Victoria for their help and to Russel Clowes and Knowledge Equity for their guidance and support. And of course a huge ongoing thanks to my family who have been there since the little aths days, and to my lovely lady Danielle, the most amazing girl in the world!

And so that brings my European trip to a close for 2011, and fingers crossed that similar opportunities present themselves next year in sight of London 2012!! As for what's next, a few more days off to rest and relax while discussing our plan of attack for training up to Shenzhen early August! To all those that I didn't mention above, I greatly appreciate all your support via facebook and email. Whilst the past two months have been beyond explanation, travelling through: China, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Belgium, France, England and Japan..... I am definitely grateful that I can still call Australia (Melbourne) home! And yes... I fly Qantas from Sydney-Melbourne... and thus far they ARE taking my poles on the plane!!

See you all soon!!!!!!

Steve Cain