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from the editor

E. Gary Hall

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS NOW American fans and athletes have been wrestling with the vagaries of the IAAF's A-B qualifying system for the World Championships, a system that came into play with the first Worlds, Helsinki '83 and has been a head-scratcher ever since.

As USATF interpretations of the best way to fill out Team USA changed from time to time, and varying numbers of athletes were allowed to chase qualifiers if they didn't already have them at the time of the Nationals, rampant confusion was often the order of the day.

With the IAAF's elimination of the 2-tiered Q-system (see p. 12), life would seem to be much simpler this time around. But is it? Will Americans actually end up missing the

old hell of A-B qualifying? That's something we won't know for sure until this year's qualifying meet plays out in Eugene in June, but I have my suspicions.

What we do know now is that in many events this year's WC Trials may well be less significant than ever. Why? For the simple reason that many (too many) events are likely to end without the full team being remotely close to known. And that's not an easy way to market a selection meet, even at a venue as mad for the sport as TrackTown USA is.

For a start, check out the accompanying box of the number of Americans who made standard during calendar '14, which out of necessity is not completely representative of reality, given that the qualifying period slides over parts of 2 years, and the '15 window has barely been breached. But for the intents and purposes intended here, using calendar '14 should be most illustrative. What the box shows is the number of Americans who made the new single standard (easier than the old A, tougher than the old B).

In the U.S.'s signature events (think sprints & hurdles) there will be no shortage of qualifiers. Whomever finishes in the first 3 at Hayward Field is good to go.

But for many other events (particularly on the field—other than the shot), the team is going to come up far short of full. And thus the chasing-standards season will begin, although just for those who finished in the top 4.

Given that the USATF Champs ends on June 28, and the IAAF window closes on August 9 (42 days later), there is of course lots of room to attain a Q (or, failing that, simply to climb higher on the yearly list, with hopes of making it to Beijing just by dint of a non-Q performance).

But where will hopeful Americans better themselves? If they don't already have a Q, they're not going to get a Diamond League invite, pure and simple. And the secondary Euro Circuit is greatly diminished of late, so that's not a huge option.

If Indy has any interest in all at fielding as complete a team as possible, it needs to be thinking about creating domestic opportunities for high-level competition.

I'd say they should also enhance existing competitions, but those, unfortunately, are almost nonexistent during the relevant period, other than a pair of Portland meets.

Summer track anyone?

**Are we actually going to
end up missing the old
hell of A-B qualifiers?**

U.S. At Standard In '14

MEN		WOMEN	
100.....	25	100.....	40
200.....	25	200.....	43
400.....	19	400.....	23
800.....	7	800.....	9
1500/M.....	8	1500/M.....	11
St.....	6	St.....	15
5000.....	12	5000.....	9
10,000.....	1	10,000.....	3
110H.....	15	100H.....	24
400H.....	7	400H.....	12
Mar.....	38	Mar.....	60
20W.....	0	20W.....	2
50W.....	1		
HJ.....	9	HJ.....	3
PV.....	5	PV.....	10
LJ.....	7	LJ.....	5
TJ.....	5	TJ.....	0
SP.....	11	SP.....	9
DT.....	1	DT.....	4
HT.....	1	HT.....	6
JT.....	2	JT.....	2
Dec.....	2	Hept.....	4