

Track & Field: Three other U.S. world champions did not qualify

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way" by the IAAF.

"It's in the interests of track and field to have the best athletes in the world competing at the world championships," IAAF spokesman Giorgio Reineri said.

"Most sports provide their world champions with the opportunity to defend their world titles — snow skiing, ice hockey, soccer — so why shouldn't we? We believe the world champion has the right to defend the title."

The athletes can compete in other events only if they have qualified through their national federation.

Johnson strained his left quadricep during his 150-meter race against Donovan Bai-

ley on June 1 in Toronto. He has run but once since and lost in the 400 meters in Paris.

"I came back from Paris and jumped into two-a-day training and lifting weights," he said. "I'm feeling very good now. I'm feeling very confident."

Johnson is one of several U.S. world champions who did not qualify for the team at the June national championships.

Dan O'Brien, the three-time world champion and Olympic gold medalist in the decathlon, missed the nationals because of a stress fracture of the right leg, while sprinters Gwen Torrance (100 meters) and Gail Devers (100-meter hurdles) were also injured.

O'Brien will have a bone scan on his right shin Tuesday to see if his injury has healed. Torrance was en route to the United States from Europe.

The IAAF's decision also means world record-holding triple jumper Jonathon Edwards of Britain will be able to defend his title, even though he could not compete in the British championships.

"We have to continue to help the athletic movement as much as possible," Reineri said. "To have these great athletes competing in Athens will provide great media attention from the United States and will build the profile of the sport worldwide."

In addition to the defending champion, each country will still be able to enter three athletes in each event. This change is also a

first as the IAAF originally adopted its entry requirements from the International Olympic Committee's requirements for the Olympics.

The change is aimed at allowing countries to excel in the events in which they are strongest.

"African nations are strongest in distance running, the United States is strong in sprinting, Germany is best in the discuss and javelin," Reineri said. "It makes sense to allow countries to have more athletes in their best events."

The IAAF also said the host nation of the world championships may enter one athlete in each event, regardless of any entry standard.

Oregon Daily
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