

A Wall St. Rivalry, for a Title and for Charity

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The Decathlon.org Justin Nunez of Goldman Sachs, who won third place in the Decathlon.

People in finance are usually more accustomed to competing for corporate clients and underwriting contracts. But this time, they fought it out for the title of Wall Street's best athlete.

More than 25 representatives of financial firms gathered at the Mitchel Athletic Complex in Uniondale on Long Island on Sunday afternoon to compete in the [Decathlon](#), a charity fund-raiser for [Livestrong](#), the cancer foundation established by the cyclist [Lance Armstrong](#).

Now in its second year, the Decathlon was organized by Marc Hodulich, a management consultant, and Dave Maloney, a sales manager, who ran track together at [Auburn University](#). Both Mr. Hodulich and Mr. Maloney have personal connections to the cause — their mothers survived breast cancer.

“We both felt sort of helpless when this happened to our families,” Mr. Hodulich said. “But we were pretty connected in the financial services community, and we knew there was a lot of money there. We wanted to harness some of that money to do a good thing.”



Kevin Roose Tim DeAngelo of the Susquehanna International Group.

Eighteen firms were represented at the Decathlon, including bulge-bracket banks like [Goldman Sachs](#) and [Deutsche Bank](#), as well as smaller outfits like [Hutchin Hill Capital](#) and [Talek Investments](#). The 10-event challenge tested competitors' abilities in the 40-yard dash, 400 and 800-meter runs, football throws, dips, pull-ups, cone drills, vertical jumps, bench press and hybrid push-up/squat jumps called "burpees." Participants were asked to raise at least \$3,000 from friends, family members, and colleagues in advance of the event, with total estimated fund-raising topping \$200,000.

For some of the competitors, whose ranks included former Division I athletes and at least one all-American, winning the Decathlon meant establishing dominance over industry peers and winning side bets back at the office.

"I don't like to lose," said Craig Capurso, a trader on the [New York Mercantile Exchange](#) and a former semi-professional football player. "If I don't win today, I will train specifically for this event next year."

"People at work said they'd give a dollar for every dip if I could do more than 50," said Max Meltzer, a former wrestler at Harvard who now works for [Bank of America Merrill Lynch](#). Mr. Meltzer strained his way to 52 dips, earning his performance-based compensation on his way to a fourth-place finish.

For others, the Decathlon was more about giving back. Jim Murphy, a 49-year-old executive director at [Nomura Securities](#), decided to participate because he himself survived a bout with colon cancer.

"I have no illusions about winning today," said Mr. Murphy, who competed while one of his sons cheered from the stands. "I'm old enough to be the father of most of these guys, and I know I'm going to finish in last place. But I'm doing this to raise money for a good cause."

Mr. Murphy added with a smile, "The over/under in my office is whether or not I come out of this alive or dead."



Matthew C. Anderson/The Decathlon.org Chris Schlack of Bank of America Merrill Lynch took the title of Wall Street's best athlete.

When the events ended, first place went to Chris Schlack, a 24-year-old analyst from Bank of America Merrill Lynch, who beat out Jason Tufo of **Virtu Financial** and Justin Nunez of Goldman Sachs to claim top honors. As the winning workplace, Bank of America Merrill Lynch will host the Decathlon trophy in its offices until next year's competition.

Mr. Schlack, who hits the gym most mornings before going to work in Bank of America Merrill Lynch's alternative investments division, accumulated 7,514 points in 10 events despite a bout of food poisoning from a dinner the night before.

"It is an honor to be crowned Wall Street's best athlete because the Decathlon attracted such great competitors from all walks of life to raise money for Livestrong," said Mr. Schlack, reached by e-mail after the competition. "I lost my grandmother this past February to her second battle with cancer, and her strength helped me throughout the day."

– *Kevin Roose*

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