

LSJ



Al Oerter is...

***Solid
Gold***

INSIDE:

Al Oerter, John McEwen,
Westside Training, Flexibility
Training and MUCH MORE!

***January, 2002
Volume 4/Issue 3***

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incomparable Al
Oerter (AllSport-
Getty Images).

At left, Ron
McKee reverses
after launching a
put at the '93 U.S.
Olympic Festival
in San Antonio,
Texas.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Each and every year people all around the world endeavor to make a list of New Year's resolutions. Many historians trace this tradition to the Romans or Babylonians. Some point to 153 B.C. and Janus, a mythical king of early Rome who was placed at the head of the calendar. With two faces, Janus could look back on past events and forward to the future. Janus became the ancient symbol for resolutions and many Romans looked for forgiveness from their enemies and also exchanged gifts before the beginning of each year.

Others credit the Babylonians who held their festival in the spring, on March 23, to kick off the next cycle of planting and harvest. Symbolically, the king was stripped of his robes and sent away for a few days while the people whooped it up. He then returned in all his finery for a grand parade, and the normal activities of life would return for the new year.

The custom of making New Year's Resolutions came into vogue in the 20th century. But most of it was done with jest and an understanding that they would not be kept (for long anyway) since humans were backsliders by nature to their naughty habits and ways. The resolutions today are simply a secular version of the religious vows made in the past toward spiritual perfection. They are often made with good intentions and broken with a sense of humor and renewed annually.

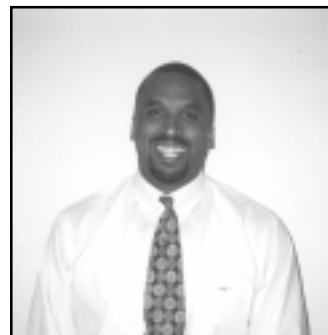
Some people's lists are annual rituals and can be somewhat lengthy. I imagine those folks have quite a bit to work on. Those same people tend to have the same core resolutions each year, such as quitting smoking or shedding 25 pounds.

Count me amongst those that don't make such lists. I'm not sure if that's because I fail to see my shortcomings, don't care to recognize them, or am just too lazy to make up a list. Even though I don't partake in this ritual on a personal level, I thought I would take a few minutes to make some resolutions on behalf of this publication. These resolutions are not only my own, but as a reader you can play an important role in bringing them to fruition.

Double Circulation

Quite often I'm introduced in throwing circles as the publisher of this magazine. After nearly four years, I still see a bewildered look from most parties. As I've stated in the past, the challenge in publishing *LSTJ* has turned out to be more marketing than literary. As of the mailing of this issue, circulation is level at about 500. Not what I anticipated when I began, and definitely not where I intend to end up.

Toward this end, the January issue of Track and Field News contains a one-eighth page ad for *LSTJ*. The cost was a little salty, but they say you have to spend money to make money. I will continue to contact coaches and athletes via mailings whenever possible. I am in the midst of some promotional work through USATF as well.



Glenn Thompson

Increased readership contributes to the financial health of the publication. Deeper pockets means improved coverage of events and better content, such as more pictures. But a larger readership also means more potential contributors and resources, both of which improve the final product.

Can you make it your resolution to bring one throwing friend aboard? Do you have access to mailing lists from any meets or clubs? You can play a role in helping *LSTJ* grow and better serve you.

Improved Publication.

During 2001 *LSTJ* took forward steps to improve the magazine's presentation and content. *LSTJ* is now printed on glossy paper all the way through, making it more durable and just plain nicer to look at. And the page count has grown from 32 to 40, a 25% increase.

During 2002 I hope to boost the page count further, although I'm hesitant to say how much. Some of that will depend on the readership. There are many talented readers who are potential contributors. To this point, the acceptance rate of articles has been virtually 100%. Just drop me an e-mail or give me a call if you have an idea, or know of someone who might be of interest to the readership.

Improved Service

By service, I am speaking specifically of mail delivery of each issue. Finances dictate that *LSTJ* goes third class mail and service levels are often uneven. Periodically I get an e-mail from a reader informing me they have not received the latest issue. I will take greater measures to make sure that each and every subscriber receives what they pay for. It would be foolish to guarantee what happens to your issue once it gets in the mail system, but I can guarantee that once you contact me, the situation will be rectified.

You can check up on me at the end of the year to see how I made out. Better make that "we", because you're in this with me!

Best wishes for a great 2002!

ONE FOUR THE AGES

By Glenn Thompson

Al Oerter was born September 19, 1936, in Astoria, New York. The first Olympic athlete to win four gold medals in the same event, Oerter won the discus and set the Olympic record each time in the 1956, 1960, 1964 and 1968 Olympic Games, the last two times despite being injured. As a high school athlete in New York, Oerter set the national prep record in the discus. At the University of Kansas, he won the conference discus title three straight years (1956-57-58), and is the only athlete in history to win nine titles in the same event at the prestigious Texas-Kansas-Drake Relays as he swept the discus circuit in 1956, 1957 and 1958. He broke the world discus record four times between 1962 and 1964 and was the first man over 200 feet. Three times Oerter broke his own world record, the last time a 206-6 effort on April 25, 1964 at the Mt. San Antonio Relays in Walnut, California. He also won two NCAA titles, and six AAU championships. He graduated from Kansas University in 1958 with the 38 best discus throws in Big Seven history.

With a full-time job and a young family, Oerter retired in 1969. While doing voice-overs in 1976 for an Olympic film, Oerter felt the platter calling to him and within a few hours had made the decision to return and began training. At the 1980 Trials, with the American boycott looming, Oerter finished fourth. In 1984, at age 47, he missed the Trials with an injured Achilles. Finished? In 1993 he threatened to try for Atlanta at age 60. "I miss going for something elusive," he said.

A short listing of Oerter's other honors and achievements include:

- Career personal best of 227' 11" in 1980.
- Olympic Order recipient
- Pan-American Games Champion in 1959
- Named 1 of 6 top Olympic athletes for the 20th century by the IAAF
- Charter member of the U. S. Olympic Hall of Fame
- Various business awards
- Charter Inductee to the National Track and

Field Hall of Fame.

- Only athlete to set four Olympic records in the same event
- Set the national high school record in the discus
- Won two NCAA titles
- 17 Halls of Fame



Oerter took some time to answer a few questions for Long & Strong from his current home in Florida.

Long & Strong: For many people, your athletic career begins in Melbourne in 1960 with your first gold medal. Talk about your athletic experience before beginning as a thrower.



Al Oerter: My throwing career started as a sophomore in high school. Prior to that I played all the New York city sports; stoopball, stickball, etc. When we moved to Long Island where there were a large number of open fields available to us we played some fairly intense football, baseball and lacrosse. All without coaches, parents, officials, umpires and generally those folks that screw up sport by voicing their views or taking control of a bunch of kids playing.

LSTJ: How did you become a thrower?

AO: I never really became a thrower as I always knew from childhood that I was a thrower. I could throw rocks, baseballs, footballs whatever, much further than anyone near my age. I became a discus thrower by chance. In my high school sophomore year I started track as a sprinter since I was quick out of the blocks, but during that big growth year it became clear that lugging that size down a cinder track was not going to get me to the state meet. I then became a miler since I was normally running 4 miles/day back and forth to school. That proved to be far too much work and no fun at all pounding your lungs into submission. One day a discus skipped on the track and I picked it up and threw it back further than the distance to the track. My coach, Jim Fraley, a great man, saw that and said, "Kid stop this distance stuff and get over there and start throwing." Nuff said.

LSTJ: You were once quoted as describing yourself as a “terrible technician”. Is that a true quote, and if so, why did you feel that way?

AO: It's true I thought I was a terrible technician. I never in all those years had a coach and for that matter a trainer, psychologist, nutritionist, doctor, guru, business manager, agent or tea leaf interpreter. I was a thrower and my only training aide was a towel. Every training session in my life I would place a towel on the first landing spot of the first throw and move the towel out to the new cut beyond the prior cuts. I threw between 60-80 hard throws almost every session and when you work that hard, that long, you get nuts trying to throw over that towel. I would try anything to do that and that workout intensity is how I won four Games and set four world records.

LSTJ: Can you talk a little more about your technical approach to throwing? What keys did you emphasize? What aspects did you struggle with?

AO: What technical approach to throwing? There was none. I never struggled with any of it as the act of throwing was a joy in itself and to work technically would have taken away from that enjoyment.

LSTJ: Did you throw the shot much? If so, why did you give it up?

AO: I threw the shot a bit, 57' indoors but I never worked at it much. I won some Big 8 titles and placed nationally but it never took hold.

LSTJ: How far did you throw as a freshman?

AO: I threw 171' 6" as a college freshman in 1955.

LSTJ: Everyone copies the Powell and the Wilkins styles, but you hardly ever hear anyone talk about emulating yourself. Thoughts?

AO: Perhaps some folks could copy my work ethic but certainly not my technique. I believe there are suggested ways to train and throw properly but since we are all unique with different levels of strength, speed, balance and the ability to work for extended periods of time for little progress there is no perfect method or training program. I believe we must develop our own routines if we are to enjoy the event

over long periods.

LSTJ: Did you change anything, that is, modernize elements of your throw when you made the comeback and the wide leg sweep was becoming prevalent? What was your favorite discus model?

AO: I never changed anything. I threw a wood Gill Hollowood because I liked the feel of wood. During the Games I never sprinted towards the rack of discii to get one I was accustomed to. I took what was left or walked to the outfield and took the next one thrown.

LSTJ: What lead to your decision to retire after Mexico City in 1968?

AO: I won my fourth medal and no one had ever done that so I felt pretty good. Right after the event I was being interviewed on the field by Howard Cosell for ABC when he said, “Al, your wife and two daughters are in the stands, give them a wave.” In that instant I realized my daughters were about to become young ladies and I would not miss that growth. I could always go back to throwing in the future but I could never recover those growth years. It was the easiest and best decision.

LSTJ: Did you ever find yourself wishing you had stuck around for Munich, or Montreal?

AO: I had no thought, wish, desire, need, etc. to get to Munich or Montreal. Those eight years were terrific in that I concentrated on family and career. I didn't lift, throw, run or do any form of training and I simply did not miss any of it. In 1976 I was doing some voice-over stuff for Bud Greenspan, the

Olympic filmmaker, and it involved my memories of the four Games I was a part of. At that time my daughters were starting college and it just became clear to me during that two-hour session that I could get back into throwing with as much enjoyment as I left it. I knew it would be difficult, or perhaps impossible, to compete nationally once again but what the hell, why not give it a shot. Coming back proved to be as enjoyable as any of my Olympic years.

The comeback had everything to do with determining how well I could throw at a theoretically advanced age. It was great fun in that I had no role models and all that coaching stuff, just a discus, a throwing ring and a towel.



Al Oerter - Getty Images

LSTJ: How did your training change in those years as opposed to your first go round?

AO: My training never really changed. I lifted a bit heavier in my comeback but that in retrospect may not have been necessary. I ran steps the same, threw essentially the same way for the same length of time. I tried to become a better technician in the throw but that became impossible. I was a thrower not a technician. In all my throwing days it was a burden to work on the technical aspects of throwing well and every time someone would film me for a training tape I would wonder why? Or who will this tape screw up? All I ever wanted was the feeling of sun on my shoulders, a disk in my hand, a solid ring under me, turning with greater force than anyone has ever achieved and leaning into one more throw.

LSTJ: From all accounts, your greatest asset may have been your competitiveness. How did you approach your goals, and how did you manage the pressure and adverse conditions under which you competed in the Olympics?

AO: I guess one of the things I'm most proud of is competing well in the Games after losing in the Olympic Trials and throwing against world record holders in the Games. Being on the floor of an Olympic Stadium was a thrill for me. While I was always a bit nervous at the start of an Olympic final, there was no other place I wanted to be. I had worked normally for 1,460 days to get there and by simulating Olympic competition for perhaps 500 of those days, nothing was a surprise to me during the final. I always felt that there was nothing, absolutely nothing else that I could have done over the prior four years to make me any better. Given that environment all there is left is to get out there and enjoy competing with the best of the best in what I had chosen to do. I have seen far too many athletes lose four years of training the moment they step on the lawn, the floor of a stadium. It is almost as if they can read their local newspaper: "Local Olympian Fails In Bid For Gold." Or their thoughts go immediately to their competitors that day and their perceived capability that day. A thousand thoughts, I have to get a disc I'm comfortable with, the ring feels slick, no wind, looks like rain, which shoes, damn I'm first up, my legs are dead and on and on. When you let this stuff invade you its going to be a long day. Just get in the ring and lean

on it as hard as you can and medal or no medal, this journey has been exhilarating.

LSTJ: Tell us about the neck injury you threw with.

AO: I damaged my spine at the base of my neck in the early 60's. It happened by throwing in cold weather on Long Island and the injury caused my left arm to sting or go dead after each throw. I threw my head back as I released the disc and that created the problem. I rolled a towel around a belt and strapped it around my neck to prevent my head from going back too far. I competed with that for about 6 years as it obviously worked.

LSTJ: You are a legendary Olympic figure. How did you feel about the Olympic scandals involving members of the IOC that came to the surface in recent years? Were you surprised at all?



AO: Nothing surprises me about the USOC or the IOC. Hopefully Dr. Rogge can change the imperial attitude that has prevailed in the IOC for several decades and the USOC can get its act together. I believe the USOC in particular must channel its resources into developing sport instead of concentrating on medal counts.

Corporate sponsorships seems to be out of control for both the IOC and the USOC and while their money is necessary, it is better utilized for youth programs, after-school programs and all sorts of sport developmental programs.

LSTJ: I spoke with Randy Matson once, and was surprised by his disinterest in the current throwing scene. Are you active in track and field in anyway? Do you follow today's elite throwers with any interest?

AO: Like Randy, I have very little interest in today's throwing community. I just returned from Edmonton where I was with Parry O'Brien, Borzov, Tyus, Snell, Keino, Juantorena, Fosbury, Dillard, Elliot, Coe, Bubka, Boston, Benoit, Shorter and many others from the past. That is what I enjoy as we all get older and our lies grow. These are great folks to be with and I hope the current crop can get together in the future and enjoy the memories of the sport as we continue to do so. Somehow I don't believe that's possible. I have followed the career of Godina somewhat as he predicted five Olympic golds, something I wanted to do.

LSTJ: What throwers in the post-Oerter era do you like? Are you surprised that physical monsters like Alekna who are so much larger, longer, and stronger — haven't really advanced the distance all that much from your best distance?

AO: There were some larger throwers in the past like Babka and Plunknett that seemed to move the markers out regularly. I don't know Alekna, but I do know Reidel having spent some time in his home town in Germany with him. I did spend an afternoon at the throwers training ground in Halle/Leipzig. Interesting.

LSTJ: As a motivational speaker, what were your most common themes? Who were your audiences?

AO: I have given over 1,000 speeches and my audiences have ranged from the Fortune 500 set to our local community center for a fund raiser. I talk about the challenges of competition, barriers, mental games that folks play, work ethic and so on and I use my Olympic experiences as a backdrop for my talks.

LSTJ: What were your strength levels and body weight, before retirement and once you returned for '80?

AO: When I retired in '68 my bodyweight was 290 and when I returned to national and international competition in 1978 my bodyweight was 290. I benched 525 for 2 reps at age 44, squatted (to a bench 1" below parallel) 750 for 5, curled (as much cheating as I could) 325 for 5, deadlifted 650 for multiples, as well as other lifts. In my thirties I did about 10% less.

LSTJ: In the days of "amateurism", how did you balance training and making a living?

AO: I had three parts to my life, all of which were complementary. I was a family man with two growing daughters, a member of the computer community and I threw in the Games. The computer field would make me nuts because we were dealing with some thorny problems (men on the moon), the gyms and throwing rings would bring me back to normalcy and once normal, family life would be a calm experience. All very complementary.

LSTJ: Give us a few comments about some of your chief rivals over the years?

AO: Here's a few:

- Rink Babka; a great competitor, long time friend. If it wasn't for Rink I would not have the gold in 1960.
- Ludvik Danek; terrific thrower/technician and tough to beat. Good guy and we shared a common Czech heritage.
- Fortune Gordien; smooth technically. Should have won in '56.
- L. Jay Silvester; should have won in '64 and '68.

LSTJ: Tell us more about your experience with Rink Babka at the Olympics.



Al Oerter with wife Cathy

AO: Rink was the co-holder of the world record with Edmund Piatowski of Poland in 1960. However, Rink and I knew it would be between us as we were throwing beyond the world record in training in Rome and he enjoyed getting in the ring as much as I did. In the Games however, I had a poor start due to some sticky resin I couldn't get off my hand and I began to rip myself out of the back of the ring on subsequent throws. I was leading with upper body and without any torque had a very short pull. I didn't realize this until Rink told me what the problem was and the next throw (5th) I corrected the problem somewhat and went a few feet beyond Rink who was leading the competition. He had a gold medal won yet he helped per-

haps the only other thrower that day that could have beaten him. That was a sign of friendship and a true representation of what the Games should be. None of the me and me only and the rest of you be damned attitude. That is why I won in 1960, and I owe that medal to Rink (but I still ain't givin it to him).

LSTJ: Is it true you suffer from a congenital heart condition? Any ailments related to throwing that you might be suffering with now?

AO: I have had high blood pressure since birth. I was not allowed on teams or playing fields as a kid until I could produce a doctor's note that stated it was okay. Same in college and I was cautioned on every Olym-

pic team. Sixty-five years of this has enlarged and toughened my heart, so that it doesn't eject blood as it should. I have a medication program that helps the problem and I feel fine. Its not a good idea for me to spend time at high altitudes or to add salt to my food, but this is not a problem as I no longer live in Colorado and my wife Cathy is vegetarian and that is the major part of my diet. I still lift some and do more aerobic work than anytime in my life, but if I were to drop dead tomorrow my life has been full and interesting and I would go with a smile.

LSTJ: What are you doing with yourself these days?

AO: I retired after 26 years in the computer field and for the past 27 years have been a so-called motivational speaker. I'm weary of all the travel involved, so I have cut that down to almost zero. My current interest is in abstract expression art and to date I have completed about 20 pieces. My first show will be in November and I will continue painting as I find the artists such as Kandinsky, Pollock, Motherwell, Rothko, De Kooning, Krasner and Frankenthaler more than interesting. I grew up in New York and Long Island when most of them were doing terrific work in

that area. I still lift and entertain some interest in getting back to Masters throwing.

LSTJ: Are you seriously considering Masters throwing? Is that likely in the near future?

AO: Master's throwing. I honestly don't know if I'll get back in the ring. At times the draw is real and at other times it becomes more obscure. I have always said I want the longest throw from the grave so time and my stubbornness will tell. ***LSTJ***



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AD

Don't Judge The Book...

By Glenn A. Thompson

John McEwen is a not someone to judge at face value. Many facets of the defending USATF 35-pound weight champion's life suggest a multi-leveled paradox. To spot him from a distance at a meet, you can't help but envision one of those guys kicking Joe Namath's behind in *EasyRider*. There's the 6'3", 268 pound frame, resplendent with two strategically placed tattoos, including one around his bicep that would take Michael Johnson a good 45 seconds to cover. This serious looking visage is capped by a Fu-Manchu that perfectly caps the chiseled facial features.

I was first introduced to John at the 2001 Penn Relays by his coach and mentor, Jud Logan. I knew of his accomplishments and had watched him perform drills in Jud's hammer video. Instantly the paradox began to show itself as he spoke in moderate tones, addressed me as Mr. Thompson and took more time than most would during a simple "nice to meet ya."

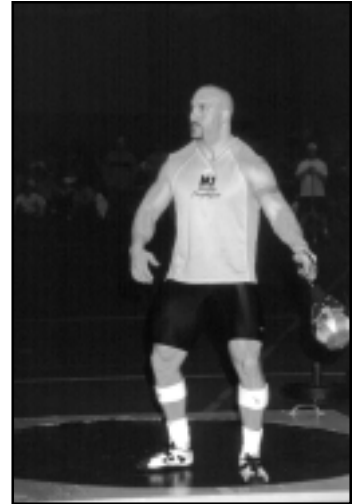
When I mentioned doing a story about him, he was not the least bit arrogant as so many elite athletes with half his accomplishments are. He actually thanked *me* for the opportunity. An interesting fellow, this McEwen.

John was born on March 5, 1974 in Los Angeles to Duane and Winona McEwen. He moved with his family to Medford, Oregon at an early age. The now hulking McEwen showed athletic ability of another sort as a youth. He won state and national titles in BMX (bicycle motorcross) racing. Much of those years was spent forging a bond with little brother Seth, who just completed his junior year at the University Oregon as a three year starter, most recently at defensive end. Seth has risen to 6'6", 265 lbs. and could find himself playing on Sundays in a couple years.

McEwen's path to the ball and chain was a lengthy and late one as is typical for most Americans. As a high schooler he was an All-Conference performer playing middle linebacker and fullback for North Medford High School in Oregon. He also wrestled (I'm envisioning opponents retiring to the restroom due to pre-match loss of bladder control) and threw the shot and discus in track (58"1 for the shot and 174"4 with the discus).

McEwen matriculated to Eureka Junior College in CA in 1993. There he was introduced to the hammer and hit 168'8" as a freshman. He returned as a sophomore with an outstanding improvement to 204'0". McEwen was a three-turner at the time.

He accepted a football scholarship and transferred to Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa for his junior year. McEwen played football and competed in track and field there. A linebacker on the gridiron, he earned first team all-conference laurels in the North Central Conference, one of the best NCAA Division II football leagues in the country. As a thrower he threw the weight 62'7" and the hammer 205' to sweep both Division II National Championships.



John McEwen

Bob Ramsak

McEwen improved to 65'5" and 213'8" his senior year. Having used up his eligibility, McEwen's post-collegiate career took a fortunate turn when he spoke with Logan at the DII Championships in 1998. Knowing that he had more room for improvement, McEwen asked if he could train with Logan in an effort to reach his potential. A couple thousand miles and 48 hours later, McEwen and his worldly assets had made the cross-continental trek from Medford to Ashland, Ohio.

Improved strength and technique during his first year in Ohio lead to 73'4" (3rd at 1999 USATF Indoor Championships) and 230'8" (12th at USATF Outdoors) PR's, outstanding improvements of 8' and 17' respectively. Although the improvements have not been as dramatic as that first year, they continue to come. McEwen finished 8th at the 2000 Olympic Trials (233'6") and was 4th at USATF Indoors while making the switching to four turns.

"My indoor season last year was great!" says McEwen. "I went to four turns in the weight and it made a big difference." He consistently threw in the 73' range before PR'ing at the 2001 USATF Indoors with a 74'4" effort. Coming up big at big meets is expected, not hoped for. He threw 235'1" last June at the USATF Outdoor Championships.

McEwen is a big movie fan, typically taking in two a week, with Logan often sharing the popcorn. Amongst his favorites from 2001 are *Oceans Eleven*, *O'Brother Where Art Thou?*, and *Memento*. Right along with you, I'm guessing the last two must have come with

subtitles. On his don't bother to rent list are *A.I.*, *Final Fantasy* and *Go Tigers*.

McEwen has his share of competition eccentricities and superstitions, reminiscent of baseball's Wade Boggs who insisted on chicken and particular routes to the ballpark each day. "Before I compete, I have to put on all of the left side things first such as left sock, then right sock, then left shoe then right shoe," he says. "My socks never match and one might be inside out or both, I don't care."

When asked which he prefers, the hammer or weight, he says the hammer because it flies so much farther. Regarding the future, McEwen hopes to make Olympic teams and become a fireman.

McEwen's primary income comes from working the drive-thru at a local company. He thanks his boss for being supportive of his athletic career and providing the work schedule flexibility necessary to pursue elite athletics.

McEwen's approach to body ink is not that of a drunken sailor on shore leave. "I like tattoos because the ones I have mean something to me and represent the people I love and things that I am proud of," he says. "I have one on my left arm that is a band all the way around on my biceps. It is the American flag and represents my love for my country and that I was a five-time All-American. The other one is on my upper back in the middle, a design with the letters C, O, D, B. Each letter represents a word for myself and three others who have the same tat, and means something special to us."

McEwen has two more tattoos on the drawing board. "My next two tattoos are in the works, one of which has to do with my family that will cover my back," he says. My brother and I are getting that one. The other is for myself, and someone that is special to me, and we will get the same one as well. That one will be located over my heart."

McEwen credits his big performances at USATF Championships to (1) improved technique, (2) proper peaking from weight training, and (3) great focus and confidence. "Jud has taught me there is a purpose for every drill and every throw you take," McEwen says. "It's not just going out and throwing. It's understanding the throw and feeling what good technique is. I've also learned how to compete. Once you go into a competition, you focus on one or two things that make

you throw far. If you think too much, you are done. Training is for technique, competition is for throwing far!!!"

The respect is mutual between McEwen and Logan. "John was a integral part of me making my fourth Olympic team at age 41," says Jud. "Although I was coaching him, I relied on him a great deal for personal feedback and formed a bond and trust that I will never forget."

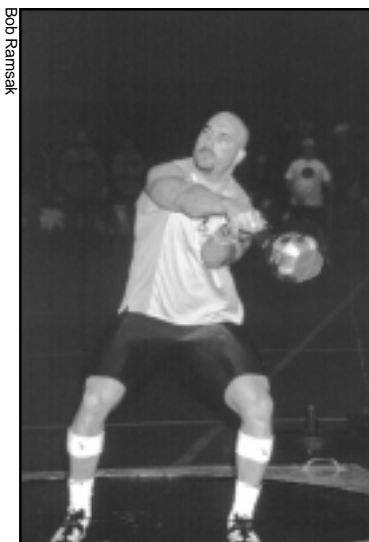
Logan sees a great future for McEwen in coaching as well as competition. "He has a positive attitude about training that he demands you share," continues Logan. "When he works out with the college kids and they know they are held to a higher standard of intensity and focus, everyone gets better. When he decides to coach he will have immediate success. He has a gift that will someday enable him to become a great teacher."

McEwen sees the current U.S. hammer and weight scene and being very close with the exception of 2001 USATF Hammer champ Kevin McMahon. "With the rest of us, it is just about how bad you want to be the best," he says. "The one thing that we all share is not getting the help we need financially like the runners and sprinters get. We have to work as well as throw. We don't have shoe deals or money stipends or appearance money to live on. That makes it very difficult. If I was the number one sprinter in the U.S., I wouldn't have to live from paycheck to paycheck. Don't get me wrong, I love

my life. I just think we deserve more for our efforts. In 2004 at the Olympic Trials, people should check out the hammer. We will all be throwing far and putting on a show."

McEwen has weight room bests of a 705-pound back squat, 405-pound power clean, 500-pound front squat, and 319-pound in the snatch. As a footballer he benched 500. That power coupled with the enough fast twitch to streak a 4.52 40-yard dash.

At 6'3" and close to 270 pounds, one would expect a gravity challenged bowling ball. Not the case. McEwen has some serious ups, posting a 38" standing vertical jump after returning from his USATF Indoor win. Although he was never a baller, he knows what to do with the rock. "Sometimes I will walk into the gym and ask for a ball," he says. "People look at me and think, 'Yeah right, fat white boys can't jump, let alone



(McEwen continued on page 33)

Dynamic Flexibility Training

By Brian Forrester, University of Akron Throws Coach



I arrived on the campus of the University of Akron with a proverbial duffel bag full of unconventional training ideas. One of those ideas was incorporating a comprehensive event group and energy system specific warm-up and flexibility program into the yearly training macrocycle of my throwers. This article will deal with the successes of that flexibility program.

We design our training programs to maximize the development and recruitment of Type II or fast twitch muscle fiber. Therefore, I hypothesized that it should make sense to develop a flexibility program, which was event group and energy system specific. The benefits of flexibility training are many: injury prevention, enhancement of coordination and technique through improvement in the ability of the proprioceptors to receive stimuli, breakdown of scar tissue, range of motion development, and the creation and maintenance of a flexibility reserve. As throwers we know that our sport is highly dynamic, and that we do not hold positions statically. Is there ever a time when we as throwers hold a position for 60 seconds? The answer is a resounding, NO! Therefore, why would one do a flexibility program dominated by static stretching?



Brian Forrester

Variable resisted active isolated ballistic stretching is the concept, which Dick Hartzell has pioneered with the use of his Jump-Stretch Bands. I want to briefly touch on each of those terms. *Variable*, one can control the amounts of resistance by using different bands or by applying more or less force to the band for each separate exercise or within an exercise. *Resisted*, there is a substantial amount of force applied to the muscle during the eccentric and concentric contraction of the stretch. *Active*, the result of the purposeful elongation and contraction that occurs during each stretch. *Isolated*, each stretch is designed to hit a certain muscle or muscle group. *Ballistic*, the

antagonist of static, but for safety purposes I would call it more dynamic than ballistic in nature.

What does all that mean? Simply put, it is the best way I have found to develop a flexibility reserve and increase an athlete's range of motion! Flexbands offer many advantages over conventional static stretching. First is the initial interest, dare I say excitement in learning a "cutting edge" training technique which will give your athletes a competitive edge over the competition. Second, is the competition among the athletes to progress through the bands and to see who can reach the strong band first. Then, there is the ego factor, "Dustin is using the strong band, he's not better than me." It becomes infectious, and soon flexibility training goes from a dreaded necessary evil, often overlooked by athletes, to a competition unto itself. Flexbands not only increase static flexibility, they dramatically increase single and multi-joint range of motion, prepare the body to be flexible in dynamic situations and allows an athlete to train flexibility while remaining in the fast-twitch glycolytic energy system. Mixed training brings mixed results. Applying the SAID principle (Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands) it seems imperative that we train flexibility for the throws just like we were training any of the other biomotor elements (power, speed, local muscular endurance, explosiveness,

strength, agility, quickness, coordination, and cardiovascular capacity) with respect to improving the athletes ability to maximize his/her throwing potential.

My athletes complete some version of the Flexband program in both the warm-up and cool down session. By using Flexbands I control and manipulate all the factors, (intensity, frequency, duration, and volume), needed for proper periodization of a macrocycle. This is done by dictating which band they use (light, medium, or heavy), and by manipulating both the set and repetition count. I change variables in relation to what I am trying to accomplish in a certain training session, microcycle, mesocycle or in different situa-

tions, (i.e. pre- practice, pre-meet, competition day).

Flexibility training should follow a logical progression. Therefore, one should do upper body exercises first, followed by lower body exercises. Always start with the left side and then the right. This system makes coaching a large group of athletes, especially in the initial learning process, much easier.

The first week all of my athletes started on the light bands for a single count of 10. This was done for a couple reasons. First, I wanted to ease the physical and mental strain on the body, which occurs during learning a new exercise or routine. Secondly, they had not done a significant amount of flexibility training prior to my arrival. I did not want them to be so sore as to consider this "cutting edge" technique null and void and, thus no longer wholeheartedly utilize it in their training program. Constant supervision and coaching of the initial learning process, approximately one week, insured that each athlete would be able to perform the program on their own, so my attention could be focused elsewhere. Now that the athletes have been doing the program for some time, you may ask, how do I determine when an athlete is ready to progress to the heavier band? The answer, they must be able to fully extend their arm on both the IT Band and Groin stretch.



University of Akron

The following are components from my fall program, which I am including so as to help you better, design and implement your own Flexband program. I like to have my athletes perform single counts of 10 when we have much to accomplish in the training session. It saves some time while still allowing for a proper progressive warming of the muscle and does not overly fatigue the muscle from being explosive. We typically do double counts of 10 to warm-up on Tuesday and Friday for those are our non-lifting days. On lower body lifting days we do single counts of 10 as a cool down. On all other days we typically do a single count of 5 to assist in maintaining our flexibility reserve which we have worked so hard to develop.

Recent scientific evidence suggests that overly stretching the muscle fiber prior to explosive activity *may* inhibit the response of the Golgi tendon organ and thus inhibit the athlete's ability to be as explosive. In response to this, on meet days we will reduce the band tension by dropping a band size, (i.e. if the athlete has been using the average band they will go

to the light band), and/or we will reduce the count to five for the warm-up and emphasize that it is for warm-up purposes only and not for flexibility enhancement. Flexbands allow athletes to warm-up the upper extremities properly as well. This is an aspect that I have found many athletes neglect. Since throwing is a total body exercise it is essential that the athlete prepare both the upper and lower extremities for the dynamic activity to occur.



Left: Dustin Shaffer performing strong band groin lockout with extended arm. Above: Greg Corbitt performing strong band IT band lockout with extended arm. Below: Lindsat Feiten performing average band hamstring lockouts.



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OK, so you've been reading and I've piqued your interest, but where is my evidence? The only flexibility test, which my athletes perform, is the static sit and reach. The average increase in hamstring flexibility among the seven athletes I have on the bands has been 1.5 inches. The greatest increase was 3.0 inches, and the least was 1 inch. Anecdotally, I have noticed a tremendous difference in overall range of motion and flexibility reserve with respect to the kinesthetic awareness drills and form running we do

in our dynamic warm-up; and also in their ability to hold certain positions during both drills and throwing. I wholeheartedly believe that the Flexbands have assisted each of my athletes in enhancing their athleticism, which will eventually translate into distance thrown. Additional proof that the bands work is that the football team will soon be using them too. I believe the Flexbands will totally revolutionize the entire athletic department's flexibility training.

Jump-Stretch Bands are available through Dick Hartzell @ 1-800-344-3539 or www.jumpstretch.com. There are two options with respect to learning the bands. They offer a certification class, which I recommend for those who will be teaching to the masses, or you can order an instructional tape which is excellent as well. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at The University of Akron, (330) 972-7796, or via email at yipacomeon@yahoo.com. *LSTJ*

Required Reading

By Glenn Thompson

I spent my adolescent years as a giant amongst my peers. I would periodically retire to my room with paper and pencil and calculate that I would top out at 7'2". I then pondered the difficult choice as to which institution of higher learning would be the beneficiary of my prodigious hoops talents. For certain I would be the next coming of Kareem. I don't recall anyone ever telling me about genetics and how your family tree usually determines height, bone structure, etc. Turns out that I was one of the first kids to stop growing and I wound up full foot shorter than my projections.

Once I came to grips with my physical limitations, I went about trying to get the most out of what the good Lord gave me, via weight training. I spent numerous hours in my buddy Wayne's basement, pumping iron on a bench that swayed more than a palm tree in a tsunami. And that was before I sat down on it. Like many others of my generation, my introduction to weight training came on a Sears sand/concrete-filled weight set. The big boys pumped iron. I pumped plastic.

In my quest for knowledge I turned to the most popular publication of that time, Joe Weider's Muscle & Fitness. For a novice, it was a great publication and I waited every month at the newsstand. I read all about Tom Platz's 50-reps-and-puke squat routine. And how if I consumed ten grams of protein per ounce of bodyweight and did twelve sets of preacher curls my arms would like those of Bertil Fox. I got a quarter-inch on my arms and about eight on the waistline (which I am fighting to this very day).

At some point I realized that having a 60" chest resting on a 30" waist with 20" guns and a 600 pound bench press wasn't going to happen using Joe's "instinctive training" principles and the rest of his slick hype. Matter of fact, it probably wasn't going to happen, period. I needed to find legitimate information based in fact, not fantasy.

My search for *real* knowledge lead me to a very plain, black and white publication called IronMan. Published by Perry Reader, IronMan was short on gloss, but thick with content. Every article seemed to be an eye-opener. But eventually the aging Reader sold IronMan which went Venice Beach and the way of the rest of the bodybuilding publications like Flex and

MuscleMag, who each month promised a different 20 set routine that would put three inches on my arms and improve my choice of fitness models. Nowadays these publications have gone softcore. I've stopped in magazine shops in airports many times looking for something to read on my flight. Thinking I would be embarrassed to sit next to a stranger for three hours thumbing through what amounts to a thong catalog, I always passed. There's a time, a place, and publications, for that type of stimulation.

So where do aspiring strength athletes, as we throwers are, turn to find out more about strength training that is not just hype and will improve our performances? Hopefully to the Long & Strong Throwers Journal first as this is part of LSTJ's mission. But thankfully we are in the midst of a small explosion in this market and there are other options that you probably won't find at the checkout at your local Seven-Eleven or Piggly Wiggly. Let's take a high level look at publications of interest to throwers that will assist in their quest for greater performance, and perhaps, another inch on the guns.

MILO

"If you're trying to understand what we're all about, our subtitle says it all: A Journal For Serious Strength Athletes," says Randall Strossen, Ph.D., Editor-In-Chief of MILO.

Started in 1993, MILO covers Olympic-style weightlifting, Highland Games, strongman, and arm wrestling, with occasional articles on powerlifting, throwing, etc. MILO is published in a black and white, book format, and looks nothing like a newsstand muscle magazine.

"We feature some of the top writers and photographers in our specialties, and based on reader feedback, we meet our objectives of providing both information and inspiration," continues Strossen. "Among other things, we're known for our worldwide coverage of the top events and athletes in our field."

MILO is available is publisher quarterly with 128 pages and no interior ads. The curious may try one issue for \$12 plus \$4 shipping and handling in the U.S. before subscribing.





PowerMag

Having just started operations in January of 2001, PowerMag already has 10,000 subscribers on board. PowerMag "covers the World's Strongest Sports," according to Jake Jones, Creative Director & Co-Publisher. "If it has to do with power it will be in our pages."

Any strength athlete inter-

ested in improving their power and performance should read PowerMag. Why should throwers read PowerMag? "Explosiveness and power are what we are all about," says Jones. "There are many cross-training benefits from reading what is published in PowerMag's pages."

Currently PowerMag is running a special of 12 issues for only \$25, 50% off of the cover price for a limited time, but please verify at www.powermagonline.com, 1-800-268-2248, or care of PowerMag Magazine, P.O. Box 2561, Spokane, WA 99220-2561 before submitting payment. Archived articles and pictures are available at their website.



Pure Power

Pure Power's objective is to give powerlifters, strength athletes and any other weight lifting enthusiast what they've always wanted from a magazine—substance. If you are looking for credentials, Pure Power features authors with a ton of initials behind their names. The foundation is

information about the science behind developing physical strength, power, and speed. Pure Power's mission is to "take scientific discoveries in the areas of exercise physiology, sport psychology, nutrition science and related fields and to present this information in an easy to understand language." Pure Power's sole purpose is to become the main resource in the world for strength training and performance enhancement.

Pure Power is can be purchased via their website for \$19.95 for a 1 year subscription (bi-monthly), a 20 percent discount off the cover price. You can visit Pure Power at

www.purepowermag.com,



write them care of Body Intellect, Inc., P.O. Box 77066, Colorado Springs, CO 80970-7066 or call 1-719-597-3525.

Bigger Faster Stronger

The Bigger Faster Stronger Journal (BFS) is a color, newsstand quality national magazine, published quarterly with a readership of 500,000. BFS seeks to aggressively develop and market strength and conditioning programs and products that will allow athletes and coaches to reach their highest personal destiny in mind, body and spirit. "Athletes and coaches should read the BFS Journal from cover to cover," says Dr. Greg Shepard, BFS President. "We focus on motivational and instructional articles on training."

Throwers hold a special place in the history of BFS. "The BFS Program came from throwers," says Sheppard. "We just borrowed from them and feel that all sports should follow their example. Throwers, at the elite level, are the biggest, leanest, fastest, strongest, and most explosive of all athletes in any sport worldwide. But you know the sad reality? The majority of high school track and field athletes along with their coaches do not know how to train during the off-season or the in-season. If you learn the BFS Program, you will learn the awesome secret of the great throwers of the world. The beauty of it is that we have packaged the program in an easy to understand format."

You can subscribe to Bigger Faster Stronger by calling 1-800-628-9737 or visiting their website at www.bfs.com. One year subscriptions are \$14.95, two years are \$27.95, and three years for \$39.95.

Strength and Conditioning Journal and Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research

"As the worldwide authority on strength and conditioning, we support and disseminate research-based knowledge and its practical application, to improve athletic performance and fitness," says Michael Barnes, Director of Education for the National Strength Coaches Association (NSCA). "The NSCA publishes the finest publications in the strength and conditioning field. Our exceptional journals give thought provoking accounts of people, programs, and issues important to the strength and conditioning professional."



Strength and Conditioning Journal is the professional journal for over 20,000 strength coaches, personal

trainers, physical therapists, athletic trainers, and other health professionals working in the strength and conditioning field. The journal's mission is to publish articles that report both the practical applications of research findings and the knowledge gained by experienced professionals. Published six times per year, each issue includes contains 80 pages of peer-reviewed articles on a wide variety of timely strength and conditioning topics as well as regular features that provide thought-provoking accounts of people, programs and issues.

The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research is NSCA's scientific journal. This quarterly 120-page publication prints original research information important to strength and conditioning practitioners. Many educational institutions, researchers, and professionals retain this journal as a valuable reference. The research journal addresses a wide variety of questions concerning conditioning, sport and exercise demands. This ranges from research on the effects of training programs on physical performance and function to the underlying biological basis for exercise performance.



phone 1-800-815-6826.

These fine publications are available to members of NSCA. Membership is \$80 for U.S. members, slightly more for international subscribers. To find out more about the NSCA visit www.nsca-lift.org, write them at National Strength & Conditioning Association, 1955 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80909, or

Track Coach

Track Coach (formerly Track Technique) the official technical quarterly of USA Track & Field, has been the sport's major technical publication since 1960. Although not specific to throwers, Track Coach does contain a proportional amount of throws articles. Several LSTJ articles have appeared here as reprints. Track Coach is quarterly for a price of \$20 and is available from Track & Field News, 2570 El Camino Real, Suite 606, Mountain View, CA 94040, by phone at (650) 948-2897 or via the web at www.trackandfieldnews.com.

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Ron Summers – Master Shot Putter

Throwing the 16 For Old Time's Sake

By Brad Reid

At the 1999 Masters Nationals held at Disney's Wide World of Sports venue in Orlando Florida, I found myself in the awkward position of warding off some ancient female high jumper who took it upon herself to challenge my credentials for being on the infield sans athletic attire. My protestation that I was a competitor wasn't readily accepted; in fact, my event had actually taken place earlier that day. So fibbing just a little, I pointed toward the dual shot put rings at the far end of the infield and explained that I had been asked to assist. There's no surer bet in all of sport than that one can find a volunteer job shagging shots, javs, hammers, or discs at a track & field meet. Moments later, the shots zooming over my head and skipping past my ankles seemed far less dangerous than my encounter with that human tsetse fly who by now I could only hope had found other prey to pester. Winding up in the throwing sector of a shot put event did have one rewarding outcome: I had the best seat in the stadium from which to view one of the most dominant 45 to 49 age group shot putters competing over the past several years. His name? Ron Summers.

Of course, I knew several of the contestants that day from other contests and events. Mark Neal had won a masters shot put championship in the past and would be formidable competition, and so would big Oklahoman, Dave Rhatigan, a strong all-round thrower and a former competitive arm wrestler. But, it took me and I suppose all of the competitors and fans just seconds to comprehend the eventual outcome of this championship: Ron Summers was going to take the gold and leave the remaining medals for others to sort out. What gave it away? Whereas many of the shot putters in the 45 to 49 age group had migrated to the rotational style, Ron had remained a glide loyalist. On his first full glide during warm-ups, Ron showed that he was still capable of hitting the requisite low starting position out of the back of the ring, apply a powerful push and leg action to propel his body across the ring, land in a low balanced position with his feet well under his body, and hips poised to provide the fuel for a powerful and quick arm strike. Snap, snap, snap. Ron moved across the ring with the quickness and zip of a seasoned collegiate shot putter. Again, to no one's great surprise, Ron was victorious that day with a broad margin of distance beyond his nearest competitor.

Back in "The Day"

Perhaps one reason Ron still moves and throws so much like a collegiate shot putter is that he was, in fact, a very successful thrower who competed four years at

Illinois College, a small liberal arts school then with an enrollment of about 800 students. Ron was also a running back for the school's football team, a sport in which he actually garnered more local attention and notoriety than for his shot putting prowess. As often noted, liberal arts programs cultivate and adhere to a philosophy of broad exposures in the learning experience, and Ron's sporting activities certainly extended that concept to athletics too. Ron progressed from a distance of 48 feet as a freshman to a career best 58'4" his senior year for a tidy 22% improvement. In each of his four collegiate years, he won the NAIA District 20 shot put championship and became an NAIA All-American his senior year. By the end of Ron's collegiate eligibility, he held the majority of shot put records at the various small college invitational meets held throughout Illinois.



Ron Summers follows through during a college practice.

Ron's early shot putting experiences weren't limited to the small school environment. He also competed at the much larger Illinois Intercollegiate Meet where both small and large colleges and universities fielded competitive athletes. It was there that he threw against several well-known shot putters of the early and mid 1970s including George Tyms and Rich Bilder of Northern Illinois University. Ron found those two throwers among others to be great sources of information for ways to improve his shot putting. Ron also attributes his summer competitions as a member of the Sterling Track Club as being highly influential on his success as a shot putter then and now. Among the better-known names of the elite shot putters he threw against in those long-ago summers were '68 and '72 Olympic silver shot put medalist George Woods, and shot put legend and icon, Brian Oldfield. And, though he had competed several years earlier for Sterling Track Club, stories about Al Feuerbach and his focused and deliberate training were still often told and sources of inspiration for Ron.

Ron's "first" throwing career ended one year beyond college after a single season as a member of Ted Haydon's University of Chicago Track Club. Worsening hand and back pain and just life moving forward all played roles in negotiating the termination of his shot-putting avocation. In the preparation for this article, Ron wrote to me explaining that he regretted not achieving his goal of 60 feet in the shot, yet his 58'4" was certainly an outstand-

Courtesy of Ron Summers

ing put for that era and for a man who wasn't blessed with the height, weight, and body levers common to the elite practitioners of his chosen sport. With the exception of some occasional throwing while assisting high schoolers from time-to-time over the ensuing years, Ron wouldn't throw again seriously for the next twenty-three years.

Finding the Ring Again

By what means did Ron find his way back into shot putting after such a long break? Like most masters throwers, it involved a degree of serendipity. In Ron's case, he attended a high school wrestling match and ran into an old college teammate who mentioned the masters track and field meets. Ron thought (or had been told in error) that the competitions were contested with 12 lb. shots. Of course, as it turned out, he found himself toiling with the heavier 16 lb. shot, and those first few throws and first few sessions had Ron second-guessing his desire to return to competitive form. After a first season of throwing in 1998, Ron had performed very well but also suffered the effects of over training, and he now had a sore hand and elbow to show for his overzealous comeback efforts. Ron consulted other masters throwers about his dilemma and determined that he must drop his throwing volume back considerably to stay healthy. The volume of throwing he knew in his youth would no longer work for him as an over age 40 athlete. Today, Ron finds that a maximum of two ring workouts a week with a 20 to 25 throws volume represents the top range for him in order to stay uninjured. About half of these throws are made with a 6kg shot. In contrast, Ron has managed much more volume in the weight room without problems. Throwing 16 lb. shots is really tough on over 40 bodies and Ron still monitors his recovery and avoids injuries by paying particular attention to training volume.

A New Goal for Ron – 50 feet with the 16!

So, if 60 feet had been Ron's goal as a prime-aged athlete, what goal would he set for himself as an athlete in his mid to late 40s? Ron quickly settled on exceeding 50 feet in the remaining few years he'd compete with the 16-pound ball. Ron found himself hitting 48s and 49s until he entered a college meet in January of 2000 when he first exceeded his goal with a put of 50'3". Ron stayed elated for over a month and his son commented that it was just like his father was going through a second childhood. He was! Ron went on to exceed 50 feet on three occasions over the 2000 throwing season and may have gone even farther but his bodyweight had crept up to 250 lbs., his squat to over 500 lbs., and his blood pressure as well. These health considerations got his attention and Ron dropped back down to around 235 lbs. and laid off the really heavy squats. While this improved his blood pressure immediately, it also took the edge off of his shot putting statistics and he settled in with a best throw of 48'8" this past season.

But, even slightly off his best levels, Ron won a second Masters National Outdoor championship this past summer in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with a throw of 14.63m (48'0") defeating Gary England who showed well but couldn't keep up with Ron and had to settle for second place with a put of 14.26m (46'9.5"). Besting a talented thrower like England must have given Ron some extra satisfaction since Gary, in his prime, had been a 64+ foot shot putter and a NCAA Shot Put Indoor champion in the mid 1970s. Perhaps Ron had, in a manner of speaking, sort of vicariously achieved a little bit of his youthful goal of 60 feet with his victory over a former NCAA champion shot putter.

Ron's Edge: Strength Considerations

At a height of 5'11" and a bodyweight of 220 lbs. at his heaviest point as a collegian, Ron spent more than a fair share of time developing his strength and demonstrating it in lifting competitions. Ron's best lifts in the mid-1970s were:



Ron is a champion Masters Olympic lifter as well.

Courtesy of Ron Summers

Full Squat	575
Bench Press (paused rep)	375
Deadlift	585
Snatch	275
Clean & Jerk	335

Few shot put gliders, and that includes masters competitors too, get very far without fairly significant strength levels to propel the ball far. Today, Ron uses his extensive strength base to help manage the rigors of training and competing with the 16 lb shot and its effects on an older, mature body. Though only returning to throwing in 1998, Ron had performed some powerlifting in 1995 and 1996, so he possessed a measure of foundational strength to carry over to his return to the shot put ring. His current best lifts are:

Full Squat	435 X 2
Bench Press (paused rep)	330
Snatch	231
Clean & Jerk	286.5

Most of Ron's current best lifts were performed in recent weightlifting competitions and may not totally and adequately reflect his true current power. Ron and I have corresponded about weight training and throwing over the past three years and the photos he has shared with me of his recent weightlifting competitions show that his snatch is almost always caught so high that it's re-

ally just a modified power snatch; his cleans too, are often caught high in power clean form. Ron's current performances as an Olympic lifting competitor qualify him as one of America's best lifters in his age and weight class: he finished 3rd place at the recent 2001 Masters Olympic Lifting Nationals. In keeping with our weight events' reputation for developing high quality, national caliber, dual weightlifting/thrower athletes, Ron's current competitive lifting ranking combined with his multiple national championships as a shot putter, qualify him as our best representative of a masters athlete upholding this tradition of excellence across the two sports.

Training Considerations, Now and Then

Ron may well have hit that 60 foot goal in his prime had he know more about issues related to technique and periodization used by shot putters today. Ron's early throwing workouts were simple: go out five days a week during the season and throw as hard as he could, then compete on Saturday. He recalls that his volume could include up to 300 full throws per week as a collegian. Plyometrics and other more recently-introduced training systems were unknown at that time though he did manage to include some high jumping and standing long jumps, developing in the latter such proficiency that he could beat his team's long jumpers in that event. Workouts with weights were also simple: Ron followed at 5,3,2,1 set/rep program on basic Olympic and power lifts year-round, rested when he became over-trained, then repeated the program again and again.

Weightlifting as a Master

Some of the modifications Ron employs now to his training include eliminating the heavy singles and doubles he used to perform in the squat once each week and modifying to more frequent squat workouts three times a week working in the 75 to 80% range for sets of 5 reps and occasionally some heavier sets of 3 reps. Ron, like other successful masters throwers, still thinks that master throwers need to go heavy in the weight room but must also balance this training with health issues and recovery time requirements. Since he trains and competes in two sports, he finds the balancing of volume and intensity between the weight room and the ring to be his most challenging objective. Ron, too, has commented that masters athletes must be able to discern the cause of decreasing distances and lifting poundages. Determining whether a decline is related to just getting a little older or to poor training methods adds a perspective to the science and art of masters training that doesn't present a problem for prime-aged athletes. Ron currently lifts three times per week and throws once. In addition to the already-mentioned squat program, Ron follows a basic Olympic lifting routine of snatches, cleans, various pulling motions, and jerks, and follows a basic pyramid – adding weight to the bar and lowering the reps as he approaches his goal for that day. Ron

also includes some overhead pressing and bench presses once each week for developing shoulder strength for shot putting. He follows this schedule until each April and then switches to throwing twice and lifting twice per week. He also cuts back on the volume of the lifting workouts to concentrate on shot putting in preparation for his next scheduled track and field meet.

Future Considerations

Though he finds it challenging to train with the intensity required to prepare for Olympic lifting competitions and shot putting events over the course of a given year, Ron likes mixing it up and staying nationally competitive in both sports. He recognizes and accepts the likelihood that not specializing in just one sport detracts somewhat from each of the two separate events, but it's a sacrifice he's willing to make to compete in both arenas. This coming year, Ron plans to compete in three Olympic lifting meets and six track meets. An age group winner at the 1999 and 2000 Springfield Celtic Games, he may also eventually participate in that sport again too. As a personal goal, even with this fairly aggressive competitive scheduling, Ron would like to medal in both the shot and weightlifting nationals each year. From this friend's point of view, the shot-putting goal should present no problem for Ron if he remains healthy, and combining his natural strength along with some lifting technique tips and continued guidance from his friend and training partner, Willis Garland, Ron should be a perennial force in weightlifting too for years to come.

Ron would like to thank Mike Shiaras, Matt Byrnes, Craig Shumaker and the many others he's communicated with over the past several years about issues related to throwing for their help and willingness to share ideas. He thanks Glenn Thompson too, for *LSTJ*'s great contribution to the throwing community. Anyone planning on competing at next summer's 2002 Masters Nationals in the 45 to 49 age group shot put event better come prepared for a battle. Ron will be throwing as one of his age group's oldest competitors at the very tail end of his eligibility in that class before he matriculates to the 50 to 54 age group (Ron will turn 50 in October of 2002). So, he's training hard knowing that this year's shot put competition could be one of the more hotly contested events in recent championships if Ralph Fruguglietti, Gary England, Mark Neal, and the other 45 to 49 age group shot putters make the trek to Orono, Maine to duke it out. I'd pay hard-earned money. Heck, I'd even shag shots just to get a chance to watch this competition!

LSTJ

Courtesy of Ron Summers



Ron was dominant at the 2001 Masters Outdoors Champs at LSU

The Life and Times of Ron McKee

By Mark Valenti

San Jose, home of the Shark Tank and some of the nicest weather this side of Margaritaville. Those unaware souls in the world may think that's where it ends, but for most of the throwing community, San Jose is Mecca. It was the city that dominated the world in the 70's and 80's. It was the home to some of the greatest throwers that have ever lived. Oldfield, Wilkens, Powell, Plucknett, McGoldrick and Feurbach to name a few. It was at this time that a young thrower started to fall in love with the shot put. There was no better place to find coaches, than in his own backyard of San Jose. Ron McKee was that young man and he turned into quite a thrower in his own right. What follows is a short trip into what it was like to throw and lift in tossers heaven.

Courtesy of Ron McKee



McKee is still very active in the Highland arena.

LSTJ: What was it like to train in San Jose in the 70's and 80's?

Ron: Well, how about being a 14 year-old and getting out the phone book, looking up Al Feurbach's phone number and calling him! Then actually having him talk to you, agree to meet with you at San Jose State track and then train with him. Ron Semkiw, Pete Schmock! Yep, it was the beginning of some great times.

LSTJ: When and how did you meet the "BIG O", Brian Oldfield?

RON: I was training with Pete Schmock at DeAnza College one afternoon. We were working on the glide. Just then, pulling up in the parking lot, was the Big O! He got out of his car and he was huge! He was wearing a leopard skin speedo bathing suit and throwing shoes. He runs over, scales a ten-foot fence, and starts giving Schmock a bunch of crap! They start pushing each other and I thought they were going to sink the cement ring! They were just screw-

ing around, but hey, I was 16 and it was cool! The same day Oldfield asks me why I do not spin. I said, "I do." He says, "then what are you doing gliding with Pete? Show me a spin." I do a South African right into Schmocks general direction, almost hitting him. Peter was irritated at Brian and I by then. After that I never went back to the glide. Brian started giving me personal instruction.

LSTJ: Who were some of your other training partners?

RON: Kevin Brady was the original (he had quite a Highland Games career), Paul Bishop, Oldfield, Greg Tafralis, Brian Faul, J.R. Hanley, Jim McGoldrick, Scott Biberthaler, Ryan Vierra, Sean Gleeson, Bryant Harris and Phil Martin. Lately I've been training alone. Family constraints allow me to train on a

very tight schedule. I found that is the reason so many of my latter partners and I parted ways.

LSTJ: Iron Works Gym in Campbell, California. What was it like?

RON: A loaded question. Full of many stories and fond memories. Here is a summary. They don't even load on the bar these days the weights I've seen lifted!!! Mac Wilkens, Art Burns, Big O, Plucknett, McGoldrick, Jerry Hannah, Kevin Winter, Scott Palmer, Wolfgang Schmidt and gosh, so many others could be seen training on a daily basis. Bishop Dolgiewicz was also there. The guests we would have some time as well! My gosh! There were throwers, lifters, powerlifters, bodybuilders, everyone. Some very strong people. Mac Wilkens was one of my personal favorites. He was STRONG and in my favorite kind of way...powerlifts! Also quite adept at Olympic style lifts, but I saw him squat and deadlift his fair share.

We had a couple of discussions on power squatting and how it pertains to throwing, quite against the normal group-thinking.

The gym had two huge platforms that had a total of four bars going on them at once, two per platform. These were situated toward the back of the room. Against the back wall were two benches to sit on between lifts. Lots of chalk everywhere. It didn't seem messy to me. Funny how gyms have this thing about chalk now. Around the platforms were various racks for squatting and a large power cage. In front of them were many machines for other members. A full wall of dumbbells were available and the greatest pull up bar ever in the middle of the room suspended from the ceiling. Big O had us hooked into doing these inverted sit-ups hanging from gravity boots. I wish I was in that kind of shape right now! Some great bench presses too!

There was always some kind of testing or contest going on each time at the gym. If we knew a guy was going to try something really heavy we would make an effort to be there to witness or spot. A close group we were, even though we all had different disciplines.

Here is a memory that at the time got me really mad. I was attempting my first ever 705 pound squat. I missed it on my first attempt. Plucknett was waiting for me to finish so he could squat (height difference kept us from training at the same time). I went off to recover for a second attempt. As I returned he had unloaded the bar. I went BALLISTIC! Especially when he said, "He wasn't going to make it anyway." McGoldrick took me outside, reloaded my weight and I returned to make the lift! A little anger is good some times. Ben and I are fine friends and it was just another day at the Iron Works.

LSTJ: What were your weight room PR's?

RON: How about powerlifting in general? I had my best lifts at the 1991 National Powerlifting Championships in San Francisco. In the squat, a 705, then 733 and smoked a 749 on my third attempt! For the bench, 451, then 473 and a miss at 501. The deadlift was 601, then 622 and 640 on my third, for a 1862 total and a third place finish. I have benched more in training; 505 about seven different workouts and a 517 once. Incidentally I was competing as a 275-pounder, but weighing only 251. I didn't diet down to 242's cause I was there to PR.

Snatching is fun and I did my share of them. My best is 140kg (308 lbs.) with straps versus Kevin Winter in a great session at the Iron Works. Kevin Winter was the U.S. record holder in the snatch at 198, as well as

a great friend. Funny thing about the clean...IT SUCKS FOR ME! With my short Tyrannosaurus Rex arms (great for benching), the "rack" is a great problem and hurts my biceps. My PR is 318 lbs. I do clean pulls instead.

LSTJ: What about your throwing PR's?

RON: For the shot, its 19.37m (63'6¾"). The stone ([16.5 lbs. SAAA stone]) is 56'4". I've got a 59'3" mark with a stone at Costa Mesa one year, the same stone that McGoldrick has a 55'-plus with and Alistair Gunn had a 54'-plus (circa 1994).

LSTJ: You mentioned your height. You aren't exactly a shoe-in for the NBA. How has that affected your throwing career?

RON: In regards to my height (5'9"), I believe given all the same traits of personality, desire, and everything being equal, I would've been a contender (straight out of a bad Philly/Rocky movie)!!! Yeah, it's great to wonder, but the fact is I wasn't and I did what I did with what I had. I loved slamming the "big guys!" The fact is, I truly believe at some point that I was technically superior to almost all my competitors. I think that is a place where one has to be mentally to get their best results. This point is not to be taken lightly. It is the ball game (excuse the pun). I CRANKED THE SHOT MANY A TIME! I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT MANY THROWERS HAVE NEVER FELT THE "STUFF" ON THE BALL LIKE I HAVE. I AM GRATEFUL!

LSTJ: What do you love about throwing?

RON: Let me work that backward, as I can tell you what I like about throwing now. Right now I like the fact that I can perform and teach the movement better than anyone else that I know. When I perform, I throw right. A 21 year-old guy that is at 55' right now is beating me. His friend's dad asks me, "Well Ron, what is it like getting beat by these guys now?" I said I haven't noticed that I was getting "beat" but I was thinking how my last throw was a f&%"in' great toss and I am glad I threw it and felt "it"! And I'm out here to help these "kids" find "it" within themselves and their throws. I love these guys (local throwers Nick Garcia and Brandon Goldstein). More power to 'em!

This isn't a real change from how I felt in my mid twenties and thirties either, except that I was not so challenged with my family ties. After the third child, my attitude suffered. Attitude helps in the shot put, but not at home. You've heard that nice guys finish last. It's true. If you know a nice guy that is throwing far, HE IS UNDERACHIEVING!!! (haha!)

LSTJ: What is your greatest achievement as a thrower?

RON: My 63'6¾" at the Modesto Relays(!) followed by a 60'11" in the USA/Great Britain/USSR indoor meet in Glasgow, Scotland. That was my first USA team. John Paul Sigmanson was looking on for that last throw, and I cranked it. My first of many trips to Scotland to throw.

I'm better liked and respected in Scotland than in the USA. I have more fun, and I can enter any games I please. The SGA (Scottish Games Association) is great! Familiarity breeds contempt and I am familiar in California. As a consequence I tend to do better in competitions over there than here. In fact, this past July I did three games in four days, placing fifth in Balloch at the SGA World Heavy Events Championships behind Bruce Aitken, Alistair Gunn, Gordon Martin and Murray Gunn. A tough top four to crack.

Oldfield taught me about Highland Games way back in 1980 as part of his, and now my training for the shot put. Annually, I would enter the Campbell Games (I am now the meet director) and do one a year, missing a few in between when shot put was going so well.

LSTJ: What do you think about the new breed of throwers in the U.S. today?

RON: I think all the shot boys right now are awesome! We are kicking some real international ass! Godina, a Art Venegas (UCLA Head Coach) product, is, or should I say performs, a combination of all the great spin techniques. I see a static start and a sprint step. Then the classic "switch" reverse, a UCLA/Venegas trademark. He's a tremendous athlete. Godina is a multiple world champion and multiple Olympic medalist. It all speaks for itself.

I actually feel what Adam Nelson is doing. He is a "stretch reflex" thrower. I feel close to him when I see him throw. I'll bet if you asked him about Edmonton he would tell you that he wasn't getting off his left foot out of the back with correct timing. He may be more

sensitive to ring conditions, type of shoes he is wearing, etc. When he is on, it's gone! He proved that at the 2000 Olympic Trials.

I would like to make an observation. Growing up here in San Jose, I was privileged to meet and train with the world's very best shot putters and discus throwers. I don't ever really remember any of them having coaches. Everyone did a lot of throwing by themselves and then would occasionally get together at a big session at a local ring. Some never even participated in such gatherings! Athletes then began to formalize their own theories and concepts. At social gatherings these athletes would then share their concepts and thoughts. Then everyone would go away and work on things. My point is that you need to

go throw; no excuses, no help, just throw! This is how you develop timing!! Being "coached" destroys timing. Looking at films and breaking down your technique destroys timing! You want a PR? Get better timing! Feel it! You know what they say? Timing is everything!

LSTJ: Okay, so how about some San Jose stories?

RON: Here's one. I was competing at a meet in San Jose. My friends Paul Bishop,

Kevin Brady and Bob Cook, all San Jose State (SJS) throwers, thought it a good idea to use an alias. Rondo was a popular soft drink at the time. You typically had to "slam" it down. Slam Rondo was coined, but something was missing. Then Brady (Kevin Brady of Highland Games fame) came up with using our favorite officials first name. Hank used to officiate all SJS meets in the shot. He probably officiated Feurbach's world record. So in honor of Hank, I became Hank "Slam" Rondo that meet and forever after that. Oh yeah, John Powell was SJS's coach at the time and he liked it so much that he used it while in Europe competing, when his distances were more like practices (below 205'). So Hank "Slam" Rondo has some interesting PR's in some great far away places in both the shot and disc! This is a true story...don't listen to John's version.

Probably my best story is when I was a 21 year-old at



McKee at the '93 sports festival in San Antonio surrounded from left to right by Russian hammer greats Litvinov, Sedyek and Smirnov.

Courtesy of Ron McKee

Cal State Northridge, coached by Bill Webb (now head coach at the University of Tennessee). We would have team meetings and as a captain I volunteered a story about a mid-70's team at San Jose State that had a shot-putter named Ron Semkiw. Ron was 19 years old when he hit 70' with the 16 lbs. shot!!!! The team was on a bus headed to Stanford/ Berkeley, somewhere up the road. I guess the bus was traveling a little over the speed limit, and athletes were eating oranges and tossing the peels out of the bus windows. In the back sat a very psyched up, emotional Ron. Rumor has it that he was doing some kind of muscle stimulation with cattle prod on his quads. The bus was pulled over by the CHP officer, and a discussion took place between the bus driver and the law. Ron grew dissatisfied with the length of the discussion and walked up the bus aisle to meet the CHP officer and deliver this famous line: "F#@^K THE ORANGE PEELS, WE'VE GOT TO GET PSYCHED!!!!" I can't even count how many times I've heard this line. Before a great lift at the Iron Works Gym, or right before a big throw, or on the way to a meet.

So I'm telling this story to my teammates at CSUN right before the California Collegiate Athletic Association Championships at Pomona Junior College. Our team was primarily throwers and long distance guys. Everyone kind of laughed and got a kick out of it. To my surprise on the day of the meet at Pomona the entire row of stands was lined with my teammates looking over and facing the hammer area. They were all throwing ORANGE PEELS onto the field right before the first throw, yelling, "Hey McKee!!! When actions are louder then words!!!" I PR'ed with 186'6" and took first place! I loved that team.

LSTJ: Last, but not least, how have you been throwing lately?

RON: Since you asked, throwing has been going very nicely. It's been four years since I've had practice throws in the 28 pound weight over 70' and just last weekend I'm there again! It's been building back up for several weeks, but its now finally arrived. Today's workout was 3 x 68', 2 x 69' early before 10:00 a.m. I'm always by myself now as I have no training partners anymore. In honor of Pleasanton being today

[Editors Note: this interview was done on the afternoon of the Pleasanton Highland Games, the home of the World Championships this year], I pulled out my 26 pound leather soccer ball and did my Braemar puts with it. How about 35' at 9:15 a.m. Check it out; it's a size 5 ball and I cut out a small panel, then filled the inside with cement and let it dry on a bowling ball holder. It's very round and 26 pounds. Very challenging.

The Open stone is always an adventure for me. Full spin, half spin, glide, what's a guy to do? All my PR's are with the full movement. However lawn conditions aren't always conducive to the full spin. Have the

South African in your back pocket! And I'll say this: IF I HAD THROWN MY SHOT PR WITH THE GLIDE, NO WAY WOULD I BE SPINNING! I WOULD BE GLIDING AND SMASHING STONES. But hey, I suck at the glide. The spin is in!

Had my wife ,Anne, spot the caber today. I had four attempts and four turns. Very strong! Also the 56 lbs. weight cleared about 14', a strong effort.

Had a teaspoon of glutamine and a Budweiser. I hope the boys are having fun in Pleasanton today. I had to chose between training and going up to watch. I am hoping to get into the Masters World Championships this year.



McKee with the big stone

A month and a half later I received this email...

*Mark,
Masters World Championships...I won all events contested! Don Stewart couldn't make it. Great group of masters athletes. I met and made friends with some really good people. The games sight was outstanding, the organization was first rate, and I would like to thank all those involved for an outstanding memory I'll have forever!*

Ron

I guess Ron F#@&k'd the orange peels and got psyched! ***LSTJ***

The Westside Way

By Steven Hunzinger

Many athletes are always searching for a routine that will result in miracles. Those same athletes are always told that there is no such thing and that any type of lifting with true dedication will result in success. I used to believe that.

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Steve Hunzinger and I just recently turned seventeen. I am a junior at Robinson High School in Fairfax, Virginia. I feel that much of my success in throwing is from a great work ethic and from a great lifting routine. Is it a routine of miracles? Let's get into that.

Over the past five years that I have been throwing, I have heard so much about lifting routines from athletes, and I have to say that I am amazed at how many people really do not know how to lift, especially for their sport. I have also heard some say that in

throwing, a certain level of strength is enough. Given the level of improvement that I have experienced recently, I could not disagree more. Throwing is a showcase of one's agility, speed, strength, and explosiveness. For those of you who believe that very successful throwing can be achieved with limited strength, let me ask you this. Why are so many world-class throwers using strength enhancing drugs, especially if they were near peak strength when they were clean? Maybe because they figured out for themselves that given any level of technique, increased strength will definitely result in increased throwing distance.

I must emphasize that, without solid technique, strength will get you nowhere in throwing. It must be clear to people that both strength and technique are equally important. There have been many instances where some of us have thrown farther than people who were stronger than us. This happened because we had better technique. Conversely, people who are weaker than us, have out thrown some of us. This is a result of the competitor having form superior to ours. So, as you can see both are important. If you are lacking in one of those areas, it will deter you from

reaching your maximum throwing potential. From what I have seen, too many "above average" throwers are not up to par in the strength department. What is making many throwers good is their natural athletic ability. In many cases, the difference between being good and being great is the athlete's strength level.

Earlier I mentioned that I used to believe there were no miracle lifting routines available. I felt this way until a few months ago when I looked back at all of the success I achieved in less than two years time.

The Discovery

One Friday night during my freshman year, I was not feeling well and the rest of my family was going to watch the local high school football game. I decided that I would stay home and surf the web for some advice about lifting. My best lifts at that time were:

squat- 365 pounds, and bench- 215 pounds. My best throws were: shot- 43 feet and discus- 120 feet. That night I stumbled across a web page that talked about a style of lifting that I had never heard of before. The style of training was so peculiar that I almost moved on, but instead I decided to read on. As it turns out, reading that page is probably the main reason I have improved so much over the last 18 months.

Courtesy of Steve Hunzinger



Steve Hunzinger

The web page was about a lifting club called Westside Barbell located in Columbus, Ohio. This gym is one of the strongest gyms in the world, if not the strongest. I will get into their numbers later, but first, I would like to briefly describe their method of lifting.

The Westside lifting routine puts as much emphasis on speed as it does on strength. This is perfect for a thrower, because we have to be strong, but more importantly, we have to be explosive to put the strength to work. One-half of the core lifting involves low repetitions at maximum speed. When lifting for speed, the barbell should move at a speed comparable to your arm speed when throwing the shot. In addition to the high-speed repetitions, large rubber bands are attached to the bar to create a significant

and continuous resistance increase through the top part of the lift. It is vital to maintain the high speed throughout each repetition even with the bands attached.

Only four days of lifting per week are necessary to perform this method of training. Two days are dedicated to the upper body and the remaining two are dedicated to the lower body.

The first day of upper body training is bench pressing for speed as described above. The bar weight should be in the range of 40 percent to 60 percent of your one rep maximum. It is highly suggested that most people stay in the range of 40 percent to 45 percent. Only a few people are capable of moving 50 percent at the speed necessary for this exercise. Rubber bands are then attached to the bar and to the floor using either heavy dumbbells, or wrapping them around the bottom of a power rack. The objective of using bands is to have little or no weight added to the bar when on your chest, but to add 80 pounds to 100 pounds of tension at the top of the lift. Eight sets of three repetitions are to be performed with maximum speed and explosion. The rest periods between sets are short, ranging from 30 to 45 seconds. After completing the eight sets, you should move on to your assistance work associated with your triceps, shoulders, upper-back and lats. Rest periods for these assistance exercises range from 60 to 120 seconds. Seven to 10 sets of tricep exercises should be performed. Exercises include, but are not limited to: lying dumbbell extensions, lying barbell extensions, close-grip press, half-press (close-grip, bar only lowered half-way), and tricep pushdowns. A weight should be used that results in muscular failure at between eight and 12 repetitions. For your shoulders, only three to four sets are necessary. Exercises are military press, front raises (with a plate or dumbbells), and side raises. Repetitions should range from eight to 12. For your upper-back and lats, four sets should be performed. Exercises are T-bar rows, bent-over rows, one-arm dumbbell rows, and lat pulldowns. Once again, repetitions range from eight to twelve with 60 to 120 seconds rest.

The second day of upper-body training is for strength and power. It is also known as maximum-effort day. The objective on this day is very simple. One repetition maximums are to be performed for a particular exercise related to the bench press, but not the bench press itself. Exercises that can be performed on this day include, but are not limited to: rack press, floor press, board press, half-press, and lying extensions (for a description of how these exercises are to be performed, visit the website listed at the end of this article.). These lifts should begin with approximately 60 percent of your one lift maximum and be performed

in sets of two repetitions. The second and subsequent sets are performed after two minutes rest and adding 20 pounds for each set. Sets should continue until failure, reducing to one repetition when necessary. Upon completion of this exercise, assistance work, which is the exact same as described above, should be performed.

The first day of lifting for the lower body involves squatting for speed. Ten to twelve sets of two repetitions are performed using 50 to 60 percent of your one lift maximum with 45 seconds of rest. You should be as explosive as you were on speed day for your upper body. On this day, the box squat is employed rather than the regular squat. [Please read the article on the website listed at the end to learn how to perform a box squat.] You will love the gains you make by performing the box squat. Bands are also attached to the bar to increase the weight through the entire lift. If your regular maximum squat is 450 pounds or less, you should use bands that add 100 pounds at the top. If you squat 450 pounds to 600 pounds, you should use bands that add 150 pounds at the top. If you squat 600 pounds or more, you should use bands that add 200 pounds at the top. Upon completion of the box squats, assistance work is performed to target your lower back, glutes, hamstrings, and abdominals. For your lower back, perform some type of good-morning. These consist of placing the bar on your back as in squatting, bending over until your upper body is parallel to the ground with your legs straight, and returning to the upright position using all lower back muscles. Your glutes and hamstrings can be worked together using leg curls, glute-ham raises, or pulling a sled, or pushing a car. For abs, sit-ups and crunches work best, but be sure to target your obliques as well. Four sets with 10 repetitions should be performed for each of the assistance exercises.

The second day for the lower body is for power and strength, also known as maximum-effort day. You should take yourself to failure on a particular exercise performing one repetition. These lifts should begin with approximately 60 percent of your one lift maximum and be performed in sets of two repetitions. The second and subsequent sets are performed after two minutes rest and adding 20 pounds for each set. Sets should continue until failure, reducing to one repetition when necessary. Exercises to be performed on this day are either deadlifts (while standing on a two to four inch platform, but with the bar on the ground), box squats (using different elevations of the box), or good mornings. Good mornings should be performed in three-repetition maximums. Upon completion of the core exercise on this day, assistance work, similar to that of the speed day, should be performed. At Westside, they have been performing the same four

workouts on the same four days for the past seven years. Monday is for maximum effort/lower-body, Wednesday is for maximum effort/upper body, Friday is for speed/lower body, and Sunday is for speed/upper body. A new lifter to this program should develop and maintain a workout schedule similar to that described above.

If you can recall, I stated that my best lifts at the time I discovered this program were: squat- 365 and bench- 215. My best throws were: shot- 43 feet and discus- 120 feet. After 18 months of hardcore Westside training, my maximum lifts rose to: squat- 575 pounds and bench- 365 pounds. My new distances were: shot- 55'3" and discus- 168'2". Those were during my sophomore year at a bodyweight of 178 lbs. I am proud to state that I was the Virginia state champion in the shot put and state runner-up in the discus. I owe much of my success to the "Westside" strength program.

The Westside Experience

A man named Louie Simmons owns the Westside Barbell club. You can probably recall reading an interview that the LSTJ conducted with him (April and July, 2000). Louie is a guru when it comes to strength. Not only are his numbers impressive, but what his program has done for so many athletes is astonishing.

Mr. Simmons and I have known each other for over one year. We talk on the phone often (it's always me calling him for advice). Last June, after he heard of my dedication to his program and what it has done for me, he invited me to train with him and the guys for a weekend. After a few days of convincing my father to fly out there with me, we booked a flight. We were there for four days in late July. What an experience!

Every morning before training, they meet at the same restaurant for breakfast at 7:00 A.M. Training begins at 9:00 A.M. Two hours for breakfast is a long time, but it flies when they are having a good time telling stories and talking trash to each other. Everyone was extremely friendly at breakfast, and nobody "looked" as strong as they truly were. That is what is great about power lifters; their strength is visibly hidden.

I was not fully aware of what I would see in the gym. I had watched some of their training videos, and knew they psyched themselves up from time to time. Louie did warn me though. He said that they may appear to be some of the friendliest guys, but everyone is shocked to see their behavior in the gym. All hell breaks loose when they step foot in the gym. At the end of breakfast he said, "Just don't bother them, and they won't bother you." He spoke of them as if they were animals.

Courtesy of Steve Hunzinger



Hunzinger demonstrates band usage while benching and box squatting. Note the bands are anchored by dumbbells and the power rack, respectively.

Courtesy of Steve Hunzinger



He wasn't kidding! As soon as somebody began blasting the heavy metal, it became a jungle. Screaming, yelling, craziness, and super-hardcore lifting describe what really goes on in that gym. It sounds uncivilized but, to lift astronomical amounts of weight like they do, you cannot have normal human behavior. You must become a beast, who takes its anger out on heavy iron. The results are amazing.

Never again in my lifetime, will I witness such a great showcase of strength. I had read of those lifters and the amount of weight they could lift. I had even watched it on videotape before. But seeing it in person was truly unbelievable. I saw what hard work, over a long period of time, can result in...Success!

I witnessed one lifter locking out 1,200 pounds in the squat (that weight includes the tension added from all of the bands). I also

witnessed another guy bench-pressing 565 lbs. for reps, with ease! Currently at Westside, there are 24 men who can squat over 800 pounds, seven of them squatting 900 plus, and three of them squatting 1,000 plus. In the bench press, 23 men can bench press over 500 pounds, 12 of them benching 600 plus, and four of them benching 700 plus. The best bench presser in the world (pound for pound), George Halbert, lifts at Westside. George just recently bench pressed 733 pounds with a body weight of 206 pounds. The gym has only several hundred square feet of space and over twenty animals seeking to destroy all in their sight. They were intense. You had to scream to talk to the person three feet away from you because of the volume of the heavy metal that played during the entire workout.

For many of you, this does not sound like a lot of fun, but if you are young (and I'm not implying that you are old) and you have a lot of testosterone circulating through your system, you can have the time of your life. What is even better is the results that this style of lifting has done for hundreds of lifters and throwers over the years.

Only a fraction of information about how to lift the Westside way was mentioned in this article. It would take a book to explain it, and no one could retain all of the information stated in one article. There is a website however, that has several hundred articles on the training methods at Westside Barbell. Read all of them if you want to achieve a great level of success. The website address is www.elitefitnesssystems.com. Click on the articles section, and you will be on your way to a great start of something that I know you will not regret. If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at: Powerzinger@aol.com. I hope that you will have as much success as everybody else who has ever lifted the Westside way. Good luck, train safe, and throw far! ***LSTJ***

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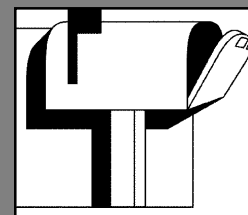
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ON A MISSION

By Glenn Thompson

Sixteen year-old Dustin Johnson's athletic world is just beginning to come into focus. In his world, there are no unobtainable goals, no missed opportunities. Just obstacles to be overcome. Dustin found himself just fourteen inches shy of qualifying for the World Youth Championships in 2001, but bound and determined to get there.

"I began to throw like it was my whole life," says Dustin. "Some days when I couldn't get my throwing session in before dark, I would simply throw at midnight. The moon is a wonderful light to throw javelin by. My father actually caught me throwing at 1 a.m. in the morning in 20-degree weather once. I had heard an ice storm was coming the following day, and I wanted to get my throws in before it hit, so I wouldn't get behind."

Some find excuses not to. Dustin Johnson just finds a way.

Genesis

This shouldn't be surprising, given his family background. Dustin, the son of Danny and Cheryl Johnson, spent much of his adolescence living abroad. "I was raised in the Philippines from age three to eleven. My parents were missionaries there.

Through those experiences in my life, I experienced many positive influences, and developed a worldview. I am very thankful for all that we as Americans have, considering the majority of the Filipino people literally live in bamboo and grass huts. I believe most Americans take family and education for granted. My family and religious faith are the most important aspects of my life. Next, my educational training is very important. Athletics, of course, also play an important role in my daily life."

Dustin's father Danny was a church planter in the Philippines, assigned to start new churches in remote areas of the Philippines for the first 5 years of his stay. For the last couple years Danny served in Manila, a city of over 12 million people. In Manila, he pastored a large church, mostly consisting of college students and adults.

Danny recalls, "there were floods, earthquakes, and typhoons where thousands of people perished. I frequently helped coordinate disaster relief for victims."

The Philippines gave Dustin a perspective many

adults never grasp, while hardening his resolve to succeed. "I grew up realizing that nothing in life is fair, and times are not always good," he says. "I was raised to believe that education is a great way to improve your quality of life. Living in the Philippines reinforced my determination to succeed in life, not just submit to living at the bottom of the totem pole."

Upon his return to the United States at age 11, he was overweight and unfit at 205 lbs. on a 5'1" frame (presently 5'10", 175-190 lbs.). He soon realized that he could never succeed at the highest levels athletically, unless he began to train. At age 12 he convinced his parents to purchase a 310 lb. Olympic weight set for his birthday.

It didn't take long for Dustin's physical talents to begin surfacing. "The first time I ever squatted, I lifted just over 200 lbs," he says. "I lifted about the same in the deadlift and benched about 100 lbs." And within a few months, his numbers began to shoot up dramatically.

Within a year, he had developed an interest in powerlifting. At his first meet, he placed fourth overall at the Arkansas High School Powerlifting Championships, as a thirteen year old. A few weeks later he competed at another state meet, winning it with ease. Later that summer, he won the 165 lbs. class at the AAU High School National Powerlifting Championships, and in the process set several American records. He then won the AAU Junior Olympics in Cleveland, Ohio, breaking his own records. By this time he had increased his squat by almost 200 lbs., bench by 100 lbs., and increased well over 200 lbs. in the deadlift.

Dustin was introduced to Dr. Kyle Pierce at the USA Weightlifting Development Center, at Shreveport, Louisiana. Pierce encouraged Dustin's competitive weightlifting by competing in meets in the snatch and clean and jerk. At the Jr. Olympics in Cleveland, he tied for the gold medal, but was awarded the silver on the basis of greater bodyweight than his competitor. That began his serious Olympic weightlifting. Within a few months, Dustin had won the USA Weightlifting Junior Nationals and the USA Weightlifting Jr. Olympics. He also won a gold medal at the T.J. Louis Cyr



Dustin with the tools and rewards of his trade

Courtesy of Danny Johnson

meet in Huntingdon, Quebec, Canada for Team USA in May 2000.

A New Talent

A few weeks prior to the 1999 AAU Jr. Olympics in Cleveland, Dustin's father handed him a javelin. The novice won the gold medal in javelin at Cleveland, along with the other sports. However, his success in weightlifting left the javelin as a side event. For the next year, he trained in weightlifting, powerlifting, and javelin, along with the discus and shot.

In 2000, at age 14, Dustin decided that Olympic lifting offered the most promise and dropped powerlifting competition. During that year, his squat increased to 450 lbs., jerk hit a solid 125 kilos, and his snatch hit 100 kilos. Dustin was already capable of power cleaning 140 kilos.

At age 14, he began to compete in the javelin at USATF meets, as opposed to AAU. "That year changed my path in life," he says. "When I participated in the Youth National Championships at Decatur, Illinois, as a 15 year old intermediate, I threw the IAAF 800 gram javelin 187 feet and 10 inches, within 20 centimeters of the 15-16 year old national record. That day, I decided the javelin was my event. That throw gave me a chance to represent the USA at the World Youth Championships in Debrecen, Hungary the following summer." All he needed was those 14 inches.

Arkansas does not contest the javelin, and he needed to qualify by the following May, 2001 with the 800 gram IAAF javelin. At his last qualifying meet, he cut loose on his second throw, a mighty heave of 196 feet which earned him a ticket to Hungary.

His next meet was July, 2001 at the USATF Youth National Championships, at Decatur, Illinois. "I knew I could break the intermediate record I was seeking," he says. "I was feeling amazing explosive-ness that day. My peaking lifts were feeling huge, and my throws were looking long. On my second throw, I finally surpassed the 200-foot barrier throwing 202 feet and 9 inches. That broke the national record by almost 15 feet."

However, the first throw had tweaked his knee during his



Dustin watches one disappear

follow-through. "It felt like I had hyper-extended it when I landed," Dustin recalls. "I brushed it off, and set the national record on the next throw. Afterwards, I wanted to get in one more workout before Worlds." Off he went to the training center at Millikin University, where he had "one of my best workouts ever," as he squatted 450 lbs. for two reps, cleaned 308 lbs. for two, and snatched 220 lbs. for reps."

The next morning his knee was the size of a small watermelon, with a trip to Hungary only a couple days away. A local physician x-rayed it, and diagnosed it as a strain, and it continued to swell. Throwing through the pain and swelling, Dustin still managed to finish 10th at Worlds. It wasn't until he returned home that an MRI revealed a fractured leg.

Now healed, he's training toward the USATF Jr. Nationals at Stanford in 2002. Ever the realist, Dustin says, "I need to make significant gains in order to have a chance at the next level, but they will come. I am training particularly hard on my running and jumping explosion. I am also focusing on technique this year, since I already have strength development. I know my real gains will be because of improved speed and technique. They are my priority."

Away from the athletic arena, Dustin is a pretty typical teenager, for the most part. A hard rock fan, Dustin enjoys bands such as Linkin Park, Soil, and Metalica, but gives a nod to the oldheads by referencing Journey, Guns n' Roses, and Eric Clapton. He loves expensive sports cars and enjoys checking them out on the web. He enjoys traveling and winning at everything he does.

I said pretty typical. Dustin actually *enjoys* studying, so much so that he carries a 4.0 GPA and is number one in his academic class. For three years, he has participated in the Educational Program for Gifted Youth at Stanford University, a special series of classes provided by Stanford University. Only a few elite students worldwide are allowed to participate in the program. Dustin just completed his first term of college calculus in the program, receiving...you guessed it, an 'A' for the class.

Touched By Many

Several influential individuals have molded Dustin's talent and athletic character. Coach Milton Williams (currently the head strength coach at the University of Arkansas- Little Rock, and assistant track coach.), a long-time friend of Dustin's father, introduced him to throwing and explosive weight training. Williams taught him the clean and snatch as well as writing his programs for conditioning and athletic training. Dustin credits Williams' training methods in "helping turn me from simply being a very strong person into an athletic person."

Greg Estes, Breaux Greer's coach at Northeast Louisi-

ana has molded Dustin's javelin technique. "There may be a few gurus out there who teach perfect technique," Dustin says, "but I live in remote Southeast Arkansas. I really appreciate a man who is willing to volunteer his free time to teach a 13 year old boy how to throw a javelin."

Dustin had the opportunity to spend a few days with Olympian and former World Record Holder Tom Petranoff. "It was a huge motivation for me as a javelin thrower," he says. Tom invited me up to Rhode Island when I was 14 years old. That weekend, I became a part of their family. The Petranoff's are wonderful people, and Tom's love for the javelin and youth planted a lasting vision in my mind. I can't describe the motivation I received to train and be a champion."

Not to be overlooked on this list is his father. "My father is a persistent man," Dustin says. "Whatever it takes to help me, he does it."

The Future

Dustin has a strong concept of who he is and where he wants to go. On his "short" list of goals are:

- Win the Olympics, with Breaux Greer at his side. ("One-two, USA would be awesome!")
- Graduate from high school with a 4.0, and score very high on the SAT.
- Attend a university of his choice.
- Compete and win at the college level, and train for the 2008 Olympics.
- Graduate from college with a business degree.
- Attend Harvard University, and graduate with an MBA/Law degree.
- The 2012 Olympics.
- Branch out, and eventually win the state decathlon.
- By July 1, 2002, throw the 800-gram IAAF javelin 70 meters.
- Win the USATF Junior Nationals at Stanford, and qualify for the Junior Worlds in Jamaica next July as a high school sophomore.

Can he get there? Petranoff says of Dustin: "He has the goods to go far, and not only in the javelin. Thank God he loves the javelin better than other sports. If we could find 5-10 guys and gals like him we would be AWESOME! I think he'll be unbeatable in five years. He's a role model and great for marketing the throws to the world."

Weight Training

Because of that broken leg, Dustin has not squatted heavy of late. He recently did 375 lbs. for three sets

of 10 with ease and is "sure I could hit around 525 lbs. at the moment. Before I injured my knee, I was hitting in that area easily. I always go all the way down in squats, way below parallel. I go until I hit the bottom, and can't drop any more. I almost hit my butt on the floor. This habit comes from my Olympic lifting. I consider parallel squats as an old man's squat. I am hoping to hit over 550 by this summer."

Dustin's clean is around 320 lbs. at present, slightly down from a pre-injury 330. He cleaned 150 kilos last year and also did 308 for reps last year. He is hoping to hit at least 350 lbs. in the clean by June of this year. "My snatch hasn't been measured recently, but I hit 115 kilos before worlds," Dustin says. "That was a squat snatch by the way. My clean and jerk personal best is 140 kilos.

However, I have backed off of these during this time of the year in order to focus on general strength." His power base along with improving athleticism generated that PR of 202'9" at the USATF Youth Nationals.

Balancing Act

Dustin ranks his various pursuits by importance. School comes first, then athletics (he also plays varsity baseball), and "when that's all done, it's time to go to bed." On Sundays he frequently speaks at churches during services. "I also speak at youth meetings around the area" Dustin says. "I traveled in the Philippines last summer, and spoke to thousands of college students. I usually do weightlifting demonstrations to get their attention." Next summer he hopes to travel to Guatemala and several other countries. "I hold the Lord above all things," he says. "If he told me to do something that involved giving up all I had, I would do it in a second, and be pleased. I am a devout Southern Baptist, and will continue to be." Dustin enjoys traveling to schools throughout the country demonstrating weightlifting and convincing students to keep healthy without doing drugs and alcohol.

"Local folks think I'm obsessed, but they respect me for it," says Dustin. "I guess all of us who succeed are obsessed in some way. But if that's what it takes to reach the top, then that's what it takes. After all, my motto has always been, 'The will to win is nothing without the will to train'.

The goals are lofty no doubt. But Dustin Johnson is more than a talent. He's a doer; a young man on a mission. ***LSTJ***



Dustin repping with 405.

DISCUS NOTES WITH L. JAY SILVESTER

By Glenn A. Thompson

Held in conjunction with the 2000 Olympic Trials,
Sacramento, CA --- Presenter L. Jay Silvester

L. Jay Silvester opened by reviewing the history of the men's discus world record, recounting such names as Fortune Gordien, Al Oerter, Ludvik Danek, Silvester himself several times (first person to throw 60 meters [1961] and first person to throw 70 meters [1971] official best of 224-5, but threw 70m in two unsanctioned meets. John Powell, John Van Reenan, Mac Wilkens, Wolfgang Schmidt, Ben Plucknett and finally Jurgen Schult (243') in 1986.

Silvester cited Tony Washington, John Godina, Andy Bloom, Adam Setliff and Doug Reynolds as the cream of the U.S. crop with Nick Petrucci and Casey Malone as being "on the cusp."

The concept of throwing anything involves a run-up area. For throwers, the circle constitutes that run-up area. The challenge for discus throwers is to best utilize that 8'2.5" circle to gain kinetic energy momentum, and then transfer that energy to the implement.

Throwers who throw far are very powerful people. If you are blessed with reasonable size and great power you can be a good, perhaps very good or even great thrower. Strength-power training should parallel throwing. A thrower who begins at age ten, or younger, should also begin strength-power training. Nik Arrhenius (discussed later in this article) did that, and his younger brother Leif has done that. Leif is good. How good is yet to be determined. Young people who want to throw need to be powerful as well as technically accurate. Strength and power facilitate doing things that weak people cannot do. That is to move at high velocities while making precise technical movements.

Sources of Force, Rear of Circle

1. The basis of all translation of the human body from one position to another is *lean*; or the act of moving the center of gravity beyond the base of support. The more dramatic the lean, the greater the speed of movement necessary to prevent falling. You must move at high velocities to create high levels of kinetic energy (momentum). However moving at too high velocity (leaning too much) causes the right foot/leg to stop when landing in the center of the circle. A discus thrower must determine the degree of lean that will allow

him/her to move through the center of the circle without stalling. Silvester spent hours working out this delicate balance for himself. Lean too hard and you stop yourself at the right foot touchdown



L. Jay Silvester

in the middle and there is little transition of momentum to the front of the circle. Lean too little and you do not create adequate momentum.

2. Another way to create force is by sweeping or swinging the right leg wide out of the back of the circle. Silvester loves Godina's active right leg. Randy Barnes was also highly effective in this regard. Mac Wilken's referred to the right leg as his most important source of force.
3. Lastly, *left leg push off* out of the back.

The challenge is to blend the three elements. The lean and the left leg pushoff are more or less linear movements while the sweeping right leg is rotational. A very important challenge to all throwers is to blend these movements so the result is a smoothly flowing tornado that unleashes the discus with maximum force.

Sources of Force, Middle of Circle

1. *Linear drive* works in tandem with rotary force. Usually beginners are rotary oriented; some accomplished throwers of the past have also been very rotational. Former world-record holder Edmund Piatowski (POL, WR-59.90M) worked almost exclusively in a rotary fashion, rarely covering more than half the circle. Rotary force is very important in discus throwing, but to get the most out of one's technique a thrower must combine great linear and rotary movement.
2. *Lift* generated by standing tall while preparing for delivery of the implement. Transferring the center of gravity from the right side to the left while rising over the left leg block.

Grip

The discus should be gripped with the first two fingers fairly close together. Silvester prefers to keep the perimeter of the hand and fingers in contact with the discus. The palm should have no contact with the implement surface. Silvester always preferred to have a firm grip on the discus with his fingers as opposed

to a looser grip that felt like it would easily slip out.

The discus is an airfoil and you must learn how to fly it. As you lift and pull at release, the outer edge will be tilted slightly down. The discus bowling drill is great teaching exercise. Tony Washington's release when viewed from the side appears to be an underarmed scoop. This style is great for head winds, but less advantageous for right quartering breezes that will push the discus down.

Release Angles or Strike Zones for Throwing (Delivering) the Discus

Silvester used a high strike (delivery movement of the right arm shoulder) early in his career, and a lower strike later. Biomechanical studies of Mac Wilkens' gold-medal effort at the 1976 Olympics showed a release height of 7', as opposed to 5' for fellow medallists Wolfgang Schmidt and John Powell. Wilkens release height could have been influenced by his days as a javelin thrower and the overhand delivery in that event. Either high or low works well. High is more difficult to fly the discus properly from.

Rhythm versus Mechanics

What's more important in throwing? Silvester says without hesitation, rhythm. How do you teach rhythm? Common teaching says start slow and gain speed. Silvester teaches a fairly fast start. Most of the angular momentum of the discus body system has been developed by the time the left foot leaves the back of the circle. Silvester says, "Go pretty hard, when you can." Push it as much as possible without everything falling apart.

The rhythm can be expressed as "sweep....da..da", with the sweep being the right leg and the da represented first the right foot, then left foot touch down at the front of the circle. This rhythm will vary per thrower, such as "sweep..da....da", "sweep.....da,da", etc.

Disconnect the Upper Body from Lower Body

The upper body in the throwing motion is loose, without tension, and patient. The upper body waits for the lower body to work like crazy in the circle, creating torque. Only at the end is the upper body unleashed. This principle is essentially the same for all throwing events.

Nik Arrehnius

Silvester spoke of his technical involvement with high school phenom Nik Arrehnius, then just finishing his junior year of high school at 17 years of age. Silvester describes him as a wonderful blend of rhythm, power, quickness and ability. Arrehnius, at 6'3", 230 lbs., had already posted weight room bests of 575 lbs. full squat (below parallel), a bench slightly over 400 lbs., and a power clean of 310 lbs. Silvester sees his pupil on the

international stage in the future, as evidenced by his outstanding throw of 192'....with the **2 kg**. platter. Arrhenius of course ultimately broke the National high school record by throwing 234' 3."

Specific Technique

- Coming out of the back of the ring, the movements at the start of any rotational event set the stage for the entire effort and more than likely determine the success of the throw.
- As can be seen with Tiger Woods, an early start in any sport is beneficial in developing the nervous system and precision necessary to make complex movements effectively and repeatedly.
- Silvester teaches a starting stance slightly wider than shoulder-width to promote stability. He likes to see movement (i.e.- shift of the center of gravity) at the back, which promotes smooth and fluid movement throughout the throw rather than robotic movement. Weight shift should go over the left foot, and only afterward should the entry into the circle (linear drive) commence. Good flexion in the knees should be used. Beginners, for drill purposes only, can benefit from shifting to the right, then backing (or sitting) on the left hip before advancing into the circle. With beginners doing drills, this movement should be exaggerated beyond what is used when actually throwing.
- Action on the left foot at the start is from the medial side to the ball – not grinding around on the ball of the foot.
- Silvester preferred to begin with his left foot on the centerline to add extra time and distance entering the middle, thus creating more force. Many beginners will not be comfortable with spending the extra time on the left foot.
- Orbit of the discus is very important, just as in the hammer. When the implement is between the thrower and the back of the circle, it should be at its lowest point. When the discus is between the thrower and the direction of the throw it is at its highest point. The pre-releases orbit will approximate the angle of delivery.

Development of torque is essential. Adam Nelson (shot put) is teaching us something Silvester never thought could be done. Nelson's left arm in the circle does not just stall the upper body, but actually wraps right while the body is rotating left countering the movement of the rest of the body? This develops great torque but also causes a jerk or stopping of the movement to the left. ***LSTJ***



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McEwen (continued from page 11. 11)

dunk!' But once I start throwing down two-handed reverse dunks people start leaving the building."

"When I used to bounce at a club in Cleveland I would bet people I could do a standing jump onto the bar," he continues. "The bar was maybe 40-45 inches high. The standard bet was twenty bucks and I could make \$40 to \$80 a night." McEwen feigns guilt about hustling drunks, but quickly reasons it away, saying "I needed to buy throwing shoes."

Despite his modest description as "fat", McEwen's carriage is a very efficient machine. That efficiency is augmented by his hair maintenance routine. He shaves his entire body, head, legs, arms, chest, underarms, etc. My zeal for the total truth was tested by the "etc." and since I am writing for LSTJ and not The Enquirer, I'll pass on that detail.

When asked whether anyone gives him a hard time about the body hair, he replies, "Not many people give me any harassment about that. At least not to my face." Based on appearance that's a wise choice. But then again, they wouldn't understand the paradox, would they? **LSTJ**

BLOCKBUSTER

By Glenn Thompson

To most USATF members, the mailings are very familiar. They show up in your mailbox every so often with the USATF logo in the upper left hand corner of the envelope from something or someone called USATF Development. Enclosed is listing of enough videos titles to stock your local Blockbuster. And most probably disregard the plain black and white photocopied form with less thought than they give to Ed McMahon and Dick Clark.

Lyle Knudson is the human powerplant that generates many of USATF Development's projects, including those videos. But Knudson is no mere video fanatic. "I've been involved with AAU, TAC and USATF Development since 1968," says Knudson. He has served as chair of U.S. Women's Track Coaches Association (1972-84), started the TAC/USATF Development Projects in 1978 with the National Junior Elite Women's Track & Field Training Camps, began the videotape program at 1988 Olympic Trials and established the High Altitude Running Camps in 1991. Knudson has coached at the youth, club, prep, collegiate (Colorado, Colorado State, Utah State, Florida) and international (11 USA team assignments) levels. He's developed 36 USA internationalists, seven Olympians (including Jane Frederick, Wendy Koenig Knudson, Karen Page, and Shelly Steely) and 48 NCAA All-Americans. He retired from full time coaching in 1987 to become a university biomechanics professor and corporate research and development director. Knudson now owns and operates his own computer analysis business. He also develops and markets computer software, teaches computer classes at Colorado Mountain College, and teaches skiing. And oh yeah, he operates USATF's Development's projects and activities. He also currently coaches two elite female distance runners.

Obviously Knudson has to sleep standing up. He dedicates 40-60 hours per week to Track-Tech.com, his newest project. While he develops and markets track and field software, coaches and does website development on a commercial basis, his work with USATF Development Projects (videotape program, technical articles, Junior Elite Camps and High Altitude Camps) are strictly volunteer. Knudson started Track-Tech.com (<http://www.track-tech.com>) in 2001 to "integrate the development, operation and marketing of the USATF Development Projects programs (videotapes, technical articles, Junior Elite Camps, High Altitude Running Camps, etc.) and my

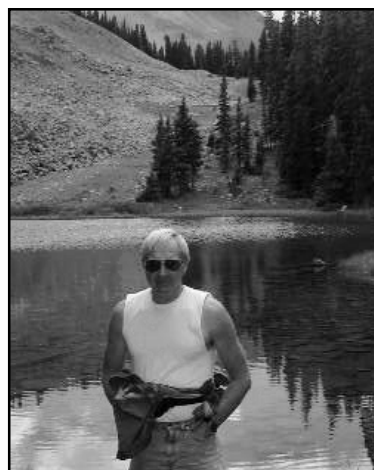
other track & field related activities (software, training programs, etc.)."

A great deal of work goes into the production of videos. Competition videos, excepting TV outtakes from 1996 Olympic Games), come from a group of videographers (coaches) that Knudson leads in taping competitions. He then edits those tapes into the masters. Instructional videos are taped by Knudson and recruited videographers who tape instruction sessions such as at Junior Elite Camps, the 2000 Olympic Trials Super Clinic, or other organized sessions. Knudson then edits the tapes. Also available are the 1987 and 1988 International Athletic Foundation tapes provided, through joint advertising arrangements, with the IAAF Education committee. Knudson uses three industrial grade VCR's (purchased by USATF Women's Development funds), one to play the master tape and two to copy two tapes at a time. Knudson estimates over 43,000 have been sold.

For throwers Knudson recommends all of the throws instruction and competition tapes, plus the IAAF Biomechanics Studies, the 1987 World Championships and the 1991 USATF Rookie Level Education tapes. [Editor's Note: Please see the special throwers order form following this article.]

Knudson is no glory hound and is quick to praise those who work in the shadows. "The real heroes of USATF Development are the athletes and coaches who take advantage of the learning, training, and competition opportunities provided by their home programs, USATF Development, and other USATF divisions such as Sports Science & Medicine and Coaches Education)," he says. "However, other heroes include the coaches, scientists, and other officials who organize, direct, and work the USATF Development (and related) programs that provide these opportunities, many working in the background without seeking or getting due recognition and support."

You may not win ten million bucks, but you're a guaranteed winner just by ordering. ***LSTJ***



Knudson in a rare moment: relaxing.

Courtesy of Lyle Knudson



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- ___ Discus (w)
- ___ Javelin (m)
- ___ Javelin (w)
- ___ Hammer (m)
- ___ Hammer (w, X)

USA OLYMPIC TRIALS, Indianapolis, 1988

(all rounds of competition, all performers)

- ___ Shot Put (w/m)
- ___ Discus (w)
- ___ Discus (m)
- ___ Javelin (w)
- ___ Javelin (m)
- ___ Hammer (m)

USA OLYMPIC TRIALS, New Orleans, 1992

(all rounds of competition, all performers, slow motion of finals of sprints/hurdles runs, results included)

- ___ Shot Put (w)
- ___ Shot Put (m)
- ___ Discus (w)
- ___ Discus (m)
- ___ Javelin (w)
- ___ Javelin (m)
- ___ Hammer (w,X)
- ___ Hammer (m)

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SPORTS

Coach,

I probably haven't done anything you haven't done with your guys. As long as I can get them working hard in the weightroom and get them as strong and explosive as possible, they're going to improve.

To me the hard part is teaching them to throw. The first time thrower, and even more so the experienced thrower, who has excellent technique. Although I've only had one like that, I feel as though I can get them so far and then my coaching style repeats itself. How much do you actually verbally coach a thrower versus him letting him work his own technique?

I feel like I say the same things over, and over again. I question myself as to whether I do this because it benefits the thrower or I just don't have anymore coaching to implement. Second, as you probably experience, the kids always want to know what they can do to throw farther after every attempt.

Rich

Rich,

You bring up things that I think every throwing coach has thought about. If I am around when they throw in practice and I have something to say, I will say it. If I don't have anything in particular to say when they ask me, I just say, "That was fine." When a meet comes it is an entire different story. I don't coach my athletes during the outdoor season meets. I feel they are the ones who have to compete, not me. They are the ones who have to learn how to perform on their own. I am not their baby blanket. When they are out there in the ring at the conference, sectional, or state meet, they must learn to make their own adjustments. During the indoor season I will coach during the meet because we view that as preseason. Once the outdoor season starts its 'showtime', and I will do my coaching before and after the meet.

As far as practice structure is concerned, the article I wrote for *LSTJ* (July, October 1999) is what I do. The only thing I could add is I count on the help of my upper classmen throwers to help the younger throwers with their technique. This accomplishes four things:

1. I like my athletes to know what I know. This enables them to better help themselves in their meets. Like I said above, they are on their own out there.
2. Nothing helps you know what you are doing better than to have to teach it to someone. If they can help the younger kids perform the techniques properly, I know they really have a good grasp of what I am trying to teach them.
3. The kids have a way of explaining things to each other where it just clicks. There has been more than a few times where I have been having difficulty trying to get a point across to a young athlete. Along comes one of my older throwers and explains it to the young thrower using different terms, and all of the sudden the young thrower understands.
4. It helps with team unity. The younger throwers don't seem to be so intimidated since the older throwers are taking the time to get to know them.

Coach Aikens

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FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

By: The Literalist

As usual during these last few days of December, I start preparing for the coming year. Mostly, this involves planning...sometimes even making lists. Rarely is any real action taken, as that would have to be credited to the "old" year's list of accomplishments. No, I'll save my actual effort until after January first. For instance: I need to break several bad habits, get myself into shape, become independently wealthy, and pick up a used tire from the neighborhood gas station. These tasks will be postponed until 2002 arrives.

Another new responsibility will involve the "Wolverine Track and Field Club". A friend and I recently organized this new corporation to function as boosters for our local high school squads. Initially, the club consisted of 2 people. After several deadlocked 1-1 votes, I was finally elected President when the other guy accepted the post of Secretary/Treasurer and agreed to pay the bar tab.

As word spread about our new group, a local attorney asked if he could be involved. We had no serious ethical problems associating with a lawyer, but he also admitted, without the least sign of remorse, to being a distance runner. In the spirit of inclusion, we allowed him to draw up the legal papers for free and make a nice donation...but cautioned him against aspiring to any position of responsibility.

Another volunteer has recently been accepted with *full* honors, however. He's the president and owner of our area's largest bank. To be honest, with his history of contributions to worthy causes, he would have been admitted if his athletic background included interpretive dance, costume jewelry collecting, or sniffing bicycle seats.

We recruited a successful insurance agent who was vulnerable to a well-planned sales pitch. We offered him a special, one-time dues category of fifty dollars per year, renewable until the age of 65. Later, we refunded his money due to his willingness to work several meets this spring...actually, we were fearful he'd find out that membership was free to everyone else.

Next year, we'll be hosting four large invitationals, so we've got a busy schedule in 2002. The first meet is a non-traditional trophy competition. We throw in the old shuttle-hurdle relay, several mixed-gender races, and a special mystery event for coaches only. Last year, it was the standing long jump, won by a thin, fit guy with one of those goofy, long-billed caps. He strutted like a peacock as he accepted his award. Oh, that reminds me, I gotta get to that gas station before April...I can't wait to see how the little defending champ will do in the coaches' tire toss.

Good Luck !

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