LONG & STRONG THROWERS JOURNAL


Prep Phenom
Walter Henning

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

## INSIDE:

A.G. Kruger, Jill Camarena,
Throws Technique,
Championships Coverage
and MORE!

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**On the cover: Prep phenom Walter Henning carries American hopes for Olympic gold on his young shoulders . (Victor Sailer) This page: Reese Hoffa spun his way to IAAF gold and a spot in the all-time Top 10 in Moscow. (Victor Sailer)**


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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Carpe Diem

*"The most important quality I have noticed in successful people is that they have a dream. They want to be someone or something. They want to have something. They want to go somewhere. They think and work towards that dream every day. I often ask people who tell me their dream, 'What did you do today to move closer to your dream?' Eighty-five percent didn't do anything. They're planning to do something next week; they're just too busy today. These eighty-five percent will probably never see their dream come true.*

*"Ask yourself the same question: 'What have I done today to make my dream come true?' If the answer is nothing specific, then you probably won't make it unless you change."*

**—Astronaut Alan Bean—**

Sometimes it takes a tragedy of some magnitude to bring us to our senses. It may have a broad scope, such as a disaster like Hurricane Katrina or September 11. But the closer to home an event happens, the more powerful the reminder of our own mortality.

In recent months I've been reminded (1) each day is a gift, and (2) each day is an opportunity. At 43 years of age, I'm supposed to be in (or reasonably close to, depending on who you ask) the prime of life. However, the month of February saw two work associates (one of whom was a friend, the other I had spoken with recently) struck down without warning by natural causes. Both were healthy, with families, and my approximate age.

Every day we need only to turn on the local news to learn of homicides and fatal car accidents. Turn on the network news and we learn about more of our brave young men and women making the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Too often, life is just too damned short. I remind myself of that every blessed day.

I'm very much a goal-oriented individual. I never do one thing, if I can be doing two. Sometimes I think this might be some type of self-esteem issue, but I have too much to do to get psychoanalyzed. Call me old school, but if something needs to be done, you find a way to do it. Those commercials with the Staples Easy Button? Funny as hell, but we all know there's no such thing.

One of the best business tools I ever received was a Franklin Planner. I love to itemize what needs to be done, but more importantly, cross off what has been accomplished. When I'm at a work meeting that is not particularly captivating, I can be seen scribbling away in my planner adding to my to-do list. Maybe I need to create a new report, or have to remember to contact an interview candidate for *LSTJ*. Very rarely do I cross off everything in my planner for a particular day. Just not enough hours on the clock. And I suppose that if I did get everything done, I'd just start working on the next day's agenda anyway.

*Glenn Thompson*

Being a private coach, I've had the opportunity to pick and choose whom I work with. No wasting time on the distinterested and lackadasical. Generally speaking, if a kid is willing to come out and spend time with me when they've had a full week of practice in another sport, the weather sucks, and they could be doing anything else, they are go-getters.

I've done features on Jeremy Silverman and Ryan Whiting in *LSTJ*. But I've been blessed with a host of other throwers who have the same love for the sport and have every bit as much drive to maximize their God-given gifts. I gain respect for them not so much as I watch them achieve their goals, but as I see them put forth the effort to get there. Those moments are special to them. And special to me as well.

And while not all of them will garner headlines and gold medals, they will be a success in pursuits of greater import; academics, and later, in their chosen professions. It's not always the Ivy League grad that gets ahead in life. Many times it's the plugger with the state college education who has a motor that just won't quit.

I know people that live life the other way as well. They drift with no clear direction. Everything can wait until tomorrow. If a challenge presents itself, they instinctively cower from it. They have an excuse for everything.

They eventually come to lead lives dominated by regret and what-ifs. By the time they have their personal epiphanies, the lost opportunities weigh heavily on them, leaving them bitter and regretful. Some of life's best lessons we have to learn for ourselves.

Never allow yourself to fall into this path of least resistance. Find a passion in life, and never stop chasing it, be you 8 or 80. Go to bed each night exhausted and somewhat, but not too, content. You'll rest easier.

So what have you done today? ***LSTJ***

Reggie Lewis Center, Boston, MA, February 24-26

# HOT SHOTS!

## By Hugh Murphy, Brown University

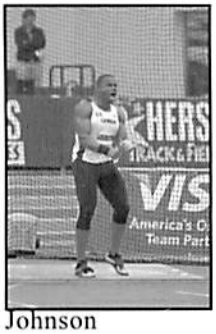
The Reggie Lewis Center in Boston played host to the U.S. Indoor National Championships once again this year, and for many top American throwers, it's beginning to look a bit like home. Three of the four returning champs reclaimed their crowns in a meet that ran with barely a hitch. And, with the $25,000 Visa Championship prize within reach of several athletes, including men's shot putter Reese Hoffa, the competition was as heated as ever.

The men's and women's weight throwers were dealt the low hand in scheduling for the second year in a row. Both events were held on Friday, while all other competitions took place on Saturday and Sunday. Spectators were forced to choose between traveling to Boston on a workday to watch two events on Friday, or waiting 24 hours to see twenty-three events on Saturday.

### Men's Weight Throw

Everyone in the Reggie Lewis Center had a pretty good idea of who the top three finishers would be in the men's weight, but no one with a straight face could tell you the order. A.G. Kruger, Jake Freeman and Kibwe Johnson were safe bets for the podium after finishing 1-2-3 at last year's championships and owning the top ten marks in the nation prior to the meet. It would take all six rounds and several lead changes to sort this year's champion out of the trio.

A crowd of 50 to 60 spectators were on hand at the start of the event. After a long warmup it was clear that training partners Kruger and Johnson were in amazing shape and ready to throw something far. Johnson's speed through the turns was absolutely scary, and Kruger looks more and more like Stone Cold Steve Austin's big brother with each passing year. Even technically sour throws were landing well over the 21 meter line.


Johnson

Johnson set the pace in round 1 with a 22.95m toss. Kruger countered in round 2 with the first 23-meter throw of the day to take the lead. Travis Nutter moved into the mix as well, hitting 22.49m. The defending champ fouled in round three and relinquished his lead to Johnson, who dropped a 23.64m bomb.


Kruger

Freeman also went over 23 meters in round three with a mark of 23.11m. Nutter lost a big throw near the 23 meters line to a questionable foot foul in the final round of prelims, but still advanced to finals.

Johnson sneaked back into the lead in round 5 with a toss of 23.72m. Kruger nipped that mark on the next throw by 2 centimeters. Johnson and Freeman landed 23 meter throws in the final round, but neither were able to overcome Kruger's 23.72m throw.

The win was the second national title in two years for Kruger, and his third overall.

"Things started off a little rough," Kruger said. "But, I got it clicking late. I switched to a four-turn this year so I can really just use the weight as a training tool for the hammer."

1, Kruger, A.G., Ashland Elit, 23.74m, (77-10.75). 2, Johnson, Kibwé, unattached, 23.72m, (77-10). 3, Freeman, Thomas, New York AC, 23.48m, (77-00.50). 4, Nutter, Travis, Pacific Bay, 22.61m, (74-02.25). 5, Cueto, Arnaldo, unattached, 21.87m, (71-09). 6, Doty, Jesse, Syracuse Cha, 20.85m, (68-05). 7, Welihozkiy, Nicholas, Pacific Bay, 20.74m, (68-00.50). 8, Freeman, Michael, Manhattan Coll., 20.17m, (66-02.25).

### Women's Weight Throw

A bare bones crowd was on hand to witness Erin Gilreath's monster throw at last year's Indoor Nationals. It was a similar scene this year, as fewer than 70 fans sat huddled in the stands of a chilly Reggie Lewis Center in hopes of viewing a repeat performance. But, after deciding to focus on the hammer this year, Gilreath and coach Larry Judge were not expecting anything more than a solid performance. It just so happens that a solid performance for an athlete as dominant as Gilreath is a national title.

The defending champ took the early lead with a 21.45m throw. Amber Campbell and Loree Smith both fouled their first throws, leaving Gilreath all alone when she unleashed a 22.37m toss in round 2. Campbell narrowly missed the 22-meter line in round 4, but got her revenge with a 22.66m bomb in round 5. The throw gave the lead to Campbell, last year's runner-up. Campbell's lead was short-lived, however, as Gilreath laid down


Gilreath

*** All photos by Victor Sailer**


Campbell

a season's best toss of 22.95m in the final round. The throw was enough to secure her third straight national title.

"It was a matter of pride," Gilreath said. "I didn't want this event to slip away."

Gilreath's coach, Larry Judge, was pleased with his athlete's performance, but deferred attention to the outdoor season.

"I'm really happy with the results," said Judge. "But we want to get ready for the hammer in '08. And right now, her hammer looks out of sight."

Campbell finished the competition in second position, and 2005 NCAA hammer champion Loree Smith took third.

1, Gilreath, Erin, New York AC, 22.95m, (75-03.50). 2, Campbell, Amber, unattached, 22.66m, (74-04.25). 3, Smith, Loree, New York AC, 21.82m, (71-07.25). 4, Thompson, Faith, unattached, 20.61m, (67-07.50). 5, Jarocki, Robyn, Wisc-Oshkosh, 20.32m, (66-08). 6, Soong, Cari, Team Xo/Gi Joes, 20.21m, (66-03.75). 7, Mahon, Anna, unattached, 19.89m, (65-03.25). 8, Yush, Kristal, unattached, 19.61m, (64-04).

**Women's Shot Put**

The question during warm-ups of the women's shot revolved around Kristin Heaston and the returning champion, Jill Camarena. Both throwers were sending the shot past last year's winning mark of 17.31m before the competition began. After the second round of competition, the questions switched to, "What? How? When? What did I miss?"


Camarena

Camarena became the story of the day when her 19.26m put landed in the sector during round 2. The throw was the third best mark in the world at the time, and moved her into third on the all-time U.S. list. She fell into a fit of hysterics as the significance of the throw began to sink in. A 4-foot PR from one meet to another is almost unfathomable, but when it comes at the U.S. championships, it takes on a whole new meaning.


Heaston

"I was just so excited," Camarena said. "This is a huge PR. for me. Once I saw the measurement, I just lost it."

The throw shut the door on Heaston and the rest of the competitors, even though Heaston's final mark of 18.24m met the World Indoor qualifying standard and would have won last year's U.S. championships by 3 feet. Jessica Cosby of Nike also threw well, marking a 17.19m throw in round 5 to place third. But, Camarena was simply too dominant, landing all four of her fair throws over the 18 meter line.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Camarena's performance was that she had switched from the glide to the spin only months before.

"Training has been going so great that it was just a matter of time before I hit a big throw. I just didn't expect it this soon."

1, Camarena, Jillian, unattached, 19.26m, (63-02.25). 2, Heaston, Kristin, Nike, 18.24m, (59-10.25). 3, Cosby, Jessica, Nike, 17.19m, (56-04.75). 4, Wanless, Elizabeth, New York AC, 16.58m, (54-04.75). 5, Jarocki, Robyn, Wisc-Oshkosh, 16.22m, (53-02.75). 6, Woods, Kenitra, unattached, 15.31m, (50-02.75). 7, Vance, Sarah, unattached, 15.08m, (49-05.75). 8, Egwu, Blessing, St. John's, 14.76m, (48-05.25).

**Men's Shot Put**

Reese Hoffa has struggled to find the spotlight over the last few years. Not that his performances would show it. A personal best over 71 feet, the lead in the 2006 Visa Championship Series, and a string of top three performances at major competitions were not enough for many fans to include Hoffa in their all-time best list. His ability has been painfully evident for several years, but for some reason Hoffa has needed extra validation from the track and field public. The 28 year-old Georgia native finally found his validation, and earned his first U.S. Championship, at this year's meet.


Hoffa

Meet organizers recognized the growing popularity of the men's shot and scheduled the event to run with only the racewalk moving on the track.

John Godina got the crowd's attention with a big first round toss of 20.50m. Hoffa answered with a 20.98m put. Adam Nelson's forgettable day


Cantwell

<See USATF on page 7>

# HOFFA: "WOW!"

## by Glenn Thompson (with Shaun Pickering)

To the observant, the outcome of the men's shot might have been easy to see after Reese Hoffa's first toss at the 2006 IAAF Indoor World Championships. Hoffa entered the ring in the morning qualifications, set himself, and whirled to a 20.76m (68-1½) automatic qualifier. A solid effort, no doubt, but perhaps it was the look of surprise on Hoffa's face that set the tone. Hoffa would later confess that throw was an eighty percent effort. "It went really easy," said Hoffa. "I thought I had thrown 20m and then it showed 20.76 (68-1½). Wow!"


VictorSailer
Hoffa

Others in qualifying bore their own looks…of exasperation, after not qualifying. German Ralph Bartels, who was having an excellent indoor season (new PR of 21.43m/70-3¾), could summon nothing better than 19.46m/63-10¼. South African and former NCAA champion Jannus Robberts had shown some of his prior promise with a 21.06m (69-1¼) toss in Pretoria in January. He also came up empty, mustering only 19.39m (63-7½).


VictorSailer
Mikhnevich

Defending champion, and fellow-American, Christian Cantwell, was the morning's biggest casualty, finishing tenth with 19.90m (65-3½), more than a meter below his season's best. Denmark's Joachim Olsen needed three throws for his 20.33m qualifier.

One of the most mentally and physically demanding events in international competition is the men's shot. It requires contestants qualify in the morning, then gear up again for an afternoon/evening final. Moscow was no different.

Hoffa opened at 21.41m (70-3½), an effort good enough to win the competition. Perhaps that toss was 90%. Andrey Mickhnevich (Belarus) followed with 21.21m (69-7) to lend drama to the competition, and impetus to Hoffa. Hoffa returned in the second stanza and blasted a 22.11m (72-6¼) bomb, propelling him all the way to 8th on the all-time performance list. That might have been 100%.


VictorSailer
Olsen

Mikhnevich, the 2003 IAAF Outdoor champion, followed in the second round with a personal best of his own, 21.37m (70-1½), to secure silver. Mikhnevich entered the competition seeking to break the Belarussian indoor record. Mission accomplished.

Olsen repeated his 2004 World Indoor bronze at 21.16m. He was also the 2004 Olympic bronze medallist. Olsen is coming back from off-season hand/wrist surgery, and his body weight is light due to incomplete training.

Hoffa's great effort was oddly enough, perhaps not the best of the event. The host country's Pavel Sofin, who had PR'ed twice in qualifying, added a third PR in the fourth round (20.68m/67-10¼) to finish fourth.

Poland's Tomasz Majewski rose a few eyebrows with a 21m foul, but would settle for seventh.

"It is the day of my career," said Hoffa. "I won a lot of confidence for championships in future years. I can't believe it…I feel awesome. My gosh, 22 meters; that is something special. I could not have expected it."

**Men's Shot**

1. Hoffa, Reese (USA) 22.11/72-6.5 (WL); 2. Mikhnevich, Andrei (BLR) 21.37/70-1.5 (PB); 3. Olsen, Joachim (DEN) 21.16/69-5.25; 4. Sofin, Pavel (RUS) 20.68/67-10.25 (PB); 5. Guset, Gheorghe (ROM) 20.60/67-7; 6. Martínez, Manuel (ESP) 20.43/67-0.5 (SB); 7. Majewski, Tomasz (POL) 20.07/65-10.25; 8. Lyuboslavskiy, Anton (RUS) 19.93/65-4.75;

**WOMEN**

The qualification round went close to form, with no notable surprises. Round one saw four automatic qualifiers, all veterans of international podiums: Belarussia's 2005 World Student Games champion, Natalya Khoroneko, 19.33m (63-5); Russian World outdoor silver Olga Ryabinkina, 19.01m (62-4½); World Outdoor champion and favorite, Belarusian Nadezhda Ostapchuk (18.98/62-3¼); Germany's 2004 Olympic silver medallist Nadine Kleinert, at 18.57m (60-11¼).

Germany's 2005 European Under-23 champion, Petra

Lammert, and Cuba's Olympic champion, Yumileidi Cumba, required all three efforts to advance, throwing 18.24m (59-10¼) and 18.78m (61-7½), respectively. It was a season's best for the Cumba.

VictorSailer

Khoroneko

USATF Indoor champion Jill Camarena struggled with a 16.23m (53-3) opener and a second round foul, before gaining her composure and striking a mentally tough 18.25m (59-10½) effort. In doing so, she became the first American women to advance to an Olympic or World Championship final in recent memory.

In the final, Opstachuk would never find her form. Opstachuk, who had not lost since the 2004 Olympics, appeared to suffer a hand/wrist injury on her first put. Into the void ascended Belarussian teammate Natallia Khoroneko, with a PR 19.84m (65-1¼) for the gold.

For Khoroneko it was a great personal victory, as she was still recovering from the recent death of her father.

The silver went to Germany's Olympic runner-up, Nadine Kleinert, 19.64m (64-5¼), followed in bronze by Russia's double European Cup winner, Olga Ryabinkina, on a season's best 19.24m (63-1½).

Round one saw Kleinert in the lead with 19.26m (63-2¼) followed by Khoroneko, 19.00m (62-4) and Ryabinkina 18.96m (62-2½). Ostapchuk had fouled, but no one could have suspected what was to come as she fouled in round two as well, the shot sliding out of the side of her hand and landing around the 16.50m mark.

VictorSailer

Kleinert

Round two was to be the decisive stanza where the top two went out to their medal winning throws, while in round three Ryabinkina snatched the bronze medal position from Germany's Petra Lammert by three centimeters.

Camarena, who was making her first appearance on the international stage, was initially stunned by the standing throws of Koreneko, Opstapchuk, Rybakina and Kleinert, all of whom have 60' power.

Camarena was one of only two rotational throwers in the competition, the other being Italian non-finalist Rosa Chiara.

**Women's Shot**

1. Khoroneko Natallia (BLR) 19.84/65-1.25 (PB); 2. Kleinert Nadine (GER) 19.64/64-5.25 (PB); 3. Ryabinkina Olga (RUS) 19.24/63-1.5 (SB); 4. Lammert Petra (GER) 19.21/63-0.25; 5. Cumbá Yumileidi (CUB) 18.28/59-11.75; 6. Ostapchuk Nadzeya (BLR) 18.13/59-5.75; 7. Camarena Jillian (USA) 17.60/57-9; 8. Borel-Brown Cleopatra (TRI) 17.59/57-8.5;

***LSTJ***

## USATF continued from pg. 5

began with a foul in round 1. He reportedly strained a groin on the throw, which looked to bother him throughout the competition.

Hoffa held the lead until the third round, when Christian Cantwell unleashed the first 21-meter throw of the day. Hoffa regained the lead on his fifth throw with a 21.64m bomb. The throw was the second farthest in the world this indoor season. Cantwell fouled on his final three attempts, but finished in second position. Godina's first toss of the competition was good enough for third, leaving Nelson and Steve Manz to complete the top five. Nineteen year-old Ryan Whiting became a story in his own right, throwing 19.36m and placing eighth in Finals.

But, the day, and the spotlight, belonged to Hoffa.

"I knew it would take 21m+ to win it," Hoffa said. "Some of the best throwers in history were competing today. It's just such an honor."

Reese retained the overall lead in the Visa Championship Series with the win and secured his spot in the World Indoor Championships team.

**Men's Shot Put**

1, Hoffa, Reese, New York AC, 21.61m, (70-10.75). 2, Cantwell, Christian, Nike, 21.10m, (69-02.75). 3, Godina, John, adidas, 20.50m, (67-03.25). 4, Nelson, Adam, unattached, 20.30m, (66-07.25). 5, Manz, Steve, unattached, 20.29m, (66-07). 6, Taylor, Dan, Nike, 20.26m, (66-05.75). 7, Mosca, Vincent, unattached, 20.05m, (65-09.50). 8, Whiting, Ryan, unattached, 19.36m, (63-06.25).

***LSTJ***

March 10-12

# DOMINANCE AND DRAMA

## By Don Babbitt, University of Georgia

*The throws competitions at the NCAA championships featured a mix of collegiate veterans along with some new faces fighting for spots on the medal podium.*


*There were dominant performances, but there were also competitions that were in question until the very last throw. The women's shot featured Michelle Carter and Laura Gerraughty in a close finish, while Virginia Tech's Spyridon Jullien had a fight on his hands. The drama and depth on display showed that collegiate throwing is very much alive and healthy.*

### Women's Weight Throw

In what was thought to be a three person race between pre-competition favorites Brittany Riley of Southern Illinois, Jennifer Leatherman of Penn State, and Jenny Dahlgren of Georgia, actually turned out to be a one thrower show. The competition was lead from start to finish by Dahlgren, who threw three times over 23m during the course of the competition, and finished was a dramatic effort of 24.04m (78-10¼) on he last throw. This was only 13cm short of the collegiate record, and was done with only two-turns. I have to say I knew it was going to be a good day for her when she warmed up with a 22m one-turn. Second place ended up going to Riley's SIU teammate, Amarachi Ukabam, who is a seasoned veteran of many NCAA Championships. She saved her best weight meet of the year for these NCAA's with a PR of 22.32m (76-6¼) in the fifth round. Third place went to Jennifer Leatherman, who was a "hometown" favorite, as she is a native of Arkansas. She seemed to struggle with her fourth turn and was never able to get into a good rhythm. Despite this she was able to use her talent to post a mark of 21.49m (70-6 ¼) in the third round to earn third place. Rachel Longfors of Florida surprised a few people with a fifth round throw of 21.33m (69-11¾), just 1cm shy of the 70 foot barrier. This was a PR throw and held up for fourth place. Brittany Riley, who had a best of 75-5 coming in, could only post a 20.98m (68-10) to earn fifth place. The rising star from SIU struggled with her technique, and was only able to post two fair throws. Riley, the reigning US Junior hammer champion, showed that she is one to watch for the future in this event.

1, Jenny Dahlgren, Georgia, 24.04m, (78-10.50). 2, Amarachi Ukabam, S. Illinois, 22.32m, (73-02.75). 3, Jennifer Leatherman, Penn St., 21.49m, (70-06.25). 4, Rachel Longfors, Florida, 21.33m, (69-11.75). 5, Brittany Riley, S. Illinois, 20.98m, (68-10). 6, Tamara Burns, VT, 20.55m, (67-05.25). 7, Tiffany Evans, Radford, 20.26m, (66-05.75). 8, Keturah Lofton, Ohio State, 20.20m, (66-03.25). 9, Jill McCormick, Colorado St., 20.10m, (65-11.50). 10, Jessica Pressley, Ariz St., 19.90m, (65-03.50). 11, Ronda Gullatte, Auburn, 19.90m, (65-03.50). 12, Jyn Wynn, Florida, 19.65m, (64-05.75). 13, Laci Heller, K State, 19.21m, (63-00.25). 14, Ariel Brooks, Tennessee, 19.17m, (62-10.75). 15, Johvonne Hernandez, Syracuse, 18.80m, (61-08.25). 16, Sara Vigil, Arizona, 18.80m, (61-08.25).

### Women's Shot Put

Michelle Carter of Texas pulled out a 1 foot victory over pre-competition favorite Laura Gerraughty of North Carolina. I have to admit it was a great competitive effort by Carter to secure the win. Carter was in first place going into the finals with a slim 6cm lead (17.85m [58-6¾] -17.79m [58-4½]). After extensive warm-ups to find her rhythm between the prelims and the final, Gerraughty finally unloaded a toss of 18.25m in round four, and seemed to be on track for another indoor title. Her throw was essentially at Carter's all-time PR, so Michelle needed to PR to retake the lead. That is exactly what she did on the next throw: 18.56m (60-10¾)! It looked easy, for she has a very long and smooth delivery. Gerraughty was unable to respond, posting two fouls on her last two efforts. Meanwhile, in the last round, freshman Sarah Stevens of Arizona State secured a third place finish with a beautiful throw of 17.91m (58-9¼). She is definitely one to look at for the future. She has a very smooth turn in the middle of the right (in the John Powell mold compared to the more mechanical approach of Gerraughty who turns a little more like Mac Wilkins). Fourth place went to Becky Breisch of Nebraska who looked very powerful, but was unable to control her positions. She had a warm-up throw that was over 61 feet, so she let everyone know what she was capable of, but she was never able to capture that same rhythm in the meet.

1, Michelle Carter, Texas, 18.56m, (60-10.75). 2, Laura Gerraughty, North Carolina, 18.25m, (59-10.50). 3, Sarah Stevens, Ariz St., 17.91m, (58-09.25). 4, Becky Breisch, Nebraska, 17.31m, (56-09.50). 5, Aubrey Martin, W. Illinois, 16.86m, (55-03.75). 6, Janine Zylinski, Ohio State, 16.62m, (54-06.50). 7, Jennifer Gilson, W. Illinois, 16.55m, (54-03.75). 8, Kasey Onwuchekwa, A&M, 16.20m, (53-01.75). 9, Amarachi Ukabam, S. Illinois, 16.04m, (52-07.50). 10, Rachel Jansen, UNI, 15.91m, (52-02.50). 11, Megan Howard, Arizona, 15.83m, (51-11.25). 12, Jessica Pressley, Ariz St., 15.75m, (51-08.25). 13, Karen Freeberg, USC, 15.68m, (51-05.50). 14, Kamaiya Warren, UCLA, 15.44m, (50-08). 15, Kelli Burton, Arizona, 15.36m, (50-04.75). 16, Aymara Albury, Alabama, 15.34m, (50-04). 17, Jennifer Leatherman, Penn St., 14.74m, (48-04.50).

**Men's Shot Put**

This year's shot competition was essentially the Garrett Johnson show. Johnson, of Florida State, opened up with huge throw of 20.48m (67-2¼) down the right sector line, and that pretty much iced the competition. No one came within a meter. He pulled his second throw around to the center of the sector and it looked farther but the tape read 20.46m (67-1½). His third effort was a solid 20.30m (66-7¼), and then he seemed to lose his timing in the final when no one was able to challenge him. The battle for second place was quite close between four throwers: Winger of Idaho, Shields of Arizona, Battle of Kansas, and Gowda of North Carolina. None of these throwers ever really hit a big throw. It was more a matter of who missed their throws the least, as this foursome only posted two fair throws out of 12 attempts in the finals. Sean Shields looked like the closest to really catching one in the final, but he could never get the height that he wanted at the end of the throw, and had to settle for third. Russ Winger, who was very impressive at least year's USA Outdoor Championships, took second place just 8cm from Sheilds but over a meter behind Johnson.

1, Garrett Johnson, Fla St., 20.48m, (67-02.25). 2, Russ Winger, Idaho, 19.44m, (63-09.50). 3, Sean Shields, Arizona, 19.36m, (63-06.25). 4, Sheldon Battle, Kansas, 19.30m, (63-04). 5, Vikas Gowda, North Carolina, 19.10m, (62-08). 6, Karl Erickson, Minnesota, 18.89m, (61-11.75). 7, Brian Robison, Texas, 18.76m, (61-06.75). 8, Milan Jotanovic, Manhattan, 18.65m, (61-02.25). 9, Ryan Ketchum, Indiana, 18.61m, (61-00.75). 10, Mitchell Pope, NC State, 18.51m, (60-08.75). 11, John Caulfield, UCLA, 18.29m, (60-00.25). 12, Justin Clickett, Pittsburgh, 18.18m, (59-07.75). 13, Dave Adamek, E. Michigan, 17.91m, (58-09.25). 14, Chad McClendon, Georgia, 17.55m, (57-07). —, Derek Anderson, Northeastern, FOUL. —, Gavin Ball, Kentucky, FOUL. Men

**Men's Weight Throw**

This was the best throwing competition of the meet, and one of the best weight competitions I have seen. It kept you interested all the way through. Spyridon Jullien of Virginia Tech had to work hard to defend his title. He produced a big throw of 23.73m (77-10¼) in the third round for the win with his very fast four-turn style. Newcomer Egor Agafonov of Kansas had multiple personal bests to challenge Jullien throughout the course of the competition, but had to settle for second with a toss of 23.19m (76-1). He is a tall, lean, three-turner with a very Russian technique. He is supposed to be a 68m hammer thrower, but by the looks of his weight throw performance, he should throw much further. Third place went to Corey Martin of Auburn, who was very steady over 22m (five throws in all). He is another four turner who is big and rangy, and he also had a personal best of 22.89m. Fourth place went to Mohsen Anani, of Virginia Tech, boasted the best hammer PR coming into the competition (75m+). He was never quite able to hook up a big throw for himself but still finished with 22.82m (74-10½). Jake Dunkelberger from Auburn came back from just squeaking into the final, to post a great throw for himself at 22.17m (72-9) in the final round to grab fifth place. Perhaps the smallest weight thrower of the competition, Mattias Jons, was sixth at 21.50m (70-6½) in this very deep competition. Nick Owens of North Carolina looked to be a contender early with a questionable foot foul in round 1 at about 22m, but he was not able to come back and ended up fouling out of the competition.

1, Spyridon Jullien, VT, 23.73m, (77-10.25). 2, Egor Agafonov, Kansas, 23.19m, (76-01). 3, Cory Martin, Auburn, 22.89m, (75-01.25). 4, Mohsen Anani, VT, 22.82m, (74-10.50). 5, Jake Dunkleberger, Auburn, 22.17m, (72-09). 6, Mattias Jons, Boise State, 21.50m, (70-06.50). 7, Eric Frasure, E. Carolina, 21.29m, (69-10.25). 8, Brian Richotte, Radford, 21.12m, (69-03.50). 9, Leonard Jatsek, Ohio State, 21.07m, (69-01.50). 10, Sheldon Battle, Kansas, 21.03m, (69-00). 11, Chris Rohr, Missouri, 20.25m, (66-05.25). 12, Mark Milleville, S. Illinois, 20.18m, (66-02.50). 13, Adam Schnaible, Minnesota, 19.70m, (64-07.75). 14, Dave Stallworth, C. Michigan, 17.96m, (58-11.25). —, Josh Henigman, Montana St., FOUL. —, Nick Owens, North Carolina, FOUL.
***LSTJ***

*** Unfortunately, no NCAA photos were available at press time.**

# WORLD CLASS

## By Glenn Thompson

Stanford Graduate Jillian Camarena has known steady and consistent success over her shot put career. At every level she's always been on the national stage, often on or atop the podium when her event concluded.

Camarena was introduced to the sport in the seventh grade. Her older brother, the Woodland High School record-holder in the event, handed Jillian her first shot put when the two went out for a day at the local ring.

Camarena was a two-year All-American at Woodland High School in Woodland, CA. She was the 1999 California state champion in shot put and runner-up in discus and the 2000 state champion in discus. She was named by the Sacramento Bee as their Track and Field Woman Performer of the Year.

Matriculation to Stanford was almost a given. She had long dreamed of doing her undergraduate work in Palo Alto. Perhaps that was because her father is a graduate.

While at Stanford, Camarena continued her winning ways and built an impressive resume. In 2001 she won the gold medal at the Junior Pan American Championships with a throw of 52-2 (15.90m) and placed ninth at the U.S. Outdoor Championships. In 2002 she was the 2002 Pac-10 champion with a throw of 54-10¼ (16.72m) and third at the NCAA Championships with a season-best of 55-1¼ (16.80m). In 2003 she finished third in the shot at the NCAA Championships with a career best and school record throw of 57-4¾ (17.49m) and broke the long-standing school record of 57-1 (17.40m) set by Carol Cady in 1984. She finished seventh in the shot put at the U.S. Outdoor Championships with a throw of 56-6½ (17.23m). Camarena finished second at the NCAA Indoor Championships with an indoor school record throw of 57-2¾ (17.44m). Her senior campaign in 2004 garnered a bronze at the U.S. Olympic Trials (17.73m/58-2), NCAA Outdoor Championships silver (18.11m/59-5), a Pac-10 championship (17.63m/57-10.25), 2nd at NCAA Indoors (17.27m/56-8), and ranked #3 in the U.S. by *Track &Field News* with a best of 18.15m/59-6.75.

Last season, in her first as a post-collegiate, she was 4th at USA Outdoor Champs (17.72m/58-1.75) and was the USA Indoor champion (17.31m/56-9.5), and ranked #4 in the U.S. by *Track &Field News,* with a best of 17.94m/58-10.25.

The 5-10, 250 pound Camarena had firmly established herself on U.S. soil, but had yet to give the Europeans much of a reason for concern.

All that changed on February 25 of this year in the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston. Camarena, a lifetime glider, showed off her freshly minted rotational technique, cracking 60' (60-1) on her opener, then shocking the putting world with a resounding 63 feet, 2¼ on her second effort for the win at the AT&T USATF Indoor Championships, and a ticket to Moscow for the IAAF World Indoor Championships.

VictorSailer

Camarena was all smiles in Boston.

The 24 year old, now residing in Provo, Utah, took some time out to talk with *LSTJ* between Boston and Moscow, where she entered the competition seeded only behind Nadzeya Ostapchuk of Belarus (66-7) and Natallia Khoreneko of Belarus (64-1½) who have put the shot farther than Camarena this indoor season.

***Long & Strong:*** *Did you play any other sports in high school?*

**Jillian Camarena:** I played many sports in high school. I played volleyball, basketball and city league softball since track and school softball were at the same time. I also did club volleyball and basketball in the summers.

***LSTJ:*** *What's college life like at a renowned academic institution like Stanford while competing at the highest levels of the NCAA? Did you ever feel like you had to make sacrifices one way or the other? Or that maybe you could have given more to your athletics elsewhere?*

**JC:** I really enjoyed my time at Stanford. I had amazing teachers and met some of the most intelligent and talented people on earth, and many of them were freshmen with me. I think being at such an academic institution actually helped me in my studies, because I knew I had to work hard, or I would not stay eligible, and thus not be able to compete. I definitely pulled more all-nighters than I would like to admit, and slept through my fair share of classes, but I think being at a high level of athletics and academics was the best way for me to go through college. I could not slack in either, and when I was running on low, Coach Robert Weir always could tell and gave me the necessary rest that was always just enough to get everything done I needed to. I do not think I could have been a pre-medical student at Stanford and compete, but I loved my history degree, and know I gave everything I could in both while I was there.

***LSTJ:*** *How tough was it for you to finish third at the 2004 Olympic Trials, but miss the 'A' standard and a trip to Olympia?*

**JC:** I think missing the Olympics was probably one of the most disappointing challenges I've had to face in my career. Coming so close, and watching it on TV in such a special place, made me realize that I never wanted to miss like that again. I never wanted to chase a mark again. Every competition after that I tried too hard, when I needed to be completely relaxed. I think that is why the season after the Olympics was so difficult. I was frustrated that I had peaked in my career and stopped enjoying the sport. I knew if I was going to continue on I needed to make some changes and that is what led to coming to Utah and training with Craig Carter.

***LSTJ:*** *Talk about your decision to move to Provo to train.*

**JC:** I decided to move to Utah after much thought and consideration. I had worked with an amazing college coach [Weir], but after five years in the Bay Area, I needed to get away from the traffic, as well as get back into school and get my Masters. I had always wanted to be a teacher, so I thought I would move back home to Woodland, CA, and get my teaching credential from Sacramento State.

All this changed when I heard from Coach Poole and Coach Legas at Brigham Young University, who wanted me to become their team's strength coach after theirs had decided to leave. I applied for the job and was turned down because I did not have the background necessary. During that time I contacted Coach Craig Carter, who recruited me when he was at Utah State, and was now in Provo running the Utah Valley Speed and Acceleration Center. I went to talk to him about possibly coaching me and we had a four-hour conversation covering all my concerns and all his coaching theories, including his desire to make me a spinner. While I was fishing in California with my father, I received a call from Coach Poole on a Wednesday telling me the news that he was able to get me into the Exercise Science and Pedagogy program at BYU, if I could come and be their strength coach. We left our vacation and I was in Utah three days later, in school, and coaching the BYU track team.

Camarena has found new life with the rotational technique.

***LSTJ:*** *Why did you make the move from the glide to the rotational technique?*

**JC:** After 12 years of gliding, I never thought I would become a spinner. I was having doubts as to how long I was going to continue in the sport. I still loved track, but I was not sure if my abilities would match up to my dreams. After my discussion with Craig this past summer, we decided to try the spin. We figured this would be a good year to commit to the spin since there were not too many major international competitions, but he told me it was a full commitment: no going back and forth between the glide and spin. I looked at all the international competitors and realized being only 5'10", that the top throwers in the world had a physical advantage over me, with many of them over 6' tall. Craig had seen me do the South African drills around 60' during my college career and knew I could spin. He knew that the spin would give me the extra advantage and help me reach the same level as the world-class throwers. That was if I could get the spin down, of course. I never thought it would come along this quickly.

***LSTJ:*** *Talk about your technical approach to the (1) glide and (2) rotation. Do you emulate anyone as a rotational thrower? What do you do well, and what do you need to improve?*

**JC:** As a glider I really focused on getting as much torque out of my body as possible. Staying back and getting my hips ahead of my shoulders was my main focus. Speed was also a key for me in the glide. Keeping my shoulder back as long as possible, and finishing out over the board with a high speed of release were some of my keys in the gilde.

Craig's philosophy in approaching the spin has become my own. He has tried to instill in my mind that the whole throw comes from the back of the ring, and if I set the throw up out of the back, that the rest would take care of itself. The power and the speed come from a scoop in the back and a linear drive to the middle. I think watching the film of John Godina has been extremely helpful. I have watched many of his throws and really enjoy the rhythm, power, and beauty of his throwing. His form is what I really try to model my throwing after. As a spinner, my strongest attribute is being able to finish the throw and reach over the toeboard. That is one thing that has carried over from my gliding days.

As for improvement? I need to improve everything! Nothing about my throw is perfect at all, as every thrower knows, but mostly I just need to be more comfortable with the spin. I have the general movement down, but I need to become consistent out of the back, learn to stay back in my

power position, and become quicker in the ring. I need to tighten up what I have been able to learn the past five months and also learn how to be able attack the throw more. It is still so new to me that I continually have to be reminded of the basics.

***LSTJ:*** *Mentally, do you approach the rotation differently than you did the glide?*

**JC:** The biggest difference, mentally, for me, is realizing that I cannot muscle the spin. I have to be completely relaxed in the spin, because if I am not, then my form breaks down so bad that my distance drops significantly. You need to be relaxed in the glide as well, and that is when the big throws come, but I feel like you can get away with being a little more tense.

***LSTJ:*** *What kind of changes did you make in your training routine?*

**JC:** My training routine is not completely different. During college I spent a lot of time in the weight room. When throwing would get frustrating I would go lift. I still lift, but my focus is now on throwing more while improving my strength levels. I also knew as a spinner I would need to be lighter and quicker so I have tried to alter my nutrition. The biggest thing is that my time is more limited being back in school and coaching as well. Now I am more disciplined with my training and make sure I get it done even if I am there late.

***LSTJ:*** *Suddenly we're having an explosion of 60' women putters (Laura Gerraughty, Kristin Heaston, Liz Wanless, Adriane Blewitt and Camarena) in the U.S. We're on the verge of being competitive with the Europeans. To what do you attribute this?*

**JC:** I think that we have some amazing coaches and athletes in the United States. I have seen some of the most athletic female shot putters who continue in the track and field, instead of playing another sport. The community of throwers also helps build up female shot putters. I know if it were not for the support system I have, I would have been finished with throwing as soon as I graduated college. Although female shot putting is not the most watched event at most track meets, the desire of the athletes has increased the number of throwers overall. I am looking forward to improved financial support for female shot putters, and making the event as exciting as the men's shot is now. I am so excited this year to go to meets and have more female throwers than male throwers. That may be due in part to Title IX, but it is still exciting. The coaches we have in the United States are also very important to the success of female throwers. I would not be throwing over 60' had I it not been for my high school coach Rob Rathbun, Coach Weir, and Coach Craig Carter.

***LSTJ:*** *Recount Boston for us. To have such a huge PR must have been overwhelming.*

**JC:** I am still overwhelmed with the flurry that Boston has created. The day actually started out slightly stressful. I have learned not to become attached to a particular shot, but it is still hard not to, especially with indoor shots, because they all have such a different feel to them. When I went to check in my shot, they found a small dent that could have been deemed a "finger grip" and could be an advantage so they impounded my shot. That is never a good thought, but I checked out the other shots and found one that I was comfortable with.

After that, I spent most of my time in the warm-up area relaxing, listening to some music and trying not to get nervous. I am not a nervous thrower but just sitting around can make someone a little apprehensive about whatever the situation is. The goal was to keep my own schedule and not have the rest of the competition dictate how I competed. Once I got out on the track and started warming up, I was comfortable and ready to go.

When I warm up, my standing throws are usually around 48-50 feet, but my first one of the day was around 52'. I knew it was going to be a good day. My warm-up throws were all over, or just under, the 60-foot line, and I knew I was ready to get a PR, I was not expecting what I threw. The goal of my first throw was to get an easy mark and make it to finals, but still put the pressure on the others. It was 60'1", and everyone was screaming, but I knew the other girls could throw that. After that I knew I just had to go after it and leave everything I had in that ring. My second throw was the big one (63'2¼") and I became overwhelmed with emotion. I have never been so excited. I laughed, I cried: every single emotion a person can have, I had in those next minutes before I threw. It was then I knew I could compete with the world.

***LSTJ:*** *After Boston, it was off to Moscow for the IAAF World Indoor Championships just two weeks later.*

**JC:** Worlds was not exactly what I thought it was going to be like, but I really learned a lot from the experience. When I

**THROWING PROGRESSION**

| YEAR | SHOT | DISCUS |
|---|---|---|
| 2006 | 19.26m/63-2¼" | |
| 2005 | 18.15m/59-6.75 | |
| 2004 (SR) | 18.15m/59-6.75 | |
| 2003 (JR) | 17.49m/57-4.75 | 52.52m/172-4 |
| 2002 (SO) | 16.94m/55-7 | |
| 2001 (FR) | 16.38m/53-9 | |
| 2000 (SR) | 15.22m/49-11½ | 49.09m/161-0 |
| 1999 (JR) | 15.53m/50-11¼ | 48.30m/158-5 |

first got there, I didn't feel too bad. I thought I was used to the time change in the first day. The second day I got the flu, so much for being used to the time change. I was stuck in bed for that day and the next. Dr. Fredrickson, the team doctor, who happened to be from Stanford, really took care of me that first night and made sure I was hydrated and had the proper medication. By the fourth day, I felt a ton better, so I tried to practice and my balance was pretty bad, and I had some stomach issues still, but overall it wasn't a horrible practice.

VictorSailer

The second round bomb brought Camarena to her knees.

My biggest problem was that I could not feel my positions. I really tried to stay calm during the trials and warmed up around 18m. Then my first throw happened. Then my second throw slipped because they were using brand new outdoor shots, not the indoor ones I was used to. It really surprised me they used them, but I just had to deal with it. I knew I had to calm down for my last throw and just remember all the practice I had had, and I hit the automatic qualifying mark on my third throw (18.25m/59'10½"). I was surprised, but so thankful I got to move on! Finals were full of the same type of throwing; unbalanced and all over the place, something I hadn't experienced before. I could not understand why my body felt good, but my mind and my body were definitely not working together (17.60m/57'9")!

All in all, I really enjoyed my time in Russia and really look forward to meeting those girls again. One of the biggest things about the competition was that I found myself in awe of the girls I was competing against, instead of thinking I could compete with them. Many of them could do a standing throw at 19 meters. My standing throws have never been really good, so it was impressive to see all them doing it. I just didn't realize that they only gained a meter or so with their full glide; and I gain a lot more out of my spin. It was great, and now I just need to compete with them because I know I can. I am done being impressed; now I have to compete.

***LSTJ:*** *How has your transition been to post-collegiate throwing? How do you balance your training?*

Training has been difficult in many ways, but my first three months were the worst. I was working an 8-5 job and would get out of work and go practice. It was during the winter, so it was dark and many times the lights to the stadium would not be on, so I would throw in the dark. The shots were cold and then it would be time to lift.

I remember one night I had to meet Robert in the weight room at 10pm and I think we left around 12am. He was so dedicated, and I am so thankful for him. I am lucky now to be involved with the BYU track team and have access to all the amenities a college athlete is thankful to have. It is a wonderful training environment with wonderful coaches who support my career. Craig is amazing and is able to be there at the same time every day and I can schedule my classes around it. I think right now the hardest part is being back in school. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be getting my Masters, but missing a week of school is very difficult. I have amazing and understanding professors as well.

***LSTJ:*** *Can you give us some lifting numbers in the major lifts?*

**JC:**
Cleans: 285 lbs., Squats: 500 lbs., Snatch: 200 lbs., Bench: 250 lbs.

***LSTJ:*** *Tell me three things throws fans would not know about you?*

**JC:** (A) I love to fish! I go fishing with my dad every summer and have gone since I was a baby. My next goal is to learn how to fly fish! Anyone want to teach me?
(B) I love to play the piano and am learning to play the guitar.
(C) I love to sew. I don't know why I think its funny that I do, but I guess you just don't think of many shot putters sitting down and sewing a bag or something!

***LSTJ:*** *What do you see in your future athletically and professionally?*

**JC:** Athletically, I hope to enjoy a career where I am able to fulfill my goals, such as make all the next World Championship and Olympic teams up through 2008. I am unsure at this point if I will go past 2008, but as long as I still love what I am doing, then I probably will. Professionally, I would really like to pursue the career I am currently in. I love being a strength coach. I love working with athletes and would love to extend that passion over to being a track coach. First I think I will focus on my own career before I take up those pursuits, but I hope to continue to work in the track world when I am all finished competing. ***LSTJ***

Walter Henning

# Great Expectations

## By Glenn Thompson

"Walter is amazing," says St. Anthony's High School (Long Island, NY) Athletic Director Don Buckley, in appreciation of his school's star athlete. "With all of his accomplishments he remains humble in school. He doesn't brag in the slightest. In class it's not uncommon for students who sit right next to him to be totally unaware of who Walter is and what his accomplishments have been. In fact, recently one student brought in his profile from a recent *Sports Illustrated* Faces In The Crowd. The student showed it to him and asked if the guy in the article was really him!"

Walter is Walter Henning III, and with each passing competition, he emerges just a little more from the crowd and into a spotlight all his own.

### I Found It Interesting

At first glance, its easy to figure out the 6'2" 220-pound junior is an athlete. It's just that you might guess him to be a linebacker, first baseman or small forward. And in most environments, his talents might have been directed into one of those pursuits had it not been for his father and just a bit of curiousity.

Courtesy of John McCree

Henning and Coach McCree celebrated a record that would be repeatedly rebroken during the winter of 2006.

Walter's exposure to throwing was almost inevitable. His father is the varsity throws coach at Farmingdale High School and a former high school standout at Smithtown West High School. In 1999 he began training Walter in a few events and brought him to some USATF Long Island Association meets to compete.

In the summer following seventh grade, young Walter competed in the Empire State Games (New York state Olympic style festival) in the javelin. "The day after I competed I went to watch the other throwing events, which included the hammer.," he recalls. "I found it interesting."

That was a very fortuitous choice for Henning and U.S. track and field, for he has become the singular embodiment of American hammer hopes.

"When I got home, I called my coach for the Empire team and he put me in touch with C.W. Post University throws coach, Jim Heizman (5th at the 2004 Olympic Trials). Due to NCAA rules he couldn't coach me. He gave me the number of his personal hammer coach, Marty Engel ('52 Olympian, former American Record holder). After a phone call and chat I was learning the basics on Marty's driveway two days later."

"Walter is very intense and goal-oriented." says Coach Engel, who works with Walter on the hammer three days a week. "He's gifted with great speed and reaction time. You could see how fast he was, and his athleticism from how he threw a football."

Henning's early exposure was slow and patient. He began by spinning and learning the length of the ball on Engel's driveway, focusing on technique before all else. After a few weeks Henning was winding and entering. The finish only came into play two months later with his first trip to the practice field to throw.

"My first throw was 62' with the 12 lb. hammer," Henning recalls. "I think a lot of the technical aspects that Marty really stressed, from day one, are key to my success thus far." His first exposure to the weight did not come until February 2003, to prep for his first meet at Weight-A-Rama at Brown University the following month.

Henning did well and his father sought to expose his son to some stiffer competition and suggested Walter start competing at Junior Olympics and Youth Nationals, which he did in 2001. My father has said, " You were always a very athletic kid and a great competitor, but I don't think anyone could have predicted this level of success at such an early age."

### The Right Stuff

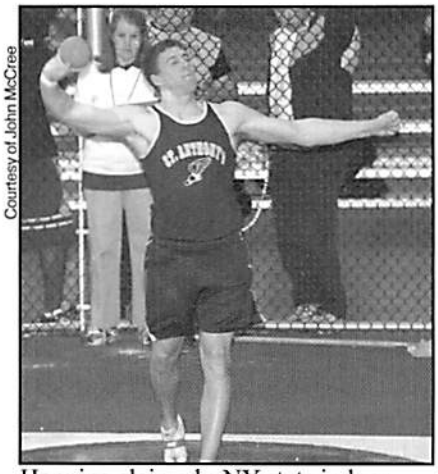
"Walter is incredibly determined," says John McCree, St. Anthony's throwing coach. "One could characterize it as stubborn. Once he sets a goal, nothing will stop him from doing whatever it takes to achieve it. And he loves a challenge. Once in awhile we will end a throwing session with an improvised contest. I have all my throwers, boys and girls, from 20-footers to Walter, grab a piece of garbage (empty soda cans, notebook, tree branch), and mark the spot of their shot put toss. Everyone gets a handicap, so Walter is often spotting someone 35 feet or more. He will

offer up a challenge to me such as, 'If I win, the boys do not have to sprint after throws.' That of course raises the girl's incentive. It usually makes for some spirited final throws."

McCree knows talent when he sees it. He coached Manny Silverio of North Bergen, New Jersey in the 1970's who threw the 12-pound hammer 231'11" and the 16-pounder 202'09" in 1976 for national records. Those records were not eclipsed until more than 20 years later by Jacob Freeman. McCree himself was a 220' hammer thrower and 60' with the weight.

"I believe his success starts with a very loving, caring and supportive family, says McCree. "His mom and grandparents are at almost 100% of our meets. They all traveled to Morocco this summer to watch him compete and lend support."

It's common place to see three Walter Hennings at any meet, as father and grandfather lend their support.


Courtesy of John McCree

Henning claimed a NY state indoor championship with a 58-9 effort.

"I can tell you he is determined, focused and a superior athlete. He brings enjoyment to a classroom and has good grades in a very competitive Catholic high school," says St. Anthony's prinicipal, Brother Gary. "On the last junior trip Walter was immediately identified as a leader and worked with the chaperones whenever we asked. Never once did he say, 'I am on the trip, not working for the success of the trip.' He would ask, 'Is there anything I can do?' I have a lot of respect for this young man and am convinced he has the mettle needed for higher levels of competition at an international level."

**Leaving His Mark**

If you want to look at Henning's throws progression, you don't have to look much past the national scholastic hammer and weight records. Only the freshman weight record escaped him, and that was a technicality.

25# WEIGHT THROW

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wes Wright (*) | FR | 63'06.25" | 2005 |
| **Walter Henning** | SO | 75'00.50" | 2005 |
| **Walter Henning** | JR | 85'06.00" | 2006 |
| Leif Arrhenius | SR | 82'10.00" | 2004 |

* Henning never held the freshman record. He did exceed the then national freshman record in February, 2004 with a throw of 56'06.75". This performance was not eligible for record consideration as the event was contested outdoors, and was not part of a full meet.

12# HAMMER THROW

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Walter Henning** | FR | 193'02" | 2004 |
| **Walter Henning** | SO | 226'06" | 2005 |
| Adam Midles | JR | 231'02" | 2001 |
| Jacob Freeman | SR | 253'03" | 1999 |

Henning also threw the 16 lb. hammer 198'2" in his March, 2006 opener. Henning threw the big ball because he posed a threat to nearby tennis courts and a baseball field.

Such is Henning's athletic talent that he anchored the varsity 800 meter relay at the New York Catholic State High School Championships his freshmen year. McCree still has to keep St. Anthony's head coach at a distance, lest he steal Henning away for sprint practice.

"His sophomore year indoors we needed to change venues during a meet because he kept hitting the ceiling while warming up with the 25 lb. weight," recalls McCree. "The ceiling was approximately 40' high and the point of contact was 38' out from the circle. After changing gyms, 30 minutes later he finally threw and hit 75'."

At a meet this past January at West Point, NY, meet officials ignored the security fence which was 70' out from the circle. Months beforehand McCree had begun requesting the fence be pushed back, or at least to be advised if it hadn't, so Henning wouldn't waste his time with an inadequate sector.

"We went to the meet expecting it to be moved as he was coming off a 76'11" performance," recalls McCree. "The meet director asked me to have him 'drop one' far enough to win, but less than the fence. I told him this wasn't bocce ball, we throw for distance, not accuracy. And it was insulting to the other athletes. I compared it to a runner easing up at the finish line, turning around and running backwards.

McCree and Henning decided he'd toss the 35-pounder instead and he went 57' 7".

In early February Henning showed he's no one-trick pony, posting an impressive 58'9" in the shot to win the New York Catholic High School Champs. Not bad for his second event.

SHOT PROGRESSION

| | |
|---|---|
| 8th grade | 38'4" |
| 9th grade | 47'1.50" |
| 10th grade | 52'8" |
| 11th grade | 58'9" (Indoors) |

And last summer Henning tasted international success. "The highlight of my career thus far would have to be competing in Morocco at my first international competition (World Youth Championships)," he says. "I was extremely honored to be representing my country and having my name in the same conversations as the big-time names of Europe and Asia. Morocco opened many new doors for me. My throw made me the world leader for 1989-born athletes at the conclusion of the 2005 season. It also set the American Youth Record."

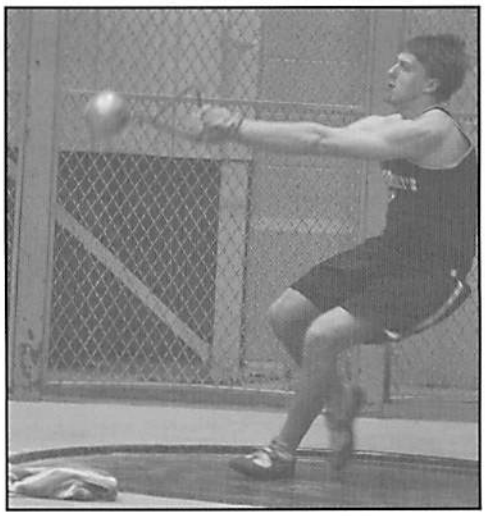
For Henning the best part of competing in Morocco, "was sitting on the bench after my third throw in prelims, disgusted, thinking I was going home and seeing my name on the top 8 qualifiers for finals. I jumped up and pointed at the display board and it was great seeing my family jumping up and down on the last row of the bleachers. After the competition I had athletes coming over to me to tell me that I am bringing the USA out of its slump."

**A Matter Of Style**

"I enjoy throwing the weight in meets but not as much as hammer," says Henning. "The hammer is what separates the men from the boys. To be a good hammer thrower means you have better technique than the average weight thrower. To get anywhere in this sport the hammer is the way to get there."

"My style is based first and foremost on technique," says Henning. "That was the only advantage I had in the beginning besides speed. I was not powerful and I started out so much smaller than my competitors. To get long I need to slow down my upper body and push like all hell with my right side in double support."

"Some of my favorite hammer throwers are Youri Sedych and Sergey Litvinov," says Henning. "Most of the technical aspects of my throwing are based on what they did in the circle. My modern-day favorite hammer throwers are Lance Deal and Ivan Tikhon. I believe Deal is the best technician the USA has produced and Tikhon makes an 84m throw look effortless. He throws with a bored expression on his face, which is due to his being insanely relaxed."



"When I train, I really focus on the technical aspects of the throw. I try to work on getting a solid entry, that in turn will help me set up the subsequent turns easier, and get into better positions. To generate ball speed, I really focus on getting really long in the back of the circle and really push my right side hard in double support. Everything must be done at the right time or it will all go downhill."

"Walter has tremendous speed," says McCree. "He works the ball towards his left (90 to 135 degrees) very quickly. He utilizes a straight back to counter the ball effectively. He starts low and manages, more often than not, to maintain counter/balance and ball speed. This he does well."

According to McCree, "further improvement will come with increases in strength, which will enhance Henning's ability to sit back (resist) during the single support phase with an even faster ball speed."

"Walter is a student of the event," continues McCree. "He reads articles, looks at the videos and devours the information. He watches his performances on tape and can critique his own technical progress accordingly."

**Not A Typo**

In the weight room Henning avoids maxing out, believing that it only leads to injury. "There really is no need to max out, besides bragging rights," he says. Showing his practical side, Henning continues, "I feel that it has a flaw. It wastes a day that you could be lifting to get stronger. My lifting philosophy is simple: work with weights that you can handle for a moderate amount of reps."

When asked for some of his best efforts, Henning lists the following:

- Back Squat 585 lbs. for 3 reps X 7
- Front Squat 405 lbs. for 3 reps X 5
- Bench Press 225 lbs. for 3 reps
- Shoulder Press (dumbell) 70 lbs. X 4
- Power Clean 250 lbs. for 3 reps X 4
- Power Snatch 165 lbs. for 3 reps X 5

No, the squat numbers are not typos. Such was the author's astonishment that I went back to Henning (and his coach) to confirm their accuracy.

"My squats are above parallel, but close to parallel," says Henning. "I try to squat as low as I sit when I throw the hammer, but if you have seen me throw, I sit pretty low. My front squats are an approximation. I don't know how to properly front squat with a bar so I always hurt

my fingers. My sophomore year I did 315 lbs. on a free bar for 3 sets of 3."

**Looking Forward**

"To further develop a more prestigious youth hammer throw program in the U.S., we first need to institute the event in all states on the high school level and promote the event with Olympic style persistence," Henning says when asked how we can have, in fact, more Walter Hennings. "I believe we should institute the age divisions, as in USATF, with the 5kg for 17-and-under, and the 6kg for 20-and-under. Also we would have to teach many coaches the fundamentals of the technique and training activities. I firmly believe if our country promoted starting hammer throwers young, then the hammer could be as big as other professional sports."

Like most scholastic athletes, Henning has visions of participating in the Olympics and World Championships, but takes life one year at a time. "This year I hope to qualify to throw in the Junior World Championships in Beijing, China," he says. "The summer of 2007 I hope to medal at the Junior Pan American Championships, and in 2008 make the finals at the Olympic Trials, and win a medal at the 2008 Junior World Championships."

In the short term, Henning hopes to break the national record in the hammer and weight for the high school and international weights for prep athletes and the national Junior record for the 6 kg. hammer throw.

"I invited Marty [Engel] and Walter to the USATF Junior Camp at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in California in 2004," says Harold Connolly, the U.S.' last Olympic hammer champion and tireless advocate for the event. "Since the previous year's camp in 2003, I had also been inviting outstanding high school underclassmen hammer throwers to join the other junior throwers at the camp. In 2004, 5 of the 12 hammer throwers and their coaches I would be working with during the camp were high school underclassmen. The four youngest hammer throwers and among the most promising were Buck Sullivan age 15; Walter Henning and Trevor Kraychir, 14; and Conor McCullough, 12. Walter was 5'11" tall and weighed 174 pounds."

"Presently, Walter is emerging as the leading candidate to achieve Olympic hammer throw finals status by 2012," says Connolly. "Walter is taller, heavier, more muscular, more explosive, and quicker than the 14-year-old of 2004, thanks to the genetic inheritance from his mom and dad, the training he is receiving at St. Anthony's High School, and the excellent hammer throwing technical progress he is making with Marty Engel. There is no question in my mind that by the time Walter concludes his high school hammer throwing career, he can be the greatest hammer throwing prospect this country has ever produced."

Connolly sees the fulfillment of Henning's goal of winning Olympic gold in the hammer being significantly determined by the coach he selects to work with him through his university and subsequent athletic career.

Henning is certain to be in demand in the collegiate ranks. "Yes, the process of looking at schools is starting to kick in," he says. "Coaches do contact me via mail and e-mail. When I look at a school, I look for a good education department because I am thinking of studying to become a teacher. Then I look for what division the school is in, the caliber of the throwers that came out of the school, how long the coach has been there and of course what there is to do around town for fun."

Walter Henning's quickly losing his anonymity. After all, how can you be just a face in the crowd when you're always standing atop the podium? *LSTJ*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# THE PLACE FOR ME

## By Glenn Thompson

*I'm not embarrassed to admit that I had never heard of Alfred Kruger prior to 2002, when he finished sixth in the weight at USATF Indoors. Kruger was an excellent athlete coming out of Stockton, Iowa, excelling in football and track. But he lacked the big-time credentials of opponents he's long since surpassed. He went on to cop a Division II hammer title at Morningside College, but it's not too often you see a D2 athlete featured in Track & Field News.*

*It wasn't until a move to Ashland, Ohio in September of 2002 that Kruger, better know as A.G., began seriously impacting the national weight/hammer scene.*

*Kruger's coach, Jud Logan, says he is, "A mix of talent and the best attitude of any thrower I have ever worked with. He has a passion for training that is infectious for those who meet him. He is a coach's dream."*

*Logan continues, saying, "A.G. can build anything; he is a cross between Bob Villa and McGyver. From toeboards to shot boxes, and from welding to woodworking, he is truly unique."*

*Under Logan's tutelage, Kruger is an Olympian and three-time USATF Weight champion.*

*Now there's no excuse for not knowing Alfred "A.G." Kruger.*

***Long & Strong:*** *Talk about your high school track career? Did you participate in other sports?*

**A.G. Kruger:** Sheldon High School in Sheldon, Iowa, was fun for me because I was involved in a lot of different things. My main sports were football, basketball, and track. I also played baseball my senior year to be a four-sport athlete because I thought it sounded good. I also was in choir, swing choir, drama, and different speech clubs, so I was a busy guy. In high school I liked track, but it was not my main thing. I was a football player. My progression in the discus was 141' as a freshman, 153' as a sophomore and a junior, and then 159' as a senior. I really did not throw the shot. My junior and senior years I made it to the Drake Relays and the state meet. Drake is a big thing in Iowa, and probably one of the best meets I go to every year. The best I did was second place my senior year in the discus, which I was very excited about. I was also a sprinter, being the anchor on the 4 X 100m and 4 X 200m relay teams, and also my senior year, running on the 4 X 400m teams. For perspective, I was 6'4", 195 lbs.

***LSTJ:*** *How did you come to choose Morningside College? Tell us about your career there?*

**AK:** I chose Morningside because I thought that would be about the best place to be able to do both track and football. I had choices of walking on at other bigger universities, but I decided to walk on at Morningside. When I got to camp for football, I was the same size and weight that I was in high school and could not bench my body weight. In football my senior year I was second team All-Conference and All-Region, I was first team All-Academic for the north central region, and I had various other team awards there. In track, I was a four time All-American, my junior year, fourth place finish in the hammer, and my senior year I had a second place finish in the weight throw, a sixth place finish in the discus, and a national title in the hammer throw. I really did not start throwing the hammer until my junior year. I threw the weight during indoors, but since I was doing football during the spring also, I only had time really for the discus. My sophomore year I did throw the hammer for two practices and then the conference meet.

The first year out of college I still trained at Morningside. I had student teaching in the fall to finally graduate and I did not take a redshirt year, so I did four years straight of competing. My senior year was the first year I actually could do track full-time in the spring, and the first year out was the first time I could train full-time. My last two years were coaching myself with the help of Dana Schwarting, who is the head coach at Lewis University now.

***LSTJ:*** *How does a Division II thrower develop elite level aspirations? What brought you to Ashland?*

**AK:** Well, the biggest reason I kept on wanting to throw the hammer and the weight is because they kept going further. I sat down with my parents after my senior year and asked them what they thought of me training and trying to throw in the Olympics. They said that would be great and they would support me in any way they could. So that first year out, I decided to give myself through 2004 to see what I could do. After I was done with my student teaching, I substitute taught in Sioux City, Iowa, and then also worked at Sears. Training on my own was quite a bit different, because to be honest, I really did not know what to do. So I tried to talk to people and to see what other people were doing, and seeing what I could use. One of the biggest things is that I trained with the sprinters twice a week to develop my speed, and I think that really helped.

After my first year out, I was happy about the weight, but a

little disappointed about the hammer. Then, at USA Outdoors at Stanford, I was talking to Adriane Blewitt's mom, Rae. I had got to know a lot of the Ashland crew from competing against them in [NCAA] DII and we just started to chat. She asked me what I was going to do the next year and I told her I did not know. I wanted to train, but I thought I needed more guidance, and that I was going to ask Jud to possibly set up a lifting program to help me out.

Not about a minute later, Jud came over and asked me what I was doing the next year, and I said the same answer. He then asked me if I wanted to train in Ashland with him. He told me that he had a thrower at the same level as me named Derek Woodske coming to train, and that he thought I would fit in well there. He told me to come visit in a month and then make my decision. My mind was almost already made up, but I went to see what was there. When I finally got there, after 14 hours in the car, I went to talk to Jud. What he said next could stay in my mind forever, and I will never forget it. He said, "A.G., if yours and my goal is not for you to make the Olympic team in two years, we are wasting each other's time." That is all I needed to know it was the place for me. On September 1 of 2002, I moved.

***LSTJ:*** *Talk about life in Ashland. How much of your time is spent training? What do you do when you are not working out.*

**AK:** Ashland is pretty low key. Other than training, there is not much to do. My weeks usually set up like this:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Sunday** | 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, Throw / 3:00 PM-4:30 PM Lower body lift |
| **Monday** | 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM, Upper body lift |
| **Tuesday** | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM, Throw |
| **Wednesday** | 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM, Plyos or secondary leg lifts |
| **Thursday** | 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM, Throw / 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM Core exercises |
| **Friday** | 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM, Throw |
| **Saturday** | Rest or compete |

So I am training about 13.5 hours a week, without counting prep time and other activities. At Ashland University I also am an assistant equipment manager, teach a couple of classes for the sport sciences department, am the strength coach for the volleyball, swimming, and baseball team, and also for some other individuals, and also help Jud coaching some of the time. I also do some personal training on the side that helps with the bills.

Kruger held off Ashland Elite teammate Kibwe Johnson for the 2006 USATF Indoor weight throw title.

I was fortunate enough to be a part of the Home Depot Olympic project, so I am working there now, too. All of that, and then also trying to spend time with my girlfriend, does not leave a lot of time during the week.

***LSTJ:*** *Who's training in Ashland (Elite) these days?*

Right now, we have eight athletes working with our program. There are three distance runners, Nick Cordes, Nate Ihler, and Leigh Daniels, that are training and are also coaches at Ashland University. There is also one long jumper, Sean Robbins, who is still training. Then there are four throwers: myself, Joe Woodske, and Crystal Smith in the hammer, and Adriane Blewitt in the shot put.

***LSTJ:*** *When did you truly believe that you had the talent to make a USA team?*

**AK:** During the Olympic year, it was a long year and a lot of throws happening. During training another person was added into our training group, Jud Logan. Well, in his style he started off pretty good and then came on really strong and his training was phenomenal. He jumped ahead of me quite a bit and I thought to myself, "Do I really have a shot?" Then in the beginning of January we had a meet in Cleveland. We had just started a new cycle of lifting, so none of us were expecting a lot. But, I started warming up and I felt great. To make a long story short, I ended up throwing 76.91 meters that day, and I knew if I could do this now, I had a great shot at making the team. I kept that going through the Trials and got myself in position with placing second, and it finally all came together a couple weeks after and just clicked, and I was in a rush to get on my way.

***LSTJ:*** *Describe your technical style. What are your points of emphasis? What do you struggle with?*

**AK:** My technical style is trying to be a little of a lot of people. I think of holding positions like Lance Deal, being very fluid like Syzmon Ziolkowski, speed like Sergei Litinov and Ivan Tikhon can get on the ball, and the just-get-after-it like Jud Logan. Now, you might see me throw and think he looks nothing like this, but this is what I am trying to get to in my technique. I think that especially in the hammer, you cannot look at one model and say that is the exact way to go. You have to find the bits and pieces from a whole bunch of techniques and make it into your own. That is where if you are a young thrower, countless hours of film, it will just make you better. But besides all of this, my main point is using the right side as one: the foot, knee, hips,

shoulders, head, and hammer all have to work together as one. On my really good throws I do not feel the ball, or it does not seem fast. The ball just shoots out of my hand and goes far.

The biggest things I struggle with is trying to pull in the left side, which I think I am getting better with, and then also thinking of too many things at one time. Some days I have to just reset my mind in the middle of practice and just think of one concept.

***LSTJ:*** *Reflect on your first Olympic experience. Is there anything you would like to change if you're in Beijing in '08?*

**AK:** Well, Athens was a very good experience. I know the fact that I threw 10 meters under my PR would not reflect a good experience. At first I was very angry at myself for doing so poorly. Then, after sitting and reflecting on the last year, one thought popped into my mind: my whole goal this year was not to compete at the Olympics; it was just to qualify. Athens, being my first international Games, was a little bit of an eye-opening experience. I still think I should have competed better, but looking back at the film and seeing how I was training and then throwing at the Games, adrenalin and the atmosphere took the best of me. Now, how I am getting prepared to go to Beijing is to fill in the gaps. In '04, I had some very big throws but on the average, it was really only around 74.5 to 75 meters for the most part, still with four times throwing over 76 meters. So last year I built up my average mark to right over 75 meters and was more consistent throughout the year. Now this year I would like to build it up 2 meters, then 1 meter, then another meter. That means my average through and hopefully by the '08 games is right around 79 meters. This, on any day, will possibly put me on the medal stand, with hopefully a few more high-end throws. The more I try to figure out how the great guys are great, it's by consistency of what they are doing, and that is what I am trying to accomplish.

***LSTJ:*** *Do you have any preferences between the weight and hammer? Are there any technical differences in how you approach the events?*

**AK:** I love the hammer: the weight is okay. In years past I really have not liked the weight because it has torn me down so much. This year, since I am working on more throwing volume than weight room volume, I have learned to love the weight a little more. The biggest thing people have to realize with the weight is that it is a training tool for the hammer and not something you rip at. Every year my goal is to convert the feet in the weight into meters in the hammer. The reason I think this is because besides the entry of the weight, I try to throw it like a hammer. This year I just went to the toe-and-three in the weight, and it has really developed the patience and positioning I need to keep it in the hammer. I think the only technical differences should be that the entry is sometimes different, talking about the sling or the different types of winding, and the fact that the weight is faster than the 16 lb. hammer. When I am throwing the weight well, the feel I get is the speed I get from throwing a 14 lbs. hammer. Besides that, I feel the same between the two events.

***LSTJ:*** *Talk about your training outside the circle.*

***AK:*** *The weight room this year is a little different. I only lift heavy once a week with the legs, but I do two Olympic lifts and one squatting motion. Jud and I decided to try this from hearing Stuart Togher talk about it and used it in my program. What I really like about it is it gives me a lot of recovery and lets me usually average 140 -160 throws a week. My upper body day really is not that much because all I want to do is stay long, so extra muscle up there is unneeded. I do a lot of rotator cuff, upper back, and grip work, things used in the hammer throw. The only other day I am in the weight room is my core day, which I do a lot of different plate exercises, abs, and Swiss ball exercises, usually lasting 35 to 45 minutes. The other thing that I do is one day of plyometrics. Since I am only lifting legs once a week, it gave me a scheduled day to do plyos to help build my quickness. I really like this because it just makes me feel quicker. I usually like to do different jumps for height, distance, sprints, quick feet drills, box jumps, and bounds. These sessions usually last an hour and I am pretty winded after I am done.*

**Lifting Maxes**
Bench- who cares, but it is 345 lbs.
Incline- don't care, but it is 325 lbs.
Squat- 550 lbs.
Front Squat- 500 lbs.
Power Clean- 175 kgs.
Hang Clean- 182.5 kgs.
Snatch- 125 kgs.
Deadlift- 605 lbs., could not walk for 2 days

***LSTJ:*** *Name three things a throws fan wouldn't know about you.*

**AK:** I love tools and love to build things, I do not dye my beard (it comes out dark red even though my hair is blonde), and I really hate scary movies and will not go see them.

***LSTJ:*** *How much longer do you see yourself pursuing your track and field dreams?*

***AK:*** *Well, my goal is to participate in four Olympics, God willing five. As long as my body can hold up, and I am still throwing distances to make teams, I am going to keep on throwing.* ****LSTJ***

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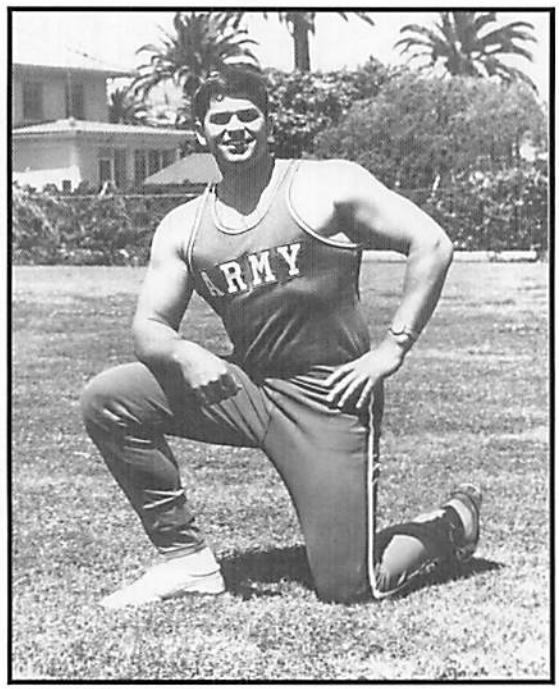
Oregon's Very Own

# SUPER DUCK!

## By Brad Reid

*"From 1965 to 1970, I coached at Portland State University. In the mid to late 1960s, Neal Steinhauer emerged as a great shot putter at the University of Oregon. He really turned on the great Oregon fans. I believe he was the first thrower who really turned on the University of Oregon track crowd. The shot ring was in the middle of the straightaway in front of the West Grandstand. The discus ring was placed reasonably close to the middle of the straightaway, if I remember correctly. Pete Schmock and Mac Wilkins continued the great throwing tradition as well as the 'tremendous throwing show.' Neal, Pete and Mac were great showmen and great competitors. I remember watching Neal, Pete and Mac throwing and entertaining the great Oregon crowds (the best in the world in my opinion) during their respective years at Oregon. Consequently, because of Neal's great size and formidable throwing, he was called, 'SUPER DUCK.'*



*Neal Steinhauer*

*The evolution of strength and conditioning at the University of Oregon was ongoing during the 60's as the very renowned shot putter Steinhauer was popularizing weight lifting for throwers. Pete Schmock and Mac Wilkins gave even greater emphasis to the weight lifting training modality in later years. It is continuing to develop, circa 2006. Those were the good old days."*

*Quoting an email from Dr. Paul Ward*

When Neal Steinhauer answered his telephone on a recent Saturday morning and said, "Hello," I had the distinct and immediate impression that I had finally made contact with one very stout man. Steinhauer possesses a deep and dulcet voice, sort of similar in quality to actor, Donald Sutherland. No surprise though on my part, for I already knew that this champion athlete from the 1960s was famous for his size and strength as a shot putter; so, his voice sort of fit my expectations. Standing 6' 5" tall and weighing as much as 280 lbs. in his prime, Neal was among an early group of athletes who had benefited greatly from weightlifting, the fruit of which for him included a NCAA Outdoor shot put championship title in 1965, multiple world indoor records established a few years later in 1967, and a U.S. National shot putting title in 1969 over Randy Matson, the 1964 silver and 1968 gold Olympic shot put medallist, by a distance of almost a foot. By definition, anyone who sported a win over Randy Matson in a shot put event in the 1960's was a very special athlete, and Neal was one of the very few who could claim such victories.

**An Inauspicious Beginning**

Neal Steinhauer differed from many of the other greats of his era who'd left high school behind with staggering records and accomplishments in the shot put. Dallas Long and Randy Matson had been prodigious high school throwers and, in Long's case, he had already become very proficient at weightlifting. In contrast, Neal would first experience shot putting as a high school junior as part of a P.E. class. Then standing only 6'1" and weighing 150 lbs., he was hardly the prototypical candidate. Neal tossed the shot a bit, decided it suited him, and almost a decade of shot putting ensued. Dave Edstrom, a 1960 Olympic decathlete from the University of Oregon, was coaching at his high school at that time and gave Neal some of his earliest pointers on the art of throwing the shot.

A devotion to the throws seized the young man who later headed off to lovely Santa Barbara to attend Westmont College after graduating high school. During his freshman track & field year at Westmont in the spring of 1963, Neal achieved very solid though not earth-shattering distances in the shot and discus, throwing 52'6" and 146' respectively. But, the lovely environment and weather of Santa Barbara conspired against Neal, his academics suffered, and he stayed out of collegiate competition the next year. Continuing to throw and train though, he hit distances of 56 to 57 feet in 1964, now only a bit shy of what the top collegiate throwers were hitting, but still roughly 10 feet behind the Olympic efforts later that same year established

by shot putting legends Long and Matson.

**A "Sneak On" at the University of Oregon**

Neal confided that he wasn't so much a "walk on" at Oregon as he was a "sneak on." Now a sophomore, eligibility-wise, in January of 1965, he had not been officially received quite yet as a member of the University of Oregon track and field team when he showed up at his first meet. His team affiliation confused spectators and officials alike, perhaps Neal, too, as he sported one piece of attire with Westmont's name on it, and another stenciled with the letters, "EEAA," standing for Emerald Empire Athletic Association, the forerunner to what later became the Oregon Track Club. He went on to win that first competition with a throw of over 60' beating the legendary Parry O'Brien along the way. O'Brien approached Neal after the event, congratulated him, and told him he had a bright future as a shot putter.

**Timing is Everything!**

One can only imagine how very quickly Coach Bill Bowerman had Steinhauer officially admitted and enrolled on the track & field team after that early impressive victory. Steinhauer would be wearing Oregon's colors and uniform by the next scheduled meet. And, Parry O'Brien was very correct, and very quickly so, regarding Neal's future as a shot putter. As a point of history, a long simmering brawl over power and control between the NCAA and the AAU culminated in 1965. As it was worked out, if an athlete chose to participate in the NCAA Championships that year, he/she became ineligible to compete on the AAU tour including scheduled international travel events; and, student athletes who competed in AAU meets were threatened with possible losses of scholarships and sanctions against the universities they represented. Neal said the decisions for two affected schools were set by historical circumstances: Oregon had just won the 1964 NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championship team title, and 1965 was shaping up as a bit of a rebuilding year and they'd need every point they could muster if they hoped to repeat as team champion; Texas A&M, even with a probable victorious Randy Matson in the shot and discus, wasn't a contender for a national track title. So, Matson forwent the NCAA meet to compete in the AAU events, while Steinhauer with a team title in Oregon's equation, competed at the NCAA Outdoor Championships. Then, this self-described "sneak on" did the most unlikely of things: he won the shot put event with a throw of 19.05 meters, in Randy Matson's absence. The University of Oregon tied USC for the 1965 NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championship team title. Steinhauer readily concedes today that he wasn't yet throwing at Matson's level and that Matson would likely have won the 1965 shot put title adding to his 1966 and 1967 titles. But, Neal was making steady progress at closing what first began as a very wide gap.

**Progression of Rankings: USA shot put hegemony**

Steinhauer ended 1965 ranked #2 in the U.S. and World rankings; then in 1966, he repeated the same rankings, again behind a dominant Matson. But, by 1967, though he would again finish ranked #2 in the U.S. and World, Steinhauer finally topped Matson in a meet establishing his first world record in the shot with an indoor result of 66' 10" smashing the indoor world record of 64' 11" held by powerhouse Gary Gubner. This occurred at a meet in early January, 1967, and then yet again later in the same month, Neal added another foot, to 67' 10" for his second indoor world record. Later, on March 25, 1967, Steinhauer hit his all-time best of 21.01m (68' 11.25"), becoming the second man in history to exceed 21 meters. Matson must have heard the news for less than a month later on April 22, 1967, he threw 21.78m (71' 5.25") for what would become his all-time best effort. The gap between Steinhauer and Matson was closing in some respects with Steinhauer now providing meaningful competition for Matson, something sorely lacking over the past several years. The race was on as they headed toward the 1968 season and the upcoming Olympic Games!

**Steinhauer "Slips" in 1968: World Ranking = #7, American Ranking = #4**

Having finally bested Randy Matson in competition, a few world records to his credit, and a personal best of 21.01m in 1967, the year 1968 looked promising for Steinhauer as the 1968 Mexico City Olympics was fast approaching. Steinhauer had not been nearly mature enough by 1964 to qualify for that year's Olympic Games, and he would most likely be too old by 1972. As it so often happens, certainly for athletes competing as true amateurs as they did in the 1960s, most only have one real opportunity to be at their peaks as an Olympic Games approaches. Steinhauer was ready and was almost a shoe-in for a spot on the U.S. team; that, and based on his recent distances, he would be a formidable competitor to Randy Matson for an Olympic gold medal. But, when I mention Neal's "slip," in the subheading, I am referring not only to his world and US rankings, but also to the nature of injury that would knock Steinhauer out of Olympic contention.

**No 1968 Olympics**

*Track & Field News*, May, 1968, reported it this way: Mt. SAC Relays, "Neal Steinhauer was forced to withdraw midweek following a weight training strain." As Matson was putting on his finishing drive peaking for the upcoming Olympics with a big throw of 69' 10-1/2" at the Mt. SAC Relays, this one line statement in *TFN* regarding Steinhauer's lifting injury understated the seriousness of his ailment. Though I have not yet discussed Neal's lifting program for this article, a program featuring a regimen of bench presses, squats, and power cleans, he also had begun performing heavy Olympic-style overhead presses, "standing bench presses" as Neal and others called this version of the press with an extensive leaning back and away from the bar as it is pushed overhead to lockout. Neal was diagnosed as having suffered a minor slipped disc. Such an injury may be "minor" to an average person, but to a glide style shot putter who relied on his formidable power and size as his dominant assets, the injury literally knocked Neal's chances of qualifying for the 1968 Olympics away. His lifting mentor, Cecil Phillips, recalls that in addition to the back injury, Neal had also severely sprained his ankle, yet was still able to place fourth at the Trials, quite good considering his physical ailments, but not enough to make the Olympic team.

So often, in an attempt to get even stronger and throw even farther as important competitions approach, athletes inadvertently heighten the chance of suffering serious injuries. Steinhauer had ground to make up on Matson if he planned to challenge him at the Olympic Games. Perhaps, he pushed himself too hard. There would be no Olympic glory for Steinhauer and a contest for the gold medal that might have gone down in the record books, never materialized. Certainly, based on his years of top world rankings, he would have been considered an odds-on favorite for a medal at the 1968 Olympic Games.

**Water off a Super Duck's back – Not quite**

To say that most competitive athletes would be able to quickly get over such a personal misfortune would be a serious breach of truth. Privately, Neal suffered the consequences of his fate for some time. He now jokingly states, almost forty years later, that he threw "pity parties" for himself for several years but nobody came. After a few years of bemoaning his odd fate, a serendipitous attending of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting where he listened attentively to the legendary lifter, Paul Anderson, and paralyzed pole vaulter, Brian Sternberg, shocked Neal and helped put a perspective on his life that he had not yet considered. The meeting would change Neal's life, yet again: from an unmotivated teenager, to a world class athlete, now to a developing Christian leader.

Interestingly, the event and the friends he'd left behind so many years ago while carrying a bit of mental scar tissue as a souvenir have come around full circle the past several years. He now often finds himself in the company of friends and competitors from the past. Neal's life after shot putting has been spent as a teacher and worker in Christian ministries. Today, he sees old friends and acquaintances often, including Mac Wilkins and, just a few weeks before my interview with Neal, he visited with Brian Oldfield. When old and new friends see Neal now, they know and expect a visit from a friend willing to listen and minister to their needs, private issues, and spiritual concerns. Neal is as comfortable and fitted for this role as he was once standing balanced over a toe board following the flight of a shot through the air.


**A Last Hurrah!**

I might add that 1968 wasn't the end for Steinhauer. Neal managed to recover from his injured back in due time, and after Oregon, now throwing for the U.S. Army, he came all the way back to win the 1969 U.S. national shot put title with a throw of 67' 4" defeating Randy Matson, Carl Salb and a young Brian Oldfield among other notable shot putters. Yes, world records in 1967, a NCAA championship title, a national title in 1969, and a number one ranking in the shot put in the United States that same year. His throwing career would conclude shortly thereafter. My research efforts found that Neal was still throwing in 1970 and hitting good distances, but it was largely over for him as a shot putter and he would soon retire from competition.

## A Summary of Neal Steinhauer's Accomplishments

To list a few:

**Shot Put Rankings:**

| | U.S. | World |
|---|---|---|
| 1965 | 2nd | 2nd |
| 1966 | 2nd | 2nd |
| 1967 | 2nd | 2nd |
| 1968 | 4th | 7th |
| 1969 | 1st | 3rd |
| 1970 | 8th | |

**Throwing Progressions:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1963 | Shot Put 52' 6" | Discus 146' |
| 1964 | Shot Put 56-57' | |
| 1965 | Shot Put 63' 3" | Discus 172' |
| 1966 | Shot Put 67' ¾" | Discus 177' |
| 1967 | Shot Put 68'11.25" | Discus 187' 3" |

**Meets:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1965 NCAA Outdoor Shot Put Champion | 19.05m |
| 1967 World Indoor Shot Put Record (twice) | 66' 10", 67' 10" |
| 1967 World Student Games Champion | 19.19m |
| 1967 Pan American Games Silver Medalist | |
| 1969 U.S. National Shot Put Champion | 67' 4" |

**Steinhauer on Strength and Throwing**

Following up on his chance encounter with decathlete Dave Edstrom in high school who gave him early tips on shot put technique, Neal was next mentored by Dave Steen, an Oregon shot putter/discus thrower a few years before him (Steen placed second in the shot put at the NCAA Championships in 1963). Steen was a Canadian Olympian with one long jump, two discus, and six Canadian shot put championships to his credit, and the first Canadian to throw over 60 feet. In the absence of specialized throws coaches that throwers at many universities benefit from today, throwers of Steinhauer's era either had to learn events themselves by trial and error, or be so fortunate as to have an experienced, older thrower act as a mentor. Edstrom and Steen filled these roles for a young Steinhauer.

Weight training was a key component of Steinhauer's success..

Steinhauer's throws training consisted of three days a week in the ring. On a normal outing, he would stretch and warm up first, then take ten to fifteen standing throws or until he felt everything was set and ready. Neal would then perform approximately 40 full glides. His volume, like many from his generation, would be on the high side compared to many contemporary throwers, though not as high as some others from that era. Generally, though, Neal and his competitors believed you had to work a lot from the ring to learn to throw far.

Neal Steinhauer, interestingly, was quite well-known for his weightlifting prowess and its effects on his shot putting progress. When *LSTJ* editor, Glenn Thompson, contacted me regarding the possibility of authoring an article on Steinhauer, my first thought was, "Yes, I remember… the big powerful shot putter from the 1960s." My mind first linked Neal to size and power. To this day, if one pulls up University of Oregon's Strength & Conditioning web page, **http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~j15/history.html**, there is a photograph of a young Neal Steinhauer performing a heavy squat with a few lines describing his role in advancing the understanding of the importance of weight training in athletics at the University of Oregon. Neal's strength became legendary.

Neal was once talked into performing a dead lift at an Oregon basketball game at half-time with a barbell loaded to 715 lbs., not too far from the heavyweight world record at that time, and he hauled the bar up for a good lift in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd. He had to… his "Super Duck" reputation was at stake. Neal's other lifts would have put him right at the level of the best power lifters of that era with mid 400 lb. bench presses, 650 lb. squats, and the aforementioned impromptu 715 lb. deadlift. In workouts, he also performed power cleans and, of course, the overhead presses that led to his serious back injury. Lifting was pivotal to Neal's success for he had to develop a body for shot putting molding it from a deficient 150 lb. starting point, so he became noted for this particular dimension of his athletic career.

Dallas Long had been quite strong, too, ending his competitive years just as Neal was beginning, stronger than Neal in some lifts; Gary Gubner was a world class lifter and 1964 Olympian weightlifter; Ken Patera was the first American to press and clean and jerk over 500 pounds; Bruce Wilhelm, the first American over 400 pounds in the snatch; Al Feuerbach and Sam Walker were champion lifters; and, Jon Cole was a record-setting lifter. But, even with this long history of great lifting linked to elite throwers, before and after Neal, oddly, few possess a stronger association between the general benefits of weight training and athletic performance. Regarding his strength, Cecil Phillips, a well-known bodybuilder, weightlifter and trainer from Oregon, and the individual Steinhauer identified as his weightlifting mentor, told me that "Neal was the strongest athlete I ever encountered given his height and long limbs."

**Conclusion**

Through a series of serendipitous meetings over his life, an uninspired teenager who had yet to find a single driving force or interest to pursue, found the shot put, and the shot carried him to collegiate, national and international shot putting fame, plus a world record performances. Helping him to attain his status as a shot putter, he found a barbell, and it worked wonders developing the sort of physique and power he would need to compete at the highest levels of his sport. A "sneak on" at the University of Oregon became a collegiate champion to help his university secure another national track & field title. Through yet another in a series of interesting life circumstances, a perceived deficit in Neal's athletic life, became, yet again, a source for another step in his life.

Say hello to Neal Steinhauer if you encounter him at a meet or attending a throwing camp. He'll be the big guy who used to tote a shot around, now replaced by a book very close to his heart. Even all these years later, Neal Steinhauer is still the 82nd ranked shot putter of all time; that, and his indoor record throw in 1967 would have placed him third at the recent 2006 National Indoor Championships. The big guy affectionately known as Super Duck was one our history's finest shot putters.

***LSTJ***

John Nespoli

# MAKING HISTORY

## By Glenn Thompson

There's sheer joy in John Nespoli's voice when you engage him in conversation. It's evident in every sentence, every word and indeed, every syllable. I couldn't help but feel it the first time my phone rang and Nespoli was on the other end. He virtually reached out and grabbed me over the phone lines with his passion for the throwing, and in particular, the shot put.

Like many Masters athletes, Nespoli's throwing interest took root during his scholastic career, continued through college, then lay dormant for over twenty years.

Nespoli was first exposed to the shot in high school at St. Francis Prep, in Brooklyn, New York, the same school that produced noted NFL alumni Vince Lombardi, Dan Henning and Dick Vermeil., as well as New York Yankees skipper Joe Torre. He graduated in 1973 with personal bests of 63'1" and 181'7" in the discus.

Nespoli moved on to Mississippi State where he majored in landscape architecture. With no coaching other than the *Track And Field Omnibook*, Nespoli threw 54'6" as a freshman and earned a bronze at the Southeastern Conference Indoor Championships.

But a promising start to his collegiate career led to several years of slow progress. His career bests were 57'6" and 161' in the discus by the time he graduated in 1978. Nespoli would never again place so high in a SEC Championship.

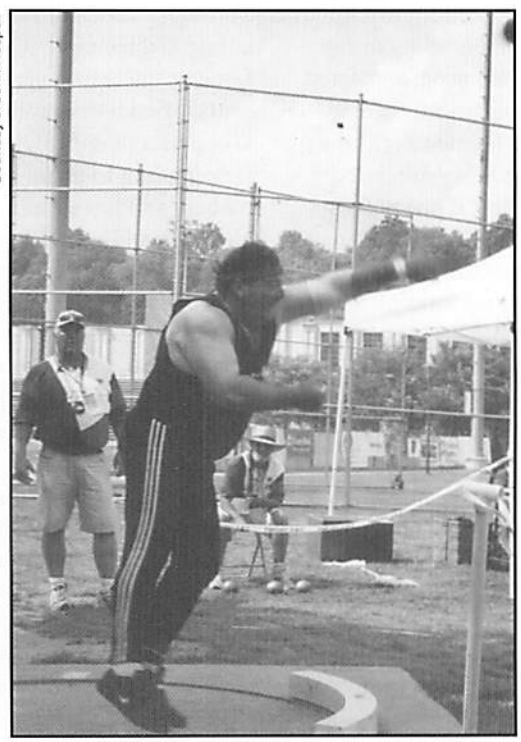
Nespoli left the college ranks bitter with the advantages other athletes utilized; steroids. He saw the effects of Winstrol and other substances, which he says were openly discussed. "I watched a thrower inject Deca-Durobalin directly into his thigh," recalls Nespoli like it was yesterday. "I saw a guy go from 52' to 62' and 220 lbs. to 270 lbs. in one year. Another guy walked around with a six pack of 100 tablet bottles of Winstrol. Anavar was used at a couple schools. Guys were shooting up in hotel rooms before meets."

"Sometimes I wondered what might have happened had I taken the steroids," says Nespoli. "I know those guys blew out bodyparts and sustained significant injuries. Because I never used steroids, I'm still capable of lifting and throwing today."

And so it was that Nespoli put his beloved shot put in the recesses of his mind and moved on to the working world in his chosen profession. He founded Germantown Landscape Company in 1985 with his wife, Carolyn.

But his love affair with the iron ball never ended. Carolyn, whom Nespoli had met at Mississippi State, took note of her husband's casual references. She knew how much the event had meant to her him. In 1992 his wife gave him a very special birthday present: a copy of the *Throwers Manual*. The book sat on the commode tank for years, serving as only occasional bathroom reading. But at age 45, Nespoli could resist his athletic calling no more. He started seriously reading that birthday gift and began training. He scheduled three college meets and won two. He competed in college meets again the next year with his best effort an impressive 55'3" with the 16-pound ball that first year.

Nespoli became frustrated with the lack of competition opportunities and put his shot away again, this time for three years. His return was prompted by a friend informing him about Senior Games competitions, and Nespoli was back in training at age 50.



Courtesy of John Nespoli

Nespoli made Masters history in Pittsburgh.

And training with a vengeance. He set his sights on the Men's 50-54 age group record of 16.95m set by Tom Gage in 1994. His training sessions indicated he was ready to do so, and he excitedly indicated his state of readiness to me prior to the competition.

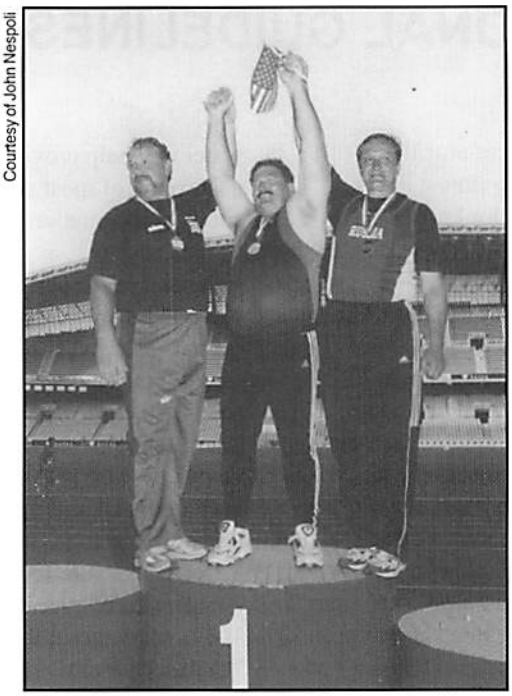
Nespoli realized that dream in June, 2005. To hear him recount his historic day at the U.S. Senior Games in Pittsburgh, is to be there, in High Definition. The way a crowd gathered around the shot area. His conversations with his competitors. And most vividly, what his first throw of the second flight felt like.

"My chest was stretched and I rotated my hip through the throw. It was the best release I could

have, and the two-hundred or so people watching broke into applause."

Nespoli set his sites on a second dream later that summer. Having claimed the American Record, his next quest was to take on the world at the World Masters Championships in San Sebastian, Spain in August. But becoming a world champion would take a little more than a passport and a suitcase with a 6 kg shot in it. Masters champi-onships are determined by finances as much as in-circle efforts. National and international medal stands are often a function of which great athlete had the financial wherewithal to make their way to some far-flung site.

Courtesy of John Nespoli



Nespoli completed his dream season with a World Championship in Spain.

Friends quickly established the John Nespoli World Champion Fund, put together approximately 400 packets, and distributed them all over the greater Memphis area. What came back included three checks for $1,000 and another for $500. Altogether $9,600 was raised. Kicking in another $1,400 out of his own pocket, the Nespolis spent two weeks in Spain. "One of the high points of my life," he fondly recalls.

At the World Masters Athletics Championships, Nespoli once again stood atop the podium, this time as World Champion. His 53' toss bested Vasilias Maganas of Greece and Russian Victor Rashchupk, both of whom towered over the 6'0", 290-pound American.

Nespoli was not alone in his quest. He has a powerful ally in his coach, Carolyn, now his wife of 25 years. Never a thrower herself, Carolyn has learned the event and can be seen advising her husband in competition, as well as competitors who seek her advise.

Adequate recuperation is a key to Nespoli's training schedule, which includes weight training every four days and throwing every four days as well. Some of his recent lifting bests include: Squat- 505 lbs., Bench- 370 lbs., Seated Behind Neck Press- 275 lbs. He uses an Ab-Lounger which he calls, "Fantastic." Another favorite exercise are snatch pulls in a Smith Machine using Aerobic Steps. When he's in the gym, he's moving big weights and training hard.

Nespoli took five months off after Worlds to recharge his batteries. He's back in the gym and circle now, and his standing throws are a full two feet ahead of last year. He's already chasing his next dream. ***LSTJ***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# BASIC NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES

## By Pat Corbett

We are now at a point in the evolution of nutritional science where we are able to determine almost the exact nutritional needs of every individual. Our knowledge of how the body works and how nutrients affect performance has improved tenfold over the past decade. So, why is it that so many outstanding athletes are still in the Dark Ages when it comes to their nutritional habits?

The nutritional considerations for any athlete should be fully one third of their training, if they are to ever reach their full potential. A training program that neglects nutritional considerations will eventually fail, for without proper nutrition the body will not respond to intense training in the long term, and will eventually break down in the form of sickness and injury. A good training program should take into consideration training intensity, load and duration of training sessions, rest, sleep and recovery and nutrition.

There are incredible amounts of nutritional information available, and it is sometimes difficult to know where to start. The list of suggestions that follow are just that, suggestions. They are not intended for any purpose other than to guide you through the maze of nutritional information, and hopefully make an impact on the way you eat and increase your nutritional knowledge. But first and foremost of these is:

****Educate yourself in nutrition. This cannot be emphasized enough!!!**

1. Think of your food as fuel and one more way to help you improve your performance.

2. Think in terms of nutrient density, not fat grams or calories.

3. Hydrate! Hydrate! Hydrate! Water, "Clean Water," is the most important nutrient!!!

4. If you are not drinking enough water, your performance literally dries up. Our bodies are more than 75% water. Knowing this, it then becomes a wise practice to make sure that two-thirds of what you consume is in liquid form. This liquid should be water, but you can replace water with other drinks that are not polluted with SUGAR, CAFFIENE, or other chemicals. Many fresh fruits and vegetables also have large amounts of water, and Gatorade is still the best sports drink, but water is always a better choice.

5. Take a good multi – mineral/multi – vitamin. Although you will lose some of these in your urine because of the poor quality of our food and our diets, you need some sort of supplement to help. Taking supplements with food and water will help provide a synergistic effect, and aid the absorption of most supplements. Read the labels to get specific information as to the best way to take them.

6. A balance of food is best. That is; for a meal, a simple way to know if you have a balance of food is to simply eyeball your food and measure it in the palm or hand, roughly the size of your fist. Each type of food should be roughly the same size, as compared to your palm/fist. Do your best to get 6 - 8 servings of carbohydrates from fresh vegetables and fruit (these are simple carbohydrates are easy to digest and the best sources for micronutrients, minerals and antioxidants). The more brightly colored the better. Make sure to also get three to four servings of complex carbohydrates (brown and wild rice, potatoes and 100% whole grain foods) per/day. Whenever you can, eat "Certified Organic" foods.

7. Do not over-eat.

8. Stay away from buffets.

9. Cut down, or eliminate, fast food, processed food, refined food and packaged food.

10. Eat more food that comes from the ground (preferably close to the ground you live by). Food from your own garden (depending of course on how you grow your food) and "Certified Organic" food is the healthiest food you can eat

11. Do not over-cook food. The longer you cook food, the more nutrients are lost.

12. Learn how to prepare and store food.

13. Eat smaller more balanced meals throughout the day.

14. Eat breakfast!!!

15. Athletes need more protein because of the constant breakdown of muscle tissue through training. A good protein shake can be one way to get some extra protein. But be careful about how much protein, and what kind of protein (more fish, less red meat), you get. Balance is important! Have some protein with each meal and snack. [See Protein Amendments.]

16. Be aware of how food makes you feel. How does your body react to the food you eat? If your body reacts in a negative way, i.e.- heartburn, acid reflux, upset stomach, diarrhea, allergic reaction, acne, etc... DON'T EAT THAT FOOD! Your body is telling you that it doesn't want it, and is reject-

ing it. Do not take drugs so that you can eat food your body rejects. These drugs may cause side effects that are worse than the initial ailment.

17. The most important thing to remember is that your performance is directly related to your nutritional habits, rest, sleep, and recovery and training habits.

18. You will NEVER reach your full potential without proper nutrition!

**"ALL OF US MUST SUFFER PAIN; EITHER THE PAIN OF DISCIPLINE OR THE PAIN OF REGRET"**

**Amendments to the Basic Nutritional Guide**

#1. Food is the fuel that provides your body with the building blocks and energy required to reach your potential as an athlete. Your nutritional needs are as important as ANY part of your training. You may be able to GET BY with a fast food diet, but this type of diet only serves to fill your stomach, not fuel your performance. With a fast food diet you also put yourself at a greater risk for future health problems such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes, which are all epidemics in the western world (90% of which is preventable).

#2. There are no drugs or supplements on the market today that have any greater effect on your health than real food!!! Although it is acceptable to take some vitamin and mineral supplements, you are better off getting your nutrients from food as your first, and best, source. Most supplements are marketed as some kind of miracle formula that will change your life. I am sorry to inform the "Miracle Workers" (manufacturers) of the supplement world, but man cannot create inorganic or organic matter manipulated in a lab that is anything more than second best. Nature has cornered the market in the miracle department, and we have evolved into our current form by eating the right foods.

#3. Losing Weight: Losing weight does not have to be a traumatic experience. There are some simple guidelines. Don't over-eat, stay active, get some exercise each day, and consume fewer calories than you burn up, eat REAL FOOD, don't eat after 8:00pm, drink plenty of water, get good rest and sleep, and stay away from fad diets. Be patient and understand that nature takes time to do her thing. If you have been over-weight for 10 years you must realize that your body has adjusted to this weight, and that it is going to take some time to lose it. Make short-term and reasonable goals for each week month and year, and you will be very satisfied. Don't rush it or be concerned about the peaks and plateaus; you can get through them with patience and a good plan.

#4. Gaining Weight/Protein Amendments: The best way to correctly gain weight is to eat more than you burn up, but you must be very patient. Mass weight gains are accompanied most of the time by mass fat gains. Athletes want lean tissue development and weight gain, not fat. This is a slow process, and only the patient athlete will stay lean, fast, powerful and healthy.

The building blocks for all muscle tissues, including your heart and internal organs, is protein. Protein comes from many sources, but the best source comes from land animals (beef, poultry, pork). But along with the protein, you also get the antibiotics, pesticides, herbicides, synthetic hormones and steroids used to keep these animals productive. You can also get protein from fish, one of the best sources for complete proteins and essential fatty acids (salmon, sardines and albacore tuna are best), soy products and combinations of beans and rice. The key is to get complete proteins (which only come from animal sources or the right combination of beans and rice – but it is very difficult to get enough protein each day from rice and bean combinations) for proper amino acid function. There are very few athletes who achieved any level of success on a vegetarian or vegan diet.

In consideration of the protein mongers, remember that your body can only synthesize 25-30 grams of protein per/meal. More than that amount is very hard on your liver, kidneys and digestive system and what your body does not use it gets rid of and in the process creates excess amounts of waste. There is also a limit to how much protein your body can use per day. This is dependent upon your training intensity, how much weightlifting you do, and your body weight. Remember, one size does not fit all. Each athlete has her/his own requirements and threshold of how much protein they need. But, gaining muscle weight will depend upon the **quality** and quantity of protein you eat.

In consideration of the many levels of fitness and the different weight classifications of athletes, protein charts have been designed. There are plenty of body weight charts for protein consumption for each particular athlete's size and intensity in nutrition books and on the internet. The following chart was created specifically for the competitive athlete who is at a high level of fitness and training. Class 1 is for power athletes involved in heavy lifting where large muscle mass is important. Class 2 is for the power athlete who may not need as much bulk, but still needs to have a large muscular base for good recovery. Class 3 is for the athlete that is more endurance-based and needs less muscle mass to compete in her/his sport.

Author's note: It has been estimated by many Sports Nutrition experts that it takes roughly six months to see any significant changes. Nature takes time to do her work, so be patient. ***LSTJ***

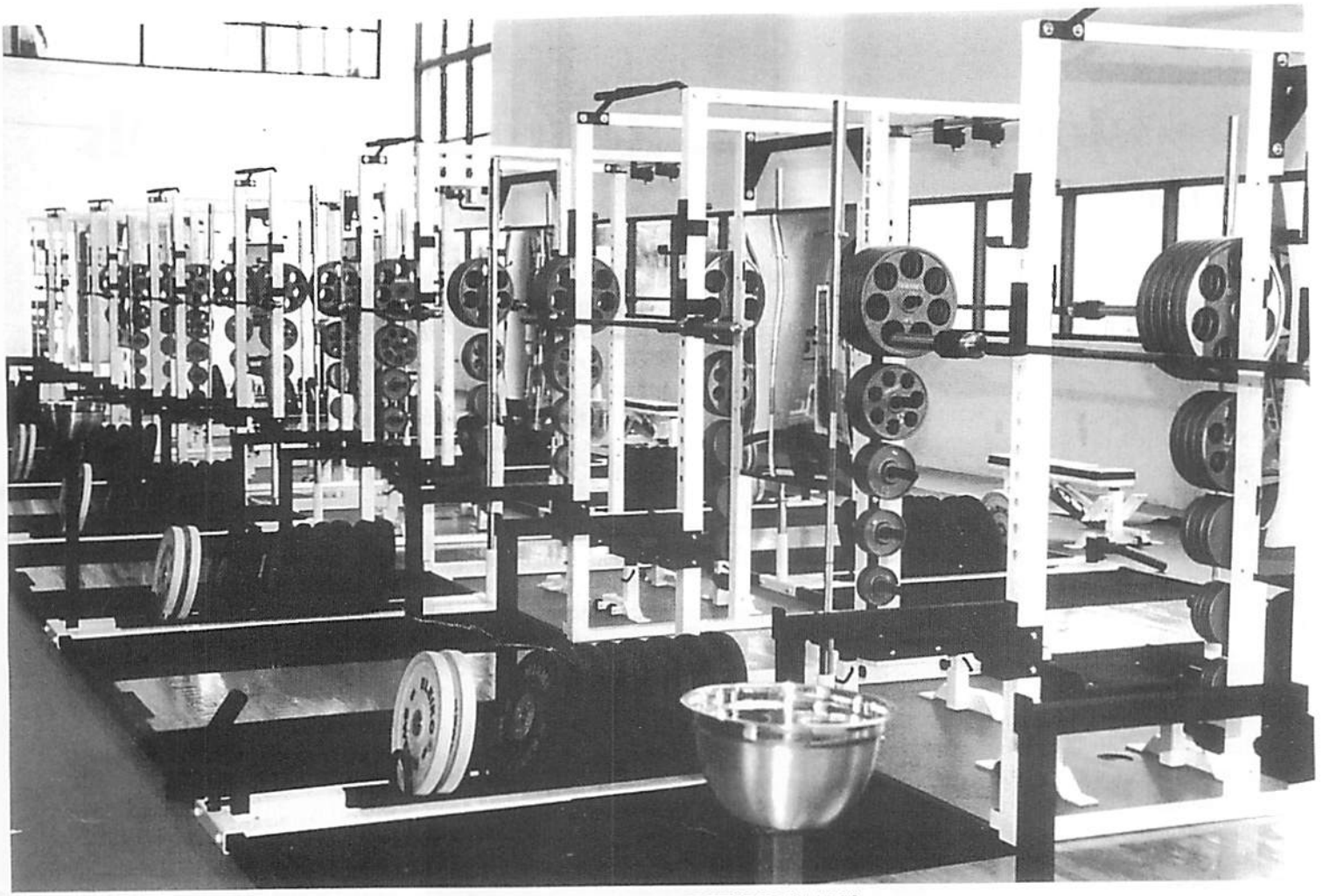
References:
"*Optimum Sports Nutrition*" Your Competitive Edge, A Complete Nutritional Guide for Optimizing Athletic Performance, Dr. Michael Colgan
"*Prescription for Nutritional Healing*" Phyllis Balch and James Balch
"*The Complete Book of Chinese Health and Healing*" Daniel Reid

"*Dynamic Nutrition for Maximum Performance*" A Complete Nutritional Guide for Peak Sports Performance, Daniel Gastelu and Dr. Fred Hatfield

"YOUR TRAINING HABITS DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE" ***LSTJ***

| Body Weight | Class 1 Training Grams of PR | Class 2 Training Grams of PR | Class 3 Training Grams of PR |
|---|---|---|---|
| 88 lbs. | 80 | 68 | 56 |
| 110 | 100 | 85 | 70 |
| 132 | 120 | 102 | 84 |
| 154 | 140 | 119 | 98 |
| 176 | 160 | 136 | 112 |
| 198 | 180 | 153 | 126 |
| 220 | 200 | 170 | 140 |
| 242 | 220 | 187 | 154 |
| 264 | 240 | 204 | 168 |

This chart is from "Optimum Sports Nutrition" by Dr. Michael Colgan of the Colgan Institute of Nutrition and Performance. Dr. Colgan is recognized around the world by thousands of athletes from the Master to the Olympian as one of the very best in Sports Nutrition and Performance.

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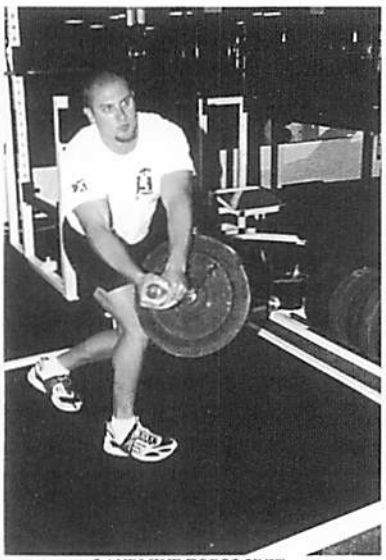

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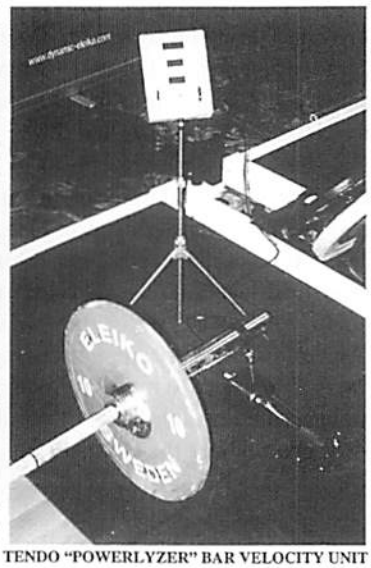


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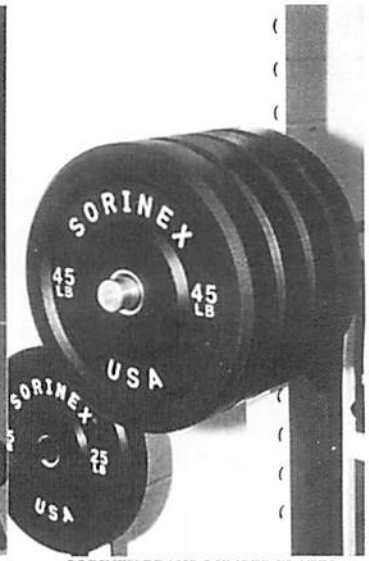


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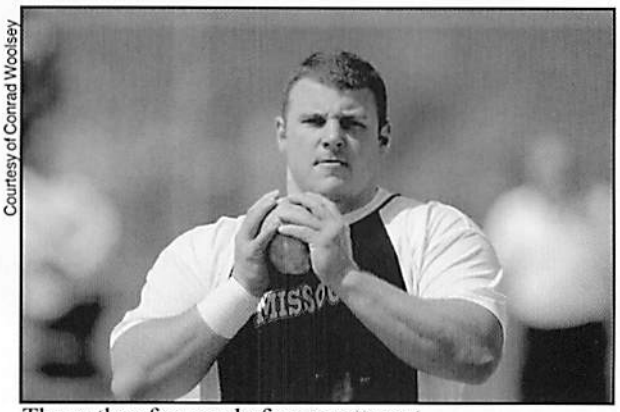
# Developing Mental Routines And Skills

## By Conrad Woolsey

There is no doubt that physical practice is the most important aspect of developing athletic skills. However, what we want for our athletes is for them to be able to consistently deliver their best performances in pressure packed situations. The good news is that this doesn't have to happen by chance! One way coaches can help athletes deliver their best, when they want to the most, is to teach them how to develop and use a mental routine. A routine that I recommend and used as an athlete is the see it, feel it, trust it approach. In short, see your technique the way you want it to look, see what you want to have happen. Then, remember how the positions and movements feel. Recall how good your best performance felt! Finally, trust in yourself and choose to be ready to deliver your best.



Courtesy of Conrad Woolsey

The author focuses before an attempt.

When athletes are thinking the right thoughts, they are more confident, composed, and deliver better performances more consistently. Remember that there is no such thing as blocking something out! However, what we can do is control our thoughts by thinking the "right thoughts" or focusing on what we want to have happen (McGuire). "Confidence is a choice" and every athlete can choose to be confident (McGuire). By teaching athletes how to develop and practice a personal mental routine, we can give them the gift of more confidence, control, and the power to choose to succeed whenever they want to. Thinking positive thoughts on a daily basis helps throwers enjoy the entire process of training and competition, not just when they are throwing well or winning.

Telling athletes to visualize without giving them direction just doesn't get the job done. Mental practice is just that. It's practice, and in order to master it, throwers need to use it everyday. During practice, I would visualize my technique before each throw and see myself performing my technique exactly as I wanted it to look. Therefore, in order to use this approach, a thrower must first have a clear picture of exactly how they want their technique to look. For me, I would regularly make reccurring mistakes in physical practice, but mentally I worked hard at doing it correctly every time. After a mistake, I would again visualize myself doing the throw correctly, instead of focusing on and reinforcing the mistake. I found that this really helped me keep from becoming frustrated in practice, because it helped me focus on positive thoughts before and after each throw. This approach should also be used while watching video. I was a visual learner so when I watched myself make mistakes on tape, I had to make sure to go over my technique correctly several times in my head after each video session. As a general rule, before championship meets I would only watch my personal best throws, because that is exactly what I wanted to have happen! Think of each throw that you watch on tape as a mental repetition.

Besides just using your mental routine in practice, it is also very important to spend a few minutes each day working on your technique mentally. Before each practice, I would spend a few minutes visualizing my technique and going through the "see it, feel it, trust it" routine. A typical mental practice would consist of 5-10 throws in slow motion where I would visualize and break down each specific component of my technique. Next, I would do another 5-10 mental throws at about 75-90%, speed working more on putting each part together. If there is something in your technique that you are struggling with, then this is the time to make sure that you do it correctly. Finally, I would end each practice with several throws, thinking about the rhythm of the throw at full speed,and remembering how good my personal best felt. I would think about things like how a great flick off of my hand felt, catching the ball way back, or any other aspect of the throw that got me excited. The night before and prior to competitions, I would focus mostly on the perfect throw in competition speed and stay away from slow motion practice throws. The main focus was to prepare myself to throw far by seeing myself throw far before the competition began. For me, this always reduced pre-meet anxiety and helped me stay focused and confident on what I wanted to accomplish that day.

Using a routine and thinking positively before each throw is critical to consistent success in championship meets. More importantly, at any time, athletes will be happier and more fulfilled with their sport experience because deep down they will know that they were "thinking right" (McGuire). After a competition, regardless of the outcome, I was able to say to myself, "I stepped up to the challenge and had fun the entire time." While others were nervous, I slept great before the competition. I was confident that I

was going to succeed. I didn't waste any energy or emotion worrying about possible negative outcomes of the competition. While others worried, I looked forward to the challenge. On the day of the meet, I chose to be ready to give my best!

With this attitude, as an athlete or coach, everyone wins regardless of the outcome! By taking away the negative thoughts, it effectively eliminates the choking experience. Someone can only "choke" when they are focusing on negative outcomes. Using this approach, athletes just don't "choke" because they are thinking positive thoughts about what they want to have happen. Throwers may not end up performing well, but they will have a better chance.

As a coach, we can make technical learning more effective and meaningful by giving our athletes structure for their mental routine and by helping them use it on a daily basis. Make sure that your throwers have a clear picture of exactly how they want their technique to look! This is the first and most important step to consistent success. Before each race or attempt, have athletes see themselves having a great performance, and encourage them to choose to be confident. Remember to teach athletes that "confidence is a choice," and that we can choose to be confident in our ability at any time (McGuire).

The mental routine I used allowed me to overcome pressure, and to enjoy or look forward to the most stressful and demanding situations without fear of failure. While at the University of Missouri, I mastered the "see it, feel it, trust it" routine by using it on a daily basis (McGuire). This allowed me to easily reach a state of "flow" during my last throws at the Indoor and Outdoor Big XII Championship meets. To define "flow," it is similar to an athlete being in the "zone" or a state where even the most difficult and demanding tasks seems easy or even effortless (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). In my experience, it was easy to reach "flow" with my mental routine under the right circumstances. In both competitions, I was able to throw a personal best and take the lead on my final throw. I went from struggling technically and being tired, to a state of complete confidence. It allowed me to harness all of my energy into a final throw while staying relaxed at the same time. On each of these throws, my mental routine helped me get completely focused. Contrary to popular belief, I was able enter a state of "flow" at my own will. In demanding situations, I could control "flow" and choose for it to happen! The beauty of reaching "flow" is that there is no pressure and everything seems easy. Even though I only had one throw left in my last chance to win the Big XII, the only thing I was thinking about was how good it was going to feel when I threw a new personal best to win the competition. Having a set mental routine allowed me to reach "flow" and to throw my best when I needed to the most.

At the Indoor championship, I was in the lead the entire meet until Sheldon Battle passed me on his final throw, throwing further than my all time personal best. Instead of being worried about losing, I was excited about the opportunity for a comeback victory! This was the moment I had been waiting for. I expected him to pass me, and for me to have to throw a new personal best to win. During the competition, I had gone over this exact scenario several times in my head, each time seeing myself respond to the challenge. Using the "see it, feel it, trust it" approach, I didn't feel any negative pressure. When I stepped in the ring, there was no doubt in my mind that I would throw far. Prior to throwing, I didn't even watch Battle's final throw. Instead, I stuck with my routine and focused on how I wanted to throw. I knew from the crowd's reaction and energy that he had passed me. Without seeing how far his throw had gone, I started celebrating before my shot hit the ground because I knew I had just thrown a new personal best. I trusted it so much that there was no doubt that it was going happen. The only thing that I felt from the lead change was positive energy and excitement. There was no threat of losing, only a great opportunity for success! Just prior to throwing, I believe that it is important to focus on your technique and routine without focusing on outside influences.

For shot putters, here are some examples of the specific cues you could think about while practicing. See yourself performing the technique exactly as you want it to look: feel the positions, feel catching the ball back, feel yourself push the shot all the way through the release, and then remember how good it feels when it happens. Every time you visualize, remember how good your best throw felt. This thought alone is exciting and can help you get completely dialed in mentally to what you are trying to accomplish. Remembering my personal best was all I ever needed to get excited to throw far!

The last part of the routine is trust, which can not be faked. It only comes with practice over time. After practicing your routine for only a few minutes each day, you will soon learn to trust in yourself, because you know that you have put in the time and are ready. A great time to work on trusting yourself is during visualization, because it's the only time you can be perfect. I think that it is crucial to mentally practice throws in slow motion, regular speed, and competition speed each day. It always gave me energy when I was tired and helped me maintain my physical skills while injured. Positive imagery and visualization was a key to my success as a thrower. Mental practice enabled me to come back to win the 2005 Big XII Indoor Championship with a personal best, just 10 weeks after left knee surgery with only 4 weeks of full throws! After thinking positive thoughts while visualizing and in practice, trusting yourself becomes easy.

Teaching athletes the "see it, feel it, trust it" mental routine will make your team better and help your athletes be more

See *MENTAL SKILLS* on pg. 51

# Mastering The Glide Shot Put

By Dr. Larry Judge

The shot put has progressed from the sideways hop across the ring by Charlie Fonville and Jim Fuchs, to the progressively changing glide of Parry O'Brien, to the rotational technique of the colorful and spirited Brian Oldfield, and finally the record-breaking throws of gold medallist Randy Barnes. When Parry O'Brien, a young University of Southern California athlete, "turned his back to the world," a historical technical breakthrough occurred in the event. O'Brien started with his back to the direction of the throw and achieved great success with his glide technique, a technique still prevalent today, nearly 50 years later. He became the first man to break the 60 foot barrier, with his revolutionary glide technique. He was a member of four Olympic teams, won two gold medals and one silver medal and, from 1952 to 1956, achieved a record of 116 consecutive victories which still stands today. O'Brien developed great discipline in his technique and it was modified by throwers after him. O'Brien's records were progressively broken until 1965 when another American, Randy Matson, shattered the 70 foot barrier. Distances continued to progress for gliders culminating with East German Ulf Timmerman establishing a world record of 75'8" in 1988, and Mike Stulce of the United States winning the gold medal in 1992.

The glide continues to be a technique used by many world class throwers, but the implementation of the spin technique has grown in recent years. In the 2004 Athens Olympics, both gold medal performances in the shot put were achieved with the glide. In fact, all twelve finalists in the women's shot put utilized the glide. Many experts in the field still consider the glide to be the best technique for putting the shot, but the technique has lost popularity in the United States. It is still the dominant technique used internationally, especially by female throwers, justified by the consistent power position of the linear technique. But the linear technique is not being taught by many of the top coaches in the United States.


Courtesy of Larry Judge

From left to right: Liz Wanless, Candace Scott, Judge, and Erin Girleath.

Factors that influence optimal performance in the shot put would be the release height, release velocity, and release angle. Segmental acceleration depends on the technique that allows optimal combinations of the above parameters. One of these factors, the height of release, is the result of genetic development and cannot be influenced by coaching or training. The other two factors can be influenced by strength/power training and technique development.

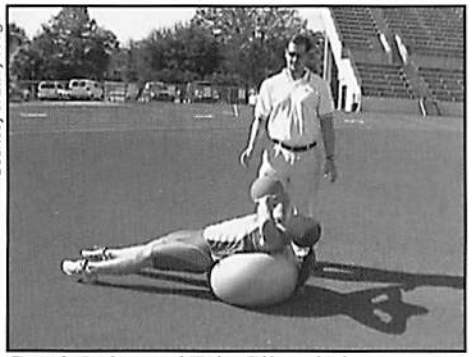
There are some variations in the technique being used in the glide today. Athletes can use a short glide with a long base or a long glide with a short base. These two techniques are commonly referred to as the short-long (power) and long-short (speed) glide. The speed glide is characterized by a dynamic start, that utilizes a dynamic drive to a linear block position and a rotary release. In speed shot putting with the dynamic glide, the athlete starts the throw aggressively by dropping from the upright position into the glide. This allows the athlete to gain the extra momentum that he would get in the back of the ring with the spin and still have the consistent power position of a glide. The speed throwing technique emphasizes the conservation of momentum principle, where a component of the momentum of the body is transferred to vertical at the release, while retaining as much of the horizontal momentum as possible. The typical speed glider is very athletic and can turn the right foot to ninety degrees in the power position. This very specific flexibility in the lower leg can be determined very quickly through multiple repetitions with an implement. In contrast, the power glide seeks to maximize the force to the shot over the greatest period of time (i.e.- the maximum impulse). A typical power glider may have trouble turning the right foot to ninety degrees. This athlete is better served as a short-long athlete and should be taught to lift and rotate in the middle of the ring. This technique is characterized by a short controlled glide, a long compressed power position, and a long explosive lift. All athletes have a specific technical model that will bring results in the ring. But, this model must be specific to the physical attributes of each athlete. The coach must set the technical model for each athlete. Your task as a coach is to solidify the technical model and to mold it. Drill it until the athlete knows it. Make sure the drills match the style of throwing.

In working with shot putters we, have adopted a series of drills to teach each specific part of the throw. This article will examine each part of the throw and a series of drills designed to help the athletes learn, and hopefully master proper technique. The focus will be on a drill progression for the glide shot put. The drills aid in helping the thrower feel the desired position or action. This article will outline

the approach used in training shot putters Kim Barrett 18.26m (59'11¾) and Liz Wanless 18.58m (60'11¼) at the University of Florida.

### Teaching the Arm Strike

The shot is held medium high on the fingers. The number of fingers behind the shot (3 or 4) is a matter of personal preference. The shot is placed against the neck under the chin with the thumb down and the elbow up. The arm carriage is in a position in which the athlete can perform a clean arm strike in the release. The arm strike is probably the most under-coached part of the throw. Properly performing the inside-out motion of the arm strike is often the difference between a good and great throw. The medicine ball push drill is excellent for teaching the arm strike. Take a medicine ball (2 or 3kg.) and hold it with the elbows up and thumbs down. Instruct the athlete to throw the ball to a partner with the inside out motion. Keep in mind the thumbs should be down and the hand will follow through outward. The shot or medicine ball drop is another drill designed to teach proper mechanics in the arm strike. In this drill the athlete lies on the ground with the arms in a receiving position at chest level with the elbows out. The partner will drop the medicine ball and the athlete will catch it and immediately push it as high as possible, straight up in the air, emphasizing proper release mechanics. The partner should catch the ball and repeats. Perform sets of ten. This is a great plyometric drill for developing speed in the upper body. The snap down drill with the shot put is another excellent drill that aids in teaching the inside out motion of the arm. The athlete holds the shot in the neck and puts the shot into the ground working on release mechanics. Athletes often use this drill to warmup their wrists and arms.



Courtesy of Larry Judge

Coach Judge and Erin Gilreath demonstrate the med-ball drop.

### Teaching the Block

In the block, the elbow of the free arm flexes and is brought back toward the body assisting in the rotational acceleration of the shoulder plane. This transfer of energy is caused as a result of the left leg blocking linear acceleration and left arm blocking shoulder rotation. As the transfer of power occurs, the shot is accelerated quickly. The elbow remains up as the shot is pushed away from the body with the thumb down.

For an efficient transfer of momentum, the athlete must understand the left side block. Most athletes have a "soft" or rotating left side. The partner high five drill is an excellent drill for teaching the arm strike and block. Have the athlete face a partner with the throwing hand off the shoulder and the left arm is long at the mid-line of the body. The target will hold his hand in the air creating a target for his partner. The athlete strikes his partner's hand with his throwing hand. It is important to stress the proper alignment of the arm with thumb down and elbow up. A similar release angle to the actual throw should be used. After a few repetitions the block can be added. The athlete should feel the summation of forces and the additional power achieved with the block.

The athlete can perform some additional drills with the shot put. The throws on the knees drill is designed to get the athlete comfortable with the arm strike and remove the legs from the equation. The right-handed athlete puts the left knee down and holds the shot put off the neck on the shoulder. The left arm is in front of the athlete slightly flexed at the midline of the body as the athlete faces the landing area. The athlete puts the shot with the same inside out motion described in the partner high five drill. The shot should not travel very far and release mechanics should be emphasized. When this is mastered, add the block by pulling the left arm into the body. When the thrower is comfortable with the block, have him or her turn counterclockwise to add torque to the movement.

### Teaching the Power Position

The main task of the glide is for the thrower to land in an effective throwing base. The length of the base and the position of the feet will be determined by the specific glide technique used. The left foot contacts the circle slightly after the right foot, and the toe is approximately aligned with the instep of the right foot. This relationship, and the forward drift of the hips, helps to utilize the straight line principle and achieve a more efficient block. Part of getting into the base is getting the hips under the torso ready to fire. This means quickly and efficiently. Placement will be on the ball of the foot with the shot remaining behind the right foot. This alignment enhances accelerated hip rotation for a quicker arm strike at delivery. Teach the athlete to get into the proper position as fast as possible. As a coach, watch for the hanging left leg or the stop in the middle of the ring. From this position at the end of the glide, the drive leg touches down to left side of the toe board and the throw is initiated by the left leg. Teaching the power position involves constant rehearsal of the proper positions. The feet are shoulder width apart with the left toe and right instep aligned. The shoulders will be turned to the back of the ring with the left hand over the right foot. The head is up and the majority of the weight is on the right leg. The right quad should hide the foot if the athlete were to look down. The core is firm. Relate this position to the weight room. It is an athletic position similar to the hang clean or quarter squat.

Teach young throwers the "Stickman Model." In this

model: the hip is over the right leg, the head is up, the back is straight, and the athlete is fairly tall. The athlete is in a great position to use his hips and feels strong because he is in an upright position. This position is similar to the position an athlete would be in the squat or power clean. Allow the athlete to get a little lower as he or she warms up. Emphasize driving the hips, but do not reverse the feet. Experiment with the stickman until it best fits the athlete you are working with. In trying to establish the proper position remember: a weak position will have no life. Strive for positions that create sparks. Don't be afraid to try things and make mistakes. Making a slight adjustment can make a big difference. Each athlete has his or her limit of how much tilt they can handle in the power position. When an athlete hits a position that is good for him or her, practice that position.

### Teaching the Lower Body Action

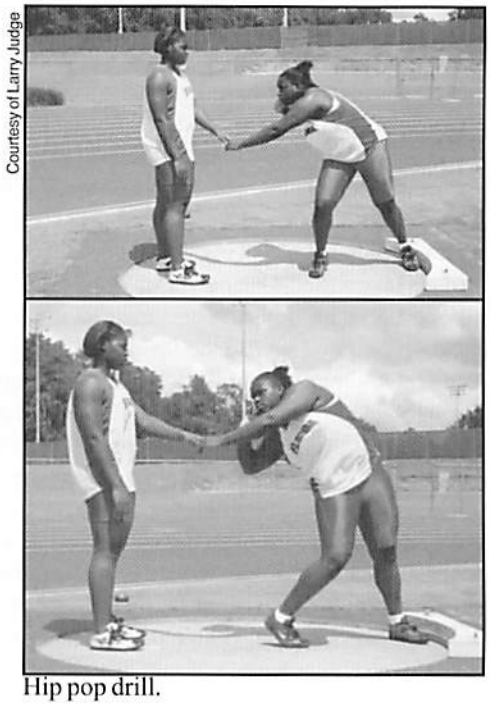
The action in the center of the circle will be a combination of a rotation, lift, and a hip drift. The action will depend on the athlete. The long short glide, speed thrower will rotate the hip, then lift the torso in the middle of the ring. The other option is, a lift and then rotate, short-long technique. Determining the action in the center of the circle will be based on the athlete's ability to turn the right foot in the center of the circle during the throw. As the lower extremities are driving toward the toe board, the center of gravity is moving forward, the left leg must be forcefully extended or posted. The free arm is kept long to help slow the rotation of the upper body. The head, throwing arm and shoulder stay back.

A drill to teach the turning of the hip, knee, and foot is the can drill. The athlete assumes the power position, and the coach places a can or cup behind the athlete's heel. The athlete turns the hip, knee, and foot in the direction of the throw and hits the can or cup. Hitting the object insures the proper amount of hip rotation. The hip pop drill is another excellent drill for hip rotation. In this drill the athlete assumes the power position. The athlete keeps the shoulders closed and the weight back on the drive leg. A partner can hold the free arm to help the athlete stay back. The athlete turns the hip on the drive leg toward the direction of the throw. This is similar to grinding a cigarette.

The modified hip pop is the same drill, except the partner holds the elbow of the throwing arm, and the athlete opens the free arm as the hip rotates. This helps the athlete work on the long free arm. Another alteration of the hip pop drill is the hip pop with a stick drill. The athlete places a pole on the shoulders and performs the hip pop drill. The length of the pole helps slow down the rotation of the upper body. The athlete can feel the lower body. If an athlete has trouble feeling the hip rotation, the assisted hip pop drill will help the athlete feel the proper action. A partner can manually help the athlete turn the hips properly. The medicine ball pop is very similar to the hip pop drill. The athlete assumes the power position with a medicine ball held against the hip. The athlete then pops the hip and throws the ball to a partner. The progression of glide drills is listed in the next section.

### The Glide: Teaching the Movement across the Ring

The first drill to teach movement across the ring is the step back drill. The athlete assumes the same starting position as the glide. The athlete steps to the middle of the ring with the right foot and extends the left foot to the board. The athlete can throw off of this drill. After the athlete masters this basic movement, it is time to teach the glide.


Courtesy of Larry Judge

Hip pop drill.

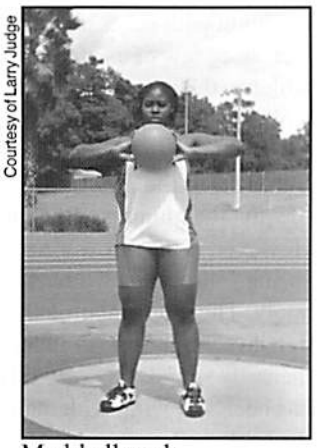
A great drill to teach the shift in the glide is the "A" drill. The athlete assumes the starting position and unseats with the majority of the weight on the right heel. The left leg extends toward the toeboard. This extension should create an elongated body position similar to the letter "A." This drill helps eliminate flight in the transition phase of the glide. The transition phase is the period from rear foot contact to front foot contact. In the dynamic glide, this phase must fluid. Too long of a flight phase often causes the left leg to ground late and takes away valuable time in which force can be applied to the implement. The ballistic start in the dynamic glide may cause the athlete's midsection to buckle at key parts of the throw. Poor core control may cause the athlete to pause in the middle of the ring and sometimes cause a winding up motion at the end of the glide. Core strength is the ability to control oneself from the knee caps upward to the chest. This will take away from


Courtesy of Larry Judge

A-Drill

the speed built in the dynamic glide. A pause in the middle of the ring will cause the athlete to get little or no increased distance from traveling across the ring and using the ballistic start. Power cleans, snatches, squats and torso exercises in the weight room help build static core strength. Throws, with kettle bells, puds, and of course medicine balls, build dynamic core strength.

The medicine ball push drill can help teach the extension of the left leg in the glide. Place a medicine ball behind the left leg of the athlete. Have the athlete kick the ball to feel the extension of the left leg. A common problem of many beginners is pulling the right leg under the athlete in the glide. The towel hop drill is great for teaching the pulling of the right leg. Place a towel in the center of the ring. Have the athlete practice gliding and pulling the right leg over the towel. Be careful not to overdo this drill. Too much of this can cause the base to be too narrow and cause the hips to drift. The mini-glide drill is a great way to teach the athlete the simultaneous grounding of the feet. The athlete performs a shortened version of the glide. This may start out with a glide of six inches and increase from there. The partner glide is a drill designed to emphasize keeping the shoulders closed in the glide. The athlete assumes a normal starting position in the back of the circle with a partner holding the free arm. The partner provides mild tension by walking with the athlete while he or she glides. Perform sets of five. The glide with a pole on the shoulders is another way to work on keeping the shoulders closed. The length of the pole helps the athlete feel the shoulders open. If an athlete has trouble staying down on the glide, the glide under a cross bar or a rope works well. A cross bar or rope is placed about mid-ring at a height that forces the athlete to assume the proper position in the glide. The athlete then glides under the bar or rope. Sets of repeat glide down a line are great for working on consistency in the glide. Just have the athlete pick a line on the track and start to glide. Check for foot positioning. Remember, perfect practice makes perfect.


Courtesy of Larry Judge

Med-ball push.


Courtesy of Larry Judge

Pole drill.

**Conclusion**

If you are interested in a more complete explanation and demonstration of these drills, I have made some instructional videos. Instructional videos are available for the beginner/intermediate level thrower, as well as the advanced level thrower. The comprehensive drill-packed videos illustrate the drill progression from the arm strike through the actual glide. Included are excellent demonstrations and clear and concise explanations of each drill. I incorporate the grip, foot position, alignment, power position, release drills, into a terrific step-by-step teaching progression. It shows the drill progression I used in developing both men and women Olympic athletes in the speed glide shot put!

Contact Championship Productions for more information at www.championshipproductions.com (800) 873-2730 or contact me www.coachlarryjudge.com if you have any questions. ***LSTJ***

# BEANTOWN AWAKENING

## By James Brown, Masters Weight/SuperWeight Champion

After attending the 2006 USATF National Masters Championships at the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston, I made several observations about Masters Athletes, competition, and life in general. Not to mention I learned the real purpose for electric power washers.

Masters athletes: awe-inspiring is the best description anyone can make. Just consider the following. Most people deal with the stresses of life, such as serious health concerns, family issues, life, death, work, relocation, job travel, and the list goes on and on. Most are content to survive. A Masters athlete, however, has a desire to live life, to face challenges, and most importantly, overcome. We may not all break records or win the gold, but we accept the challenge and compete. Our victories are not always measured by time and distance recorded on a sheet of paper, but in the length of the journey to be able to step in the ring or get out on the track.

My personal achievements in Boston were disappointing, but the opportunity to witness the various world records and personal success of the assembled athletes was a priceless experience. Most inspiring to me was the founder of the Long and Strong Throwers Club, Terry Shuman. Shuman is a heart attack survivor who returned to Nationals for the first time since his illness. His presence and positive attitude through his personal journeys, reminded me the pure reason we all should be involved in the Masters arena. Not just to compete, or show we still perfecting our form, but to share a few moments of our lives with men and women who are living life, not merely surviving it.

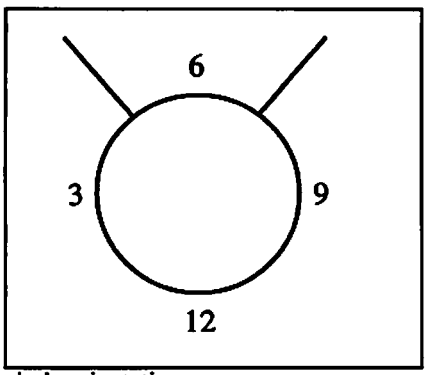
As for the reason for the power washer, ask [*LSTJ* publisher] Glenn Thompson; it was his idea. ***LSTJ***

Training The High School Discus Thrower

# STEP-BY-STEP TEACHING OF DISCUS TECHNIQUE

**by Bill Pendleton, Esperanza High School, Anaheim, CA**

Developing a skilled, top-level discus thrower requires patience but has many rewards. To begin with, the discus is an event that requires a high level of skill. Unlike the sprints or jumps, a decent thrower is almost never beaten by a superior athlete who walks over and dabbles in the event. By becoming technically proficient, a thrower of very modest athletic ability will defeat the great majority of his competitors, and a truly gifted athlete will dominate most meets short of the prestigious invitationals. In discussing the training of the discus thrower, I will emphasize coaching approaches I have found successful in developing high school throwers. I will discuss everything in terms of a right-handed thrower. Reverse all directions for a left-hander. Also, in describing the ring, I will refer to the rear where the throw begins at 12 o'clock, with the front of the ring 6 o'clock etc.



circle orientation

**Selection of athletes**

For most throwing coaches, cutting athletes is never a requirement, so the real question is to whom do I devote the greatest coaching effort. If the coach only has one or two athletes, this is simple, but with five or more throwers, the coach needs to try and spot aptitude early and nurture it. Ideally, a discus thrower is gifted with athletic ability which may be evident as he excels in other sports.

Height is also of great benefit. Height provides two indispensable qualities. First, long arms provide long levers. If two discus throwers are rotating at the same speed, the farther the discus is from the body (or axis) the greater the momentum generated. Secondly, a taller thrower has a higher release point if he/she throws correctly.

Three factors determine the distance a discus will travel:

1. velocity of discus at release;
2. angle of release;
3. height of release point.

A 6'-tall thrower throwing a discus on the exact same flight path (parabola) as a 5'9" thrower will throw farther since his flight path starts higher and reaches the ground later. Yet, since few of us are blessed with tall and skilled athletes, the best bet initially is the well-coordinated athlete while the taller thrower represents longer range potential.

**Introducing the Discus**

Ideally, the training of the thrower can begin in the fall. However, if the thrower needs to begin in the spring following a winter sport, the same training principles apply. The most important factor with beginners is devote enough time to them so that they become fundamentally sound. It is very difficult to take a thrower who has been throwing with major flaws, such as diving out of the back, and correct these flaws. It takes less time overall to start him correctly.

Firstly, a thrower must walk correctly before he can run. In other words, he must know how to grip and release the discus properly before he takes standing throws. Then, he must master the standing throw before he throws from a pivot on the right foot. Lastly, he must pivot correctly before he takes complete throws.

All beginning throwers see older throwers and want to attempt full throws, but when they begin these on their own, they develop and reinforce flaws which they may never lose.

The first area of importance is the grip. The beginner may either spread his fingers or place the index and middle finger together with the joint of the first knuckle on the outside edge of the discus. Have the beginner stand with his arm at his side and squeeze the discus like a bar of soap so that it squirts out forward. Most beginners will release the discus out the back of their hand.

Secondly, have two beginners stand five yards apart and "bowl" the discus back and forth. This teaches them to release the discus correctly. If they do not release it correctly, it will not roll to the partner. After they can bowl it back and forth several times without either one of them having to move sideways to catch it, they should back up to 10 yards until they are successful at that distance, and so on back to about 20 yards.

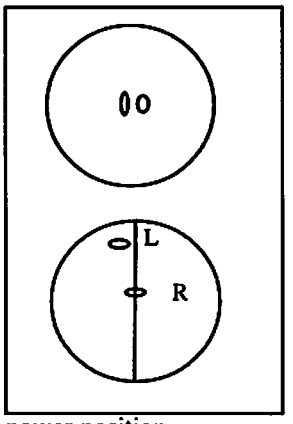
Next, the throwers move on to releasing the discus horizontally or "skimming" the discus. They stand about 20 yards apart and throw the discus back and forth releasing

the discus horizontally working on level flight. They should understand that the faster a discus rotates, the farther it will travel, so a good release is vital.

**The Standing Throw**

In teaching the discus we break the throw into four parts: 1) exiting the rear of the ring as the throw begins over the left foot; 2) driving out of the back and landing on the right foot in the center of the ring; 3) pivoting on the right foot until the left foot touches in the power position; 4) throwing from the power position.

The teaching progression takes these four parts and works backwards. In teaching the discus, we will use a "whole-part-whole" approach. Show the beginner what a full throw looks like and explain that we will master the final step and then work backwards one step at a time before attempting the full throw.



power position

Standing throws should not only provide a warm-up, but they should emphasize technique that will improve the full throw, not just the standing throw. For example, excessive lunging forward during the standing throw will add distance to the standing throw but detract from the full throw. The type of standing throw I prefer is seen on the Mac Wilkins instructional video.

- √ The thrower faces the back of the ring with the right foot in the center. The weight is centered on the right foot. To begin, the thrower holds the discus in front of him and swings it a little to his left and then draws it back keeping the right arm at full extension until the discus points up at the same angle it will be finally released at the finish of the throw.
- √ As the discus is drawn back, the left leg extends back about two feet until the ball of the foot contacts the ring at 7 o'clock. This puts the thrower in a "heel to toe" relationship. The right foot is on a line dividing the center of the ring from 12 to 6 o'clock. The left foot is behind this line so that the hips can be opened up as the thrower rotates to throw. The left arm stays extended in front of the body. The left arm needs to stay extended as a counterbalance to the extended right arm.
- √ As the right arm reaches as far back as it can, the thrower lifts his/her left foot slightly, then drops it. This foot touch simulates what happens in the real throw as the left foot reaches the power position. This touch initiates the throw. The right foot pivots on the ball of the foot as the right arm retracts in a long U-shaped path down to a low point behind the thrower and back up to a release as near shoulder height as possible. The right foot stays on the ball of the foot as it pivots.

Ideally, the right arm will stay as nearly perpendicular to the body as possible as it sweeps around the body. The left arm will also be extended as it sweeps from 12 o'clock to 6'o'clock with the thumb pointing at the body.

Once the left arm reaches the front of the circle, it should be shortened by bending the elbow until the elbow leads the arm as it passes parallel to the left shoulder at the end of the throw. This bending or "shortening" of the left arm increases its speed since it is now cutting a shorter arc. This helps the thrower get a "stretch" across the chest as he throws. This stretch provides the proper action of pulling the discus, not throwing it by leading with the left arm.

At the release point the thrower is striving to release the discus just as his knees lock out to achieve the highest possible height of release and still have the hips ahead of the discus. In a no-reverse throw the left foot will remain facing the front as the right foot pivots. No-reverse throws are a good way to develop a good block.

***Blocking*** is a crucial concept in developing a good thrower. Blocking is a term that describes the stopping of one part of the body to accelerate another part. In the release, blocking refers to the stopping of the left side of the body at the release of the discus to accelerate the right side. Biomechanically, at the finish we have a rotating line across the shoulders. If we decelerate the left end of this line (the left shoulder), we accelerate the right end (the discus). This can be explained to young throwers by comparing it to a skateboard rider riding 10 miles an hour. If he hits a curb, his feet and the skateboard decelerate immediately to 0 mph causing his head to accelerate beyond 10 mph. A common practice is to start the throwing workout with no-reverse standing throws.

**The Pivot**

Once a thrower can correctly throw from a standing position, we begin to work backwards. The phase of the actual throw just before the finish in the power position is the pivot over the right foot to the power position. To work on this, we do pivot throws.

In a pivot throw the thrower begins with the right foot in the center of the circle and the left at the rear at 11 o'clock. He/she should be facing 7 o'clock. Both hands and the discus are held in front of the body.

To begin, the thrower bends the right knee to a 90-degree angle (just as the knee should be where the thrower lands

in the middle of the ring on a full throw) and gets up on the ball of the right foot. The thrower initiates the throw by drawing the right arm back as far as possible, while leaving the left arm facing the front. The right arm should be kept as parallel to the ground as possible, avoiding the natural tendency to scribe a vertical pendulum with the discus.

Once the discus gets as far back as possible, the thrower should pivot as fast as possible, keeping the right knee bent (the head should not rise up during the pivot). The left foot should land on the ball of the foot at 5 o'clock so the thrower is in a good heel-toe relationship, just like the standing throw. When the left foot hits, the thrower should have the discus back over his right hip and his left arm slightly bent pointing at 11 o'clock; then he executes all the fundamentals of the standing throw, but with the added momentum of pivoting. The two keys to a pivot throw are:

1. Keep the thrower's weight in the center of the ring instead of rocking to the front foot and lunging on the throw. This can be worked on by having the thrower stop the pivot as soon as the left foot hits the ground and immediately pick the left foot up off the ground a few inches. This is impossible unless the thrower's weight is in the center of the ring over the right foot;
2. Keep the discus back. The natural reaction of beginners is to lead the body's rotation with the discus, so the shoulders are always parallel to the hips, instead of staying "wound up" with the shoulders trailing the hips, so that when the left foot hits, the discus is facing 12 o'clock and the throw (the distance the discus will be pulled after the left foot hits) will only cover 180 degrees or half a circle instead of a minimum 3/4-of-a-circle up to a full circle pull achieved by keeping the discus back over the right hip.

To keep the discus back, the thrower must keep his left arm in front of him as he pivots. He must remember that the arms basically should operate at 180 degrees opposite each other. If he pulls the left arm around too fast at the start, the right arm will also rotate too soon.

One way to work on keeping the discus back is to imagine the shoulder has a "latch." Once the discus is pulled back, the "latch" clicks and the discus is locked there until the power position is reached.

A thrower can also work on keeping the discus back by momentarily pausing when the left foot hits on the pivot, to feel the discus back, then finish.

Beginners, especially, can benefit from three-point pivot throws. In a three-point pivot the thrower will cup the discus with his fingers over the discus so he doesn't drop it. Pivot three separate times and throw only on the third pivot. On the first pivot the left foot hits at 5 o'clock as always, and the thrower pauses (he can also pick up left foot briefly here to see if the weight is back). Then he pivots again continuing to rotate counterclockwise, bringing the left foot back to 11 o'clock again. Pause again. This time, re-grip the discus, so it can be thrown. Then pivot again to 5 o'clock and throw.

The three-point pivot provides a lot of repetition and reinforcement in keeping the weight over the middle and keeping the discus back in a short time. It is very important that the thrower stay up on the ball of the foot at all times and never let the heel touch.

Once a thrower is proficient at pivoting, he can work on increasing rotation speed two ways. He can "kick" himself in the rear by bringing the left heel towards his rear during rotation. This shortens the swing (arc) of the lower leg and thus speeds it up. He can also think of "squeezing" the knees by bringing them together quickly as they rotate. This also speeds up rotation.

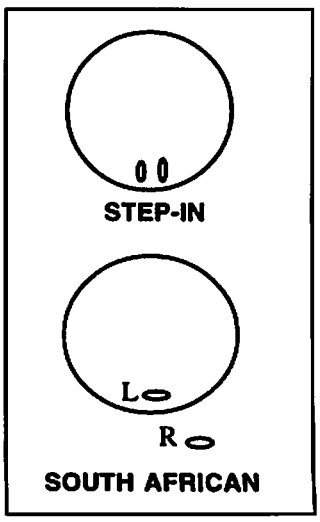
**THE "STEP-IN" or "SOUTH AFRICAN"**

Once a thrower can correctly pivot, we again work backwards. The next step is coming out of the back of the ring. There are two common methods of working out of the back off the left foot. Both begin with the thrower facing the front of the ring.

The ***step-in*** throw emphasizes rotation, while the ***South African*** throw emphasizes being dynamic and explosive.

The ***step-in*** begins with the thrower facing the front of the ring. Both feet are together with the heels against the rear of the ring. The thrower holds the discus in front and then draws the discus back parallel to the ground as far as possible. As the discus is being drawn back, the thrower leaves the left arm facing the front of the ring. Also, as the thrower draws the discus back, he steps forward with the right foot to the center of the ring. Normally, in a full cross ring throw the thrower's right foot lands facing approximately 2 o'clock.

In the ***step-in***, however, we want to have the thrower work on rotation, so we make him exaggerate the rotation. He steps in and points the right foot at 6 o'clock (straight ahead). This forces the thrower to rotate 360 degrees on the right foot before throwing. He must stay on the ball of the foot and keep his weight over the right foot



to complete the throw. This throw must be done a little slower than a normal throw, so the thrower can rotate completely. Once the thrower rotates and the left foot hits the power position, the coaching points are the same as the standing throw.

The South African is not a legal throw in many areas. It is a good method for learning how to pivot.

In the ***South African*** throw the thrower again faces the front of the ring with the left foot at 11 o'clock. The right foot, however, is outside the circle similar to where it will be swung when the right leg is swept wide out of the back in a full cross ring throw. Here, though, the foot is stationary. A line drawn through both feet will point at 5 o'clock. To begin the throw, the thrower again swings the discus to the front and then draws it back as far as possible, letting the body wind with it. When the discus is ready to be brought forward, the thrower drives forward off the left foot, sweeping the right leg in a wide arc. He should lead the right leg sweep with the inner thigh of the right leg, not the right knee. The thrower will exit the back of the ring with his eyes focused forward and upward. The left arm will be slightly flexed, but kept long as the thrower drives forward off the ground.

As the thrower leaves the ground with his left foot, the coach should see the right leg driving forward at a right angle to the body with the knee also at a right angle to the thigh, while the discus remains held behind the shoulder.

This distance between the right knee and the trailing right shoulder is called "separation." The more separation the thrower achieves, the better. Good separation enables the thrower to land on the right foot, rotate and hit the power position with the left foot while keeping the discus held back as far as possible so the thrower gets a long "pull." A thrower who brings the discus forward at the same time as the right leg usually achieves little or no separation.

In addition, the discus should scribe a wide arc with its lowest point at 12 o'clock sweeping out and up as it is brought around past 11, 10 and 9 o'clock. The thrower should drive towards the right-center portion of the sector since the momentum created by the sweeping right leg being brought back inside will push the thrower to the left, resulting in the right foot landing in the center. A thrower who drives straight ahead will end up on the left side of the throwing circle while a thrower who drives to right center will usually end up correctly positioned.

After the thrower's left foot leaves the ground, the right leg is actively pulled underneath the body to increase rotational speed. As the right foot is pulled into the center, the discus should scribe as wide an arc as possible. Ideally, the arm carrying the discus remains perpendicular to the body.

As the thrower "unseats" (leaves the back), he turns and the discus should point upward at the same angle as the discus will be released at. The orbit of the discus will be lower in the back and higher in the front. Once the right foot hits the center, facing approximately 2 o'clock, all the coaching points of the pivot and standing throw apply.

## THE FULL CROSS-RING THROW

Once throwers master the preceding steps, they are ready to begin throwing from the back of the circle. All beginning throwers will want to move to the back very quickly, but if they are not ready, they develop bad habits that can be very hard to break. If the coach is not always with a thrower because he is working with older throwers, a young thrower throwing full cross-ring throws prematurely often develops incorrect muscle memory, i.e.- patterns of movement which become difficult to correct. Try to spend the majority of time with the top throwers of any grade, then beginners (especially promising ones of any grade level), and then older throwers (sophomores, juniors, seniors) of average ability.

To begin the full throw, the thrower assumes a position with his navel aligned at 12 o'clock. The feet should be evenly distanced from that point and the knees flexed about 45 degrees. If the thrower begins with the discus in the right hand at the right side, all he should need to do to initiate the throw is swing the discus back a little and then across the body to the left beyond the chest. Then he should draw the discus back until it is behind him and almost over the left foot.

He will rotate the body as he draws the discus back. The left arm should be relaxed and slightly flexed staying 180 degrees from the throwing arm. As the discus is being drawn back, the left leg should be pivoting on the ball of the foot and maintaining the same angle at the knee.

In the interest of stability, it can be advantageous to keep the right foot flat on the ground as the arm is withdrawn and starts forward. The thrower's weight can also be shifted over the right foot as the discus is drawn back.

If a coach has all throwers utilize this simple start to the throw or any equally quick and simple start, he will avoid the waste of throwing time lost when throwers crank the discus back and forth several times. With many throwers using the same ring, this is an inexcusable waste of time. Excessively cranking the arm gains nothing.

The thrower should get mentally ready to throw before entering the ring, not step in and crank until he feels right. Once the thrower reaches the farthest point of drawing the discus back, it is important that he initiates the throw by shifting the weight towards and over the left foot and begins to rotate the left knee forward. He should not initiate the throw by starting to bring the discus forward.

Again, he can imagine a "latch" clicking when the discus is completely back, keeping it back. The left side of the body turns in unison at the start of the throw. The left foot, left knee, and left arm all point in the same direction as the thrower begins to turn.

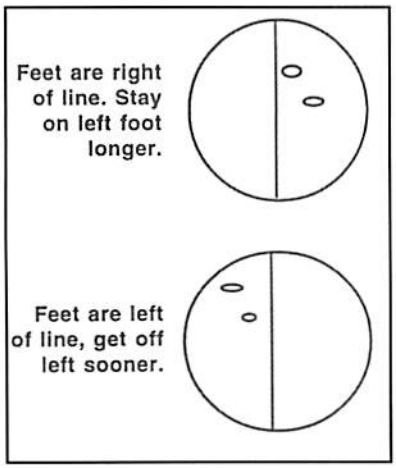
It is important that the thrower develop a wide right leg sweep to generate power. To utilize the wide right leg, the thrower needs to pick up the right foot off the ground when his chest reaches a point about 10 o'clock. When the thrower drives out of the back, he should be driving to the right of center since the wide right leg sweeping in will pull him left of where he initially drives.

In general, if he drives just inside the right foul line, a good right leg will pull him to the center; whereas, if he drives to the center, a wide right leg will pull him into the hole (left of the center line).

He should keep the knees apart as long as possible to avoid leading the throw with the right knee.

A common error among throwers is to pivot both feet until they are 90 degrees from the starting point and facing directly left before picking up the right foot. If a thrower does this, he will almost always swing the right foot out and back in a pendulum motion, leading the throw with the right knee. This reduces the rotary action of the right leg and reduces its power and speed, since it is now on a much smaller radius from the body. Often this is accompanied by excessive leaning and falling out of the back instead of driving up off of the left foot.

The right leg should sweep outside the circle slightly flexed and, as the thrower's foot sweeps across the back of the circle, the coach should not see the bottom of the thrower's shoe when he drives forward. If the sole is visible, he is leading with the right knee, not the thigh. The side of the shoe should be seen by the coach.



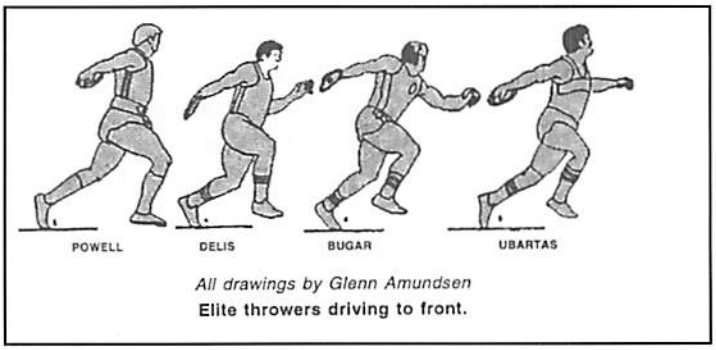

When he reaches a point where he is facing down the right foul line, the leg accelerates forward, leading with the inside of the thigh instead of the knee. The thrower's eyes and left arm should be aimed just above, parallel to the ground. All this time the angle of the left knee should not change.

Whether he drives at the foul line or just right of center depends on the thrower. The aiming point should be adjusted by observing the thrower's feet when he hits the power position. If a line drawn between the thrower's right heel and left toe is to the right of a line drawn down the center from 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock, the thrower needs to stay on the left leg longer, continuing to rotate before he drives out. If this "heel-toe" line is to the left of the center line, he needs to drive off the left sooner. Ideally, the "heel-toe" line will be the same as the center 12 to 6 line.

When the thrower's left foot is leaving the ground, the right hip and right knee should be as far in front of the discus as possible. As discussed in the South African section, this is "separation." Having separation insures that the thrower is keeping the discus behind him and that when he hit the power position, he will have a long pull.

Many throwers will have the discus even with the right hip as they exit the back. This leads to a short pull when the power position is reached since the discus will be around 1 o'clock when the left foot hits 4 or 5 o'clock, as it should be.

The body should be upright during this "unseating" or exiting of the back. When the thrower leaves the ground, the right thigh should be actively pulled in underneath the body to increase rotational speed. The vertical axis (a line drawn through the head to the rear) of the body should go from near vertical upon unseating to tilted toward the back, as the discus is rotated toward the front of the circle.




*All drawings by Glenn Amundsen*
**Elite throwers driving to front.**

In addition, many throwers are helped by using a "focal point." This means they lock their eyes momentarily on an object such as a tree or pole which is in the direction they wish to drive. This usually helps them drive straighter and be more linear across the ring. For many athletes seeing where they are driving helps.

It also prevents over rotation out of the back where the thrower stays on the left so long that he exits the back facing 2 o'clock, or even backwards, developing no

linear speed across the ring. When he does this he will probably land well short of halfway across the ring. Ideally the chest remains erect and the head is an extension of the spine, not bent forward. Keep the knees apart to avoid leading the throw with the right knee. A common error among throwers is to pivot both feet until they are 90 degrees from the starting point and facing directly left before picking the foot up.

When the right foot makes contact with the center of the circle, the foot will be somewhere between 1 and 3 o'clock. It should also be very near the center of the ring. If the thrower lands in the back half of the ring, usually accompanied by the foot facing 12 o'clock, he is not generating the speed across the ring that he should. In this incorrect scenario he will also usually lunge forward while throwing instead of turning on a tight axis after driving to the landing position. If the thrower lands correctly, the left foot should be pointing 180 degrees away from the right at the time the right foot touches down. Pictured below are the same elite throwers viewed from the same angle as their right foot makes contact.

Beginners should not rush the right foot coming down but should rush the left coming down after the right. The rhythm of the throw is "sweeeeep, boom-boom" as the feet


come down. If a thrower consistently fails to drive across the ring, a towel can be laid across the ring halfway across from 3 o'clock to 9 o'clock. Then make the thrower drive out of the back to clear the towel as he sets up to throw. To accelerate the thrower's speed as the right foot touches down in the center, he can "squeeze the knees" or "kick the butt," as discussed in the "pivot" section.

Once the thrower has hit this power position, the emphasis is now primarily on vertical lift. The coaching points are all the same as in the standing throw. The coach should check and make sure that the thrower is finishing his throw by continuing to rotate the right foot as he throws so that on a non-reverse throw, the right foot is turned past 6 o'clock, as the left foot is still at 6 o'clock. In addition, the left arm should be ripping across, finishing in a bent position at the thrower's left shoulder, creating a "stretch" across the thrower's chest as discussed earlier.

Also, the rhythm of the entire throw is constant acceleration. A beginner should be slow to fast. An accomplished thrower can be moderately fast to faster. However, the great majority of young throwers are too fast out of the back. Beginners usually leave the back too fast and then have a hesitation in the throw due to faulty technique.

For example, they may fall out of the back with a lot of speed, and then land on a flat foot or lunge forward at the finish, stopping their rotational speed and resulting in reduced speed of the discus at release.

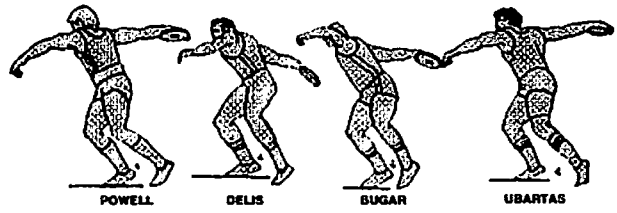
They must understand the only speed that matters is velocity at release. Any speed that is generated must be able to be carried through to the release. The thrower must try to release the discus at shoulder level with an extended arm and a good block. Ideally, the knees should be locking out as the discus is released. A thrower, however, who generates great speed may still have the right knee bent on release.

The thrower then should "chase" the discus by attempting to extend and stay with the discus as long as possible. Upon release, the discus should be tilted slightly upwards and the outside edge should be slightly lower than the inside edge. As the discus flies, it should appear to flatten out with the outside edge rising to parallel to the ground. A thrower who reverses after the throw should execute the same coaching points mentioned in the standing throw section.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

### FALLING OUT OF THE RING ON THE LEFT SIDE

This is probably the most common fault, especially with beginners. They finish the throw with the head pulling down to the left, the arm well above the shoulder. Usually the discus has the outside edge far higher than




Elite throwers hitting the power position viewed from the front.

the left and the thrower falls out of control, out the left side. This is caused by the thrower not transferring his weight over the left foot as he begins the throw. As a result his center of gravity is not over the left foot, and his vertical axis is tilted too much toward the 3 o'clock side of the ring. He continues to rotate and throw on that axis and falls out that side. Throwers working by themselves should know this and any time they fall out of the left

side, they should get over the left foot more, exiting the back on the next throw. No reverse or "stop" throws (the thrower begins a full throw but cups the discus with his hand and stops when he hits the power position) help the coach correct this fault. If the thrower is on balance, he can hold the power position when he hits it, and a non-reverse lets the coach see more easily where the feet are being placed.

**THROWING OFF TO THE RIGHT**

This can have two causes: First, if the thrower's feet are aligned correctly, but the throw is on the right sector line or wider, the thrower is probably pulling his body away and low to the left as he throws. Usually he is ducking the head and shoulders down to the left. The discus will go off right. To correct this, the thrower needs to stand tall at the release and chase the discus with his right shoulder.

Secondly, a common cause is the thrower getting off the left foot too early and a line drawn through his feet will point along the right sector line. This makes it very difficult to get the disc around. The thrower needs to stay on the left foot longer and work on getting the feet correctly aligned.

**ENDING UP IN THE HOLE**

The "hole" is the section of the ring by 4 or 5 o'clock. If a thrower ends up in the corner, but is not falling out on that side, he is on balance, but not on the desired linear path from 12 to 6 o'clock which produces maximum power. He is probably staying on his left foot too long and over rotating so that the left foot is pointing at 3 or 4 o'clock when he unseats (leaves the back). He needs to work on driving out of the back at an earlier point.

**ALL OF THE ABOVE PROBLEMS CAN BE IMPROVED BY THE FOLLOWING DRILL**

Throwers with balance problems can work on this by going on a large hard surface such as blacktop or cement and working on driving out of the back to set up on different lines. For example, line up with the feet on a line and then wind and drive out on a line directly to the left, instead of straight ahead to 6 o'clock to a stop.

The heel-toe line should be perpendicular to the left from where you started. Then move to driving and stopping on a 45-degree angle to where you started on the left side. Then straight as usual, then a 45-degree angle into the hole and then perpendicular to the right side. To do this you must get over the left foot and learn when to drive off it. You learn to be "on" the left foot and not fall into the throw.

**THE DISCUS ITSELF IS TOO VERTICAL DURING FLIGHT**

This means that as the discus leaves the thrower's hand it appears almost vertical. Several problems can cause this. First, the thrower may be driving too far into the hole (left side of the circle), so that as he rotates, trying to keep the center of gravity in the center, he is leaning back toward the center. This means as he throws, the vertical axis is tilted left to right as viewed from the back of the ring, so the throwing arm is lower than it should be, even though it may be perpendicular to the body.

If the coach watches the thrower's feet, he will see the thrower's right foot come down left of the 12-6 o'clock line and the left foot also come down left of the line and also probably not get past the right into a heel-toe relationship. The thrower will usually stumble a little back to the right as he throws.

To work on this, have the thrower do no-reverse throws and stop throws. This makes him stay over the feet as he throws or stops, and he can develop a feel for being over the feet correctly, which helps him get to a vertical axis.

One other reason for a too vertical flight may be that the thrower's orbit is reaching a high point at 3 or 4 o'clock, because he is staying on the left foot too long, so that the high and low points of the orbit are 8 and 10 o'clock instead of 6 and 12 o'clock. This means that the discus is just beginning to rise when it passes the release point at 7 o'clock and will be released too low. When the low point is this close to the release, the thrower does not have time to pull the discus back up to a correct release point near the shoulder. To correct this, the thrower needs to get off the left sooner and make sure the apex of the orbit is over the right-center portion of the sector.

**THE DISCUS LOOKS ROUND LEAVING THE THROWER**

As viewed from the rear, a correctly thrown discus will have the right edge a little lower than the left edge (and it will flatten during flight). The front edge will also be a little higher than the back. If the discus appears as as a "moon" (almost circular), then the discus is not very aerodynamic. With a beginner, the cause may be that the thumb on the throwing hand is too vertical. With a more experienced thrower, the problem is probably that he is leaning forward too much upon release, so that the head-foot axis is tilted forward. This means he cannot get into the proper arm perpendicular to the body position to throw because he would be throwing the disc into the ground. To compensate, he brings the arm through a path that is 45 degrees from the head-to-waist line to get the discus up. To correct this, he needs to stay back and throw with the chest up.
***LSTJ***

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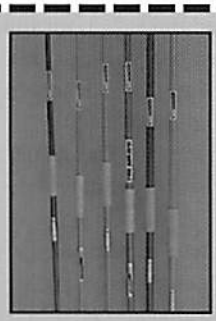

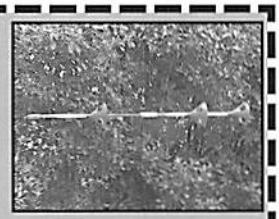

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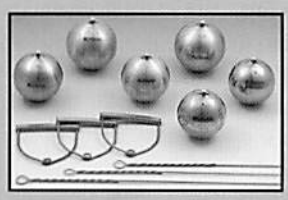

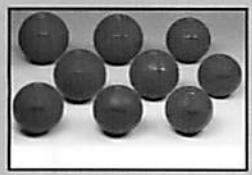

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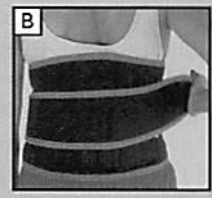


# RIGHT SIDE HAMMER TECHNIQUE

## By Al Schoterman

This article is a combination of many past ideas; methods and old vocabulary mixed with modern technology. The result is a common explanation of high speed, long distance throwing. I personally have been involved with the hammer throw for the past forty years. Never having seen or experienced the hammer, I ended up throwing it 231.5 inches after a mere three years of practice, resulting in a NCAA record. I then had the pleasure of coaching Jud Logan at Kent State University. Jud is now an excellent physical fitness, conditioning and weight training coach for all throws and I highly recommend him. Jud can be contacted at Ashland College in Ohio in the capacity of head coach of the track team.

A very high level of fitness, specific strength and speed must be achieved for throwing the hammer 80 meters and above that distance. The farther the athlete throws past 80 meters, "active rest," numbers of and intensity involving synapse nerve firings in training, and pre-meet preparation become very important.

This technique is very high powered and dynamic, using available laws regarding the dynamics of physics to accelerate the hammerhead. First some old and new analogies on concept vocabulary.

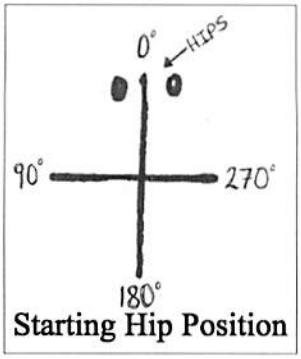
| Old | New |
|---|---|
| Left sided throw | Right side drive |
| Lift off of right left- long duration | Lift off of right left â€“ short duration |
| Stay upright and extend shoulders | Bend from waist – extend shoulders |
| Lift ball at release | Plant, lift head back and sling ball |
| Sit in middle off wind | Wind on right side |
| Turn faster = throw farther | Wind faster = throw farther |
| Tug of war | Tension on wire |
| Accelerate ball 140-170 degrees | Accelerate ball 340 degrees |

The throw will be divided into the (1) wind and the entry, (2) lift off and landing, (3) landing to zero degrees, and (4) delivery.

### Wind And Entry

A normal or a pendulum wind can be used. I prefer the pendulum as it starts to use the ball's potential energy, which will be later transferred into the hammerhead speed. Either way, the thrower MUST literally stand on an almost straight right leg, (90 per cent of weight on right leg). Using the pendulum wind, the second wind descends (drops) to a fairly flat plane. The thrower must bend from the waist, extending the shoulders out. When properly done the ball will "snap" along with the wire as the hammer starts to accelerate. You are now countering the ball with the biggest part of the body, your backside (gluteus maximus). Make no mistake, you cannot beat the ball's force, but you CAN control it to your advantage creating maximum tension on the wire.

The ball and thrower are now in harmony and create a "unit" that doesn't change much throughout the remainder of the throw.



Starting Hip Position

### Lift Off And Landing

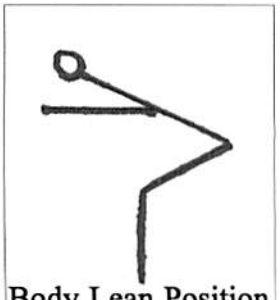
Lift off occurs about 90 to 120 degrees. The ball decelerates when one leg is removed from the ground. Consequently, the less time the leg is airborne, the better. Because the thrower is so far right-sided, the lower left leg is on a backward angle, allowing the right leg to lift off and take a "short cut" through, and land, almost immediately. When the right leg lands, you notice the athlete is now again on the right leg position to again use the backside for countering the velocity of the ball.

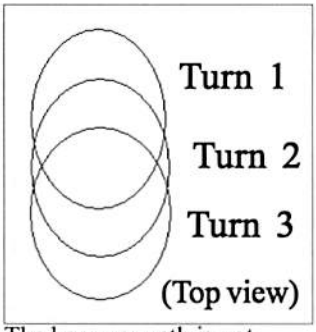
### Landing to 0 Degrees (Start Position or End of the First Turn)

After landing, the thrower is still right-sided. The unit of the thrower and the ball travel to 0 degrees. At this point the hammer is massively accelerated on completion of turns 1 and 2 for three turners, and for 1, 2, 3, for four turners, all at just before 0 degrees. The thrower will slightly straighten his legs as the ball passes 0 degrees. The thrower goes up âs the ball pulls down, creating huge wire tension. Hence, tremendous hammer head speed is caused. This movement occurs naturally IF the body is RIGHT-sided and all other components are correct. I truly believe this movement cannot be taught, as it must be felt. When all is correctly aligned, the momentum added to the wire is enormous and transferred to the hammer head. One must have legs straightening against the ball at 0 degrees to reach far distances or better throws at reduced strength and developmental levels.

### Delivery

The delivery is a lot different than that of the old technique. It is actually a continuation of the actual throw. The athlete lifts off, plants the right leg, starts to block with the head, straightens the back


Body Lean Position

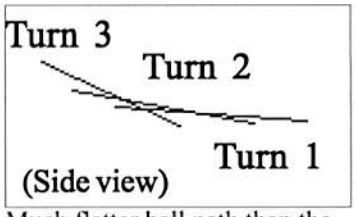


The hammer path is not circlular.

and "slings" the ball. The thrower never really lifts the ball as was usual with the old technique.

**Summary Of Major Points**

1. The hammer head accelerates for almost 360 degrees.
2. Turning speed is NOT directly proportional to hammer head speed. One can turn fast without increasing great distance.
3. The right leg and foot are the slowest turning speed of the "unit."
4. Counter and radius are being worked constantly, but counter dominates left side, radius-dominates right side.
5. A thrower lands and radius extends dramatically.
6. By being completely right-sided, the radius and counter combination creates hammer-wire tension leading to constantly accelerating hammer head speed.
7. The thrower and ball link up off the wind and form a unit that self generates speed, which is difficult to slow down.
8. As a comparison to a planetary system of circular moving objects, this is the order of what turns speed wise, from fastest to slowest: hammer head, hands, shoulders, left leg, hips, right leg.



Much flatter ball path than the old technique.

In conclusion, from my study of the sport, this is the motherload of throwing great distance. I have been in contact with Bob Lasorsa for development of biomechanical analysis films and pictures, which should be coming very soon. After many years out of the sport, with no additional physical conditioning, I can throw winning distances (in senior competitions) using this technique, and others can witness the dynamics. This is a very easy technique because it is a natural to be in this position. World-class hammer-throwers could be "mass produced" if enough athletes were interested and adopted this technique. Possibly, in another article, drills for this technique, which I have developed, can be published.

I am personally available for individual or group coaching. I can be reached at: Al Schoterman, 638 Vine Street, Kent, Ohio, 44240, 330 678-9663 (h). Thank you. ***LSTJ***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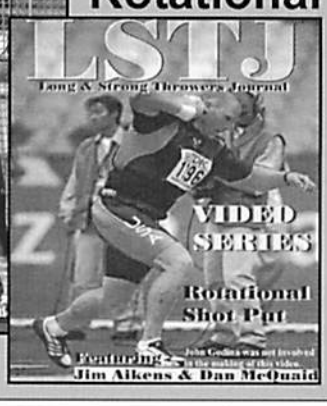


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# RESURRECTION

## By Glenn Thompson

*In the summer of 2004 Laura Gerraughty was an Olympian and the United States' best hope for a truly international caliber women's shot putter (19.15m/62-10, Indoors, 2004). A few months later her shot career appeared to be over, due to unrelenting wrist stiffness in her throwing hand. Suddenly a talent that earned her national acclaim, a trip to Olympia, and a free education, was no more. Or at least it appeared that way.*

*The same determination that made Gerraughty a champion would drive her to the bounds of conventional medicine to find a cure. And beyond.*

*With her career apparently done, the 5'9", 200-pound Gerraughty reappeared on January 28 of this year with a 59'5½" effort at University of North Carolina Fast Times Relays. And she has since improved to 60-7 ¼ and 61-9 ¾ in subsequent weeks.*

*Laura took some time to recently to talk with LSTJ about her physical struggles and the her journey back to the circle.*

***LSTJ:*** *When did you first realize you had a problem?*

**LG:** My stiff wrists, along with my inflexibility in general, have long been a joke among my friends and coaches. Every time I out-performed one of my high school teammates, she would strike a pose that consisted of sitting cross-legged on the ground, touching one hand to the same shoulder, and putting the other hand out at arm's length as if telling someone to stop (none of which I could do), just to rub it in that she could at least do *something* better than me. During my freshman year at UNC, I had the hardest time convincing Brian that I physically couldn't put the shot to my neck the way he wanted. It took him holding me by the wrist and trying to push my fingertips back towards my elbow for him to realize I just didn't bend that way. Even to this day, when adjusting my technique, he'll ask me if I'm able to get into the position he's looking for before he tells me to make the change in my throw.

VictorSailer

The 2004 Olympics could have been Gerraughty's last shot competition.

Throughout college, I occasionally had what I called "tight days" where my wrist was too stiff to throw. The shot either sat so high on my fingertips that it would roll off with any attempt to strike, or I couldn't get the shot to my neck, period. Even on good days, flexibility was still an issue. We used to say that my throw was spring-loaded because it took me two hands to cram the shot into the crook of my neck. During some workouts, I would lose it off of my fingers as often as every other throw. A large part of my inconsistency my first couple of seasons as a spinner came from having to line the throw up perfectly in order for it to come off of my hand right. Because I couldn't count on the front of the throw for extra distance, I focused on the spin itself as a means of improvement. However, by the time I got the technique down, it was too late. I had built up such large bone spurs around the ligaments in my middle finger that it looked like I had an extra knuckle. In addition, as I put on more muscle mass in the weight room and kept pounding on my joints with throwing, my wrist continued to tighten.

By the fall of 2004, I was to the point where, clean release or no, *every* throw hurt. I had one workout just before Christmas where the pain literally brought me to my knees on just the second throw. Over winter break, I struggled to break fifty feet in practice because I wouldn't push on the shot. I can remember standing at the back of the ring for minutes at a time, ready to throw, and trying to focus on technique instead of how bad it was going to hurt. I was so stressed out that I lost ten pounds in a little over two weeks. I finally called Brian from the University of New Hampshire field house parking lot and broke down on the phone, saying that I couldn't do it any more. He told me not to throw and that we would talk when I got back. When I returned to school, we made the decision that I would take at least the rest of the year off and that I wouldn't throw again until I was completely healthy.

***LSTJ:*** *Did consider/have surgery? If not, what type of rehab did you do?*

**LG:** Wow, what type of rehab didn't I do? At one point, I was spending over ten hours per week in doctor's offices, on the phone with billing departments and insurance companies, and filling out paper-

work. I knew that I would have to have the bone spurs in my knuckles removed, as those were the immediate cause of the pain. That surgery was over spring break of that year, after I got back from Indoor NCAA's.

However, I also had to figure out a way to get my wrist to bend so that the spurs wouldn't grow back. I saw sports medicine specialist after orthopedist after hand surgeon, all to no avail. When I had exhausted all of my options at UNC, I put out an all-points-bulletin on *The Ring* and the *Javelin Discussion Forum* asking if anyone had this condition and knew of ways to help. I received tons of suggestions and even more support. However, those that wrote that they had experienced a similar problem could only offer that it had ended their careers and that they hoped the same would not happen to me.

With the help of fellow *Ringers* (http://www.effortlessthrow.org), I was able to locate one of the best hand surgeons in the nation right in my own backyard. When I managed to stump even those physicians over at Duke Hospitals, I turned to the growing list of alternative therapies suggested to me. I saw a hand therapist and spent weeks in a heavy-duty splint that propped my hand up so that looked like I was waving at everyone as I walked by. I joked about selling ad space on E-Bay for my palm and about using the elastic tubing that stretched my fingertips back towards my elbow to sling

# Good Listener

## By Glenn Thompson

David Ramsey speaks with conviction. While some might be skeptical of his methods, he could care less. That's because he has results and clientele that are flesh and blood, ligament and muscle, validation of his techniques. Those living testaments include NFL players, and Olympic-level athletes.

Ramsey is not a medical doctor. He is not a chiropractor or physical therapist. For the most part he is a track coach and meet director in the Kansas City, KS. But many are starting to recognize him as a devotee of Chiro-Plus Kinesiology,

Ramsey was raised south of Kansas City and played basketball, and ran for his school's cross country and track teams. His collegiate career included five different colleges and degrees in mathematics and psychology. He has also studied kinesiology as his interest in treating injuries grew.

In November, 1992 Ramsey became an advocate of CPK when he witnessed an athlete diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome post a 30 second PR in the 3000M after treatment.

When asked how he treated University of North Carolina shot putter Laura Gerraughty, who suffered from wrist/hand problems that sidelined from putting in 2005, Ramsey simply says, "I asked her body what was going on, and it started telling me. She had so many things going on it wasn't even funny."

Huh? Ramsey repeated the "ask the body" phrase several times, and I just had to ask, "How?"

"The body has 30,000 miles of electrical circuits in it," replied Ramsey. "I'm using a language of electrical frequencies. The body understands each and every frequency that goes in and out of it. It will tell you the specific muscle fiber within the muscle that is not functioning properly. There are 10 tests alone for the quadriceps alone that can identify some kind of dysfunction."

Corrections come through methods such as muscle stimulation, bioelectric acupuncture and applied kinesiology, which are used at the level of muscle origin/insertion, spindle cells or Golgi apparatus, depending on the biodfeedback provided by the body.

Ramsey adamantly acknowledges one specific limitation of his services. "I won't work with anyone that is self-centered or has a negative attitude," he says firmly. "You body reacts to the negative energy of others."

Ramsey has not hung up a shingle in Kansas City or listed himself in the local phone directory. All of his clients are referrals from friends and associates of Ramsey. "I won't just work with anyone he says. They have to get to me through someone I know."

Given his vital role in returning Gerraughty to 18 meter throws, those referrals are sure to keep coming.
***LSTJ***

For more information, David Ramsey recommends the following texts:

- Ø *Thorson's Introductory Guide to Kinesiology*, Anthea Courtenay, Maggie La Tourelle
- Ø *Touch For Health*, Dr. John Thie
- Ø *The Body Electric*, Dr. Robert Becker

water balloons, but I couldn't disguise my disillusionment as I realized that this therapy wouldn't work either. I couldn't keep the splint on for more than ten minutes without my hand turning purple and cold. When I took it off, my wrist would burn and tighten up even more. Other therapies I tried included the Mulligan technique, which involved sliding the bones in my wrist around to increase mobility; taping my wrist bones in a shifted position in an attempt to allow them to slide over each other more easily; a cortisone shot, which worked for about 48 hours before causing further inflammation; massage therapy and fascial release; and chiropractic adjustment, which involved a two-plus hour bus ride to Raleigh for each appointment.

*LSTJ: Were you concerned that you might never throw the shot again?*

LG: The hardest part about last year was the emotional roller coaster. Even though we had decided that I wouldn't throw the shot, I still had the weight throw at conference and nationals, and the team needed every point we could get. However, right when I needed to focus the most, I struggled to see past my disappointment. Not mentally ready for competition, I skipped the first meet of the season. I started seeing a sports psychologist to get my thoughts in order outside of practice and make the most of my time on the track.

Then the doctor's appointments for my wrist started. I waited patiently for the UNC Sports Medicine staff to come up with an answer to my problem. They had fixed every other injury I ever had, I figured, so why should this be any different? You can imagine my devastation when my athletic trainer told me that they had done all that they could.

Down, but not out, I decided to take matters into my own hands and seek treatment outside the UNC healthcare system. However, as the list of therapies dwindled, the possibility of being finished became more and more real. Where at the beginning I had been optimistic at each visit to a new specialist, or the start of another new treatment, I was now more careful about getting my hopes up. The sports psychology sessions turned from focus and purpose to grief. Not just over the inability to throw the shot, but over the realization that I probably would not be able to continue on after college in any other event. On the practice field, my training consisted almost as much of coaching as it did training, as Brian began to prepare me for my intended career. I had just about given up hope of ever throwing the shot again.

*LSTJ: When did you have an idea you might be able to resume your shot career?*

LG: At NCAA's that winter, Brian introduced me to a man named David Ramsey. The coach of the Brocaw Blazers youth team out of Kansas, David is also well-known in the track world as either the "Witch Doctor" or "Magic Man" for his role as a Chiro Plus Kinesiology practitioner. I was fully prepared for this to be another unsuccessful treatment, and I have to admit, I was a little skeptical of this guy rubbing a belt buckle and doing one-handed sign language over my body.

However, as David started working on my hand and arm at the meet, the small, specific adjustments he was making made complete sense. A full session of work revealed a total-body perspective on the problem: not only was a bone displacement in my left foot affecting the function of my right wrist, for example, but a nutrient deficiency was apparently causing problems as well. The hand signs he was using (called "modes") helped to locate the problem using my body's electrical circuits as a guide. The belt buckle apparatus was actually a "resonator", an instrument used to reflect inconsistencies in electrical activity as squeaky-sounding vibrations. Rather than treating with a whole-system drug or a stretching exercise, David rearranged me slowly and systematically using finely-tuned techniques like acupressure, ligament and connective tissue stimulation, and muscle stretch sensor manipulations.

It took several sessions of this type of work over the course of a couple of months to unwind years of organ dysfunctions, bone displacements, tangled connective tissue, and muscle compensations.

Finally, that spring, I was ready to try throwing the shot. I have never been so nervous for a shot workout in my entire life as I was for my first day back. I had to figure out how to put the shot against my neck and re-learn to release. It was as if this was my first day with a new body, but I didn't care, I was throwing again! My first practice consisted of just ten throws of about ten feet each, and even then the muscles in my forearm and wrist were sore afterwards. I gradually built up in training volume and distance, strengthening my new range of motion as I went. The comeback was slow; even after hand surgery and months off, I still had to get over the fear that the throw would hurt. It was well into the summer before my workouts resembled what I had done before.

To this day, I'm not exactly sure what happened to wind my body up so tightly. While in gymnastics, I grew about seven inches in one year, and by the time I quit I was 5'8" and about 180 pounds. My gymnastics coach figured out one time that I landed with the force equal to the weight of a small car when I tumbled. I used to break the plywood in the tumbling floors on a regular basis, and the gym had to purchase a new vaulting board every year because I would wear them out so fast. I even broke a balance beam one time. Aside from being one of the biggest gymnasts at my level on the East Coast, I was also probably the most

inflexible. I think all of the pounding at that size must have knocked a bunch of bones out of alignment, and any training I did after that made my body tighten up to protect itself from injury.

According to the M.D.'s I saw, the official diagnoses were bone spurs in my fingers and a wrist that didn't bend. The X-rays of my wrist were normal, and since that part of problem didn't cause me pain, the doctors concluded that there was nothing actually wrong. From the CPK perspective, the litany of displacements, dysfunctions, and deficiencies is too long to list, and I'm not sure I completely understand all of them anyway.

***LSTJ:*** *Do you treat your wrist/hand any differently now?*

**LG:** I'm fortunate to have made a complete recovery. So far, I've seen Coach Ramsey every couple of months or so for a "tune-up." Even then, those sessions have become less involved since we've fixed most of the major damage that had built up over my athletic career. The finger surgery was a success, and the CPK treatments have left me feeling better than new. I can now lift and throw without ever having to think about what it might do to my wrist or hand.

Special thanks to all of the doctors, therapists, athletic trainers, and other practitioners who helped me over this past year, and to my coaches, teammates, and friends for their support and encouragement. ***LSTJ***

## Send Me Your News Clippings!!!

From time to time I get mail from *LSTJ* subscribers enclosing newspaper clippings of throws-related news. I always appreciate them, and from time to time, they lead to actual stories in *LSTJ*. If you have something you think might be of interest to *LSTJ*'s readership, or maybe just to me, send it to: *LSTJ*, 3604 Green Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.


Thanks for keeping me informed!

**Glenn Thompson**
**Publisher**

**********

## *MENTAL SKILLS*
(continued from pg. 33)

confident, consistent, and happier. It also helps eliminate several competition obstacles that many throwers face. I found that using my routine really helped me control my nerves and use the nervous energy to my benefit. It helped me enjoy the entire process of competition, instead of just when I performed well. Remember, we can all only think one thought at a time, and we can decide what we want to think about. Just prior to throwing, I believe that it is important to focus on your technique and routine without focusing on outside influences. When athletes are thinking the right thoughts, good things happen! Using the "see it, feel it, trust it" approach improves technical learning and decreases the time it takes to master physical skills. As a coach, I would give each athlete general guidelines for developing a mental routine and then have them personalize it to work best for them.

For a better understanding of how to develop and use your own mental routine, I suggest that all athletes and coaches read the following books:

*The Mental Essentials* by Jane Miner
*Inner Strength* by Ralph A. Vernacchia
*Mastery* by George Leonard
*Coaching Mental Excellence* by Ralph Vernacchia, Rick McGuire, and David Cook.
*Flow* by Susan A. Jackson and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

*The Mental Essentials* is a must read book for all throwers! It will cost about $5 and is only a 37 page handbook that fits in your palm. I would suggest reading this book several times as it outlines the most essential mental concepts without having to dig through an entire book. I also especially recommend Inner Strength and Mastery as I feel that they were the most important in helping me understand and develop my mental routine. Both books are quick reads and are definitely worth the time. If you read all 3 of these books, you will be very happy with the end results! In order to be able to effectively use the concepts that I have presented in this paper, I believe that it is first necessary to build your base of knowledge in applied sport psychology. If you invest in learning from these books, it will pay off in your throwing! ***LSTJ***

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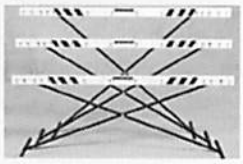
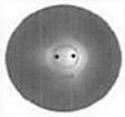


Iron Shot

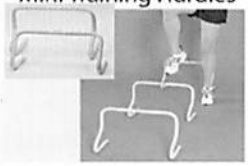


Asics Japan Thunder

Asics Turbo Phantom

Spikes

Mini Training Hurdles

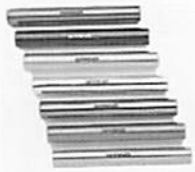


Competion Shot

Nike Zoom JA

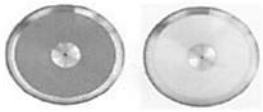
Nike Zoom Superfly G5

Aluminum Batons



StretchRITE

Challenger Discus



Adidas Meteor Sprint

Brooks F1

Denfi Original Discus

Denfi Discus

Medicine Balls

Kettle Bells

VS Multi Event

VS Youth Sprint Spike

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