

OCTOBER, 2007

LONG & STRONG



Reese Hoffa

On Top

Of The World

INSIDE

**Osaka, Highlands,
Technique &
More!**

Sept. 19, 1936 – Oct. 1, 2007

AL OERTER

**“These are the Olympics.
You die before you quit.”**

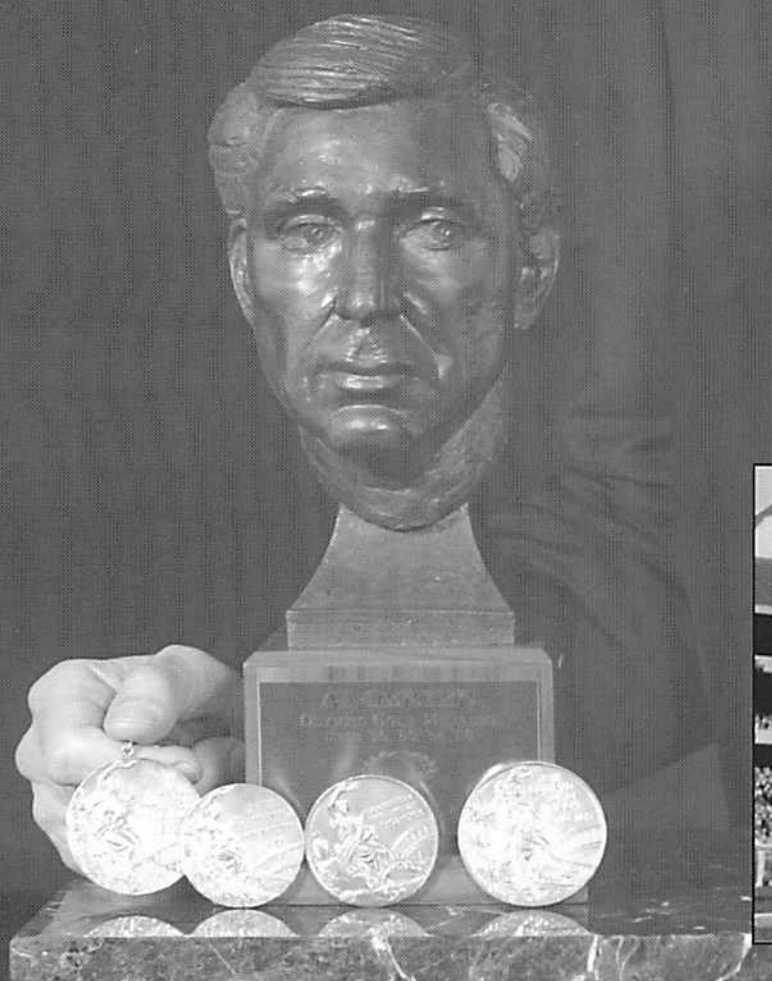
Four-time Olympic Champion

Melbourne ('56) 184-11

Rome ('60) 194-2

Tokyo ('64) 200-1

Mexico City ('68) 212-6



Correspondents:

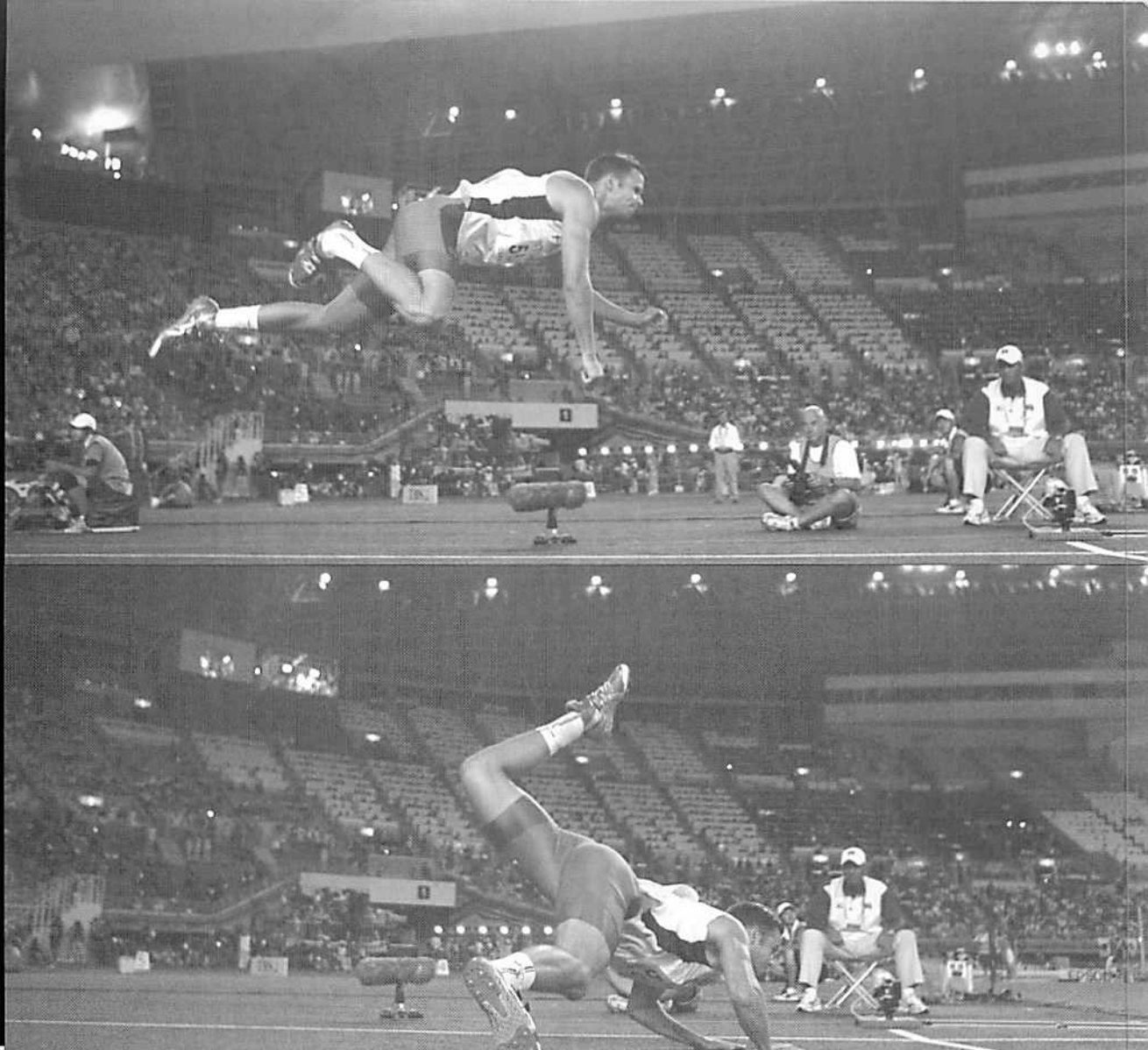
- Jeff Gorski
- Brad Reid
- Don Babbitt
- Mark Valenti
- Dan McQuaid
- Lane Dowell
- Pat Corbett

On the cover:
Reese Hoffa
finished in style
in Osaka.

Opposite page:
Al Oerter being
honored New
York in 2006.

This page:
Tero Pitkamaki
in Osaka shows
how to finish a
throw.

(All photos by
Victor Sailer)



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IAAF Championships, August 25 - September 1, 2007, Osaka, Japan

BEIJING FORESHADOWED?

By JOHN FRAZIER (USA THROWS COACH - OSAKA) WITH GLENN THOMPSON

8/8/8....August 8, 2008. The Beijing Olympics opening ceremonies are less than a year away with questions hanging in the air as thick as the smog in the host city.

Can the Americans sweep the men's shot. Can anyone challenge Franka Deitzsch? Pitkamaki or Thorkildsen? Who will step into the void left by the suspended Lysenko?

So it was fitting that the world's best athletes convened in Osaka, Japan for a dress rehearsal. This hot and humid Far East setting would serve to confirm the supremacy of most of the favorites. But some challengers served notice under the lights during the night time finals.

L&S friend and University of Tennessee Women's throws coach John Frazier served as the U.S. Team Throws coach. Coach Frazier was kind enough to share some of his insights with L&S's readership.

MEN'S SHOT PUT QUALIFYING

World No.1 Reese Hoffa wasted little effort in reaching the final when he qualified with his first effort (20.89m). Hoffa looked confident after a mental boost when he competed in the tun- up meet that was held at Nagai Stadium two days before the competition.

Hoffa was one of eight throwers to surpass the automatic qualifying distance of 20.20m. Fellow American Adam Nelson, the reigning champion, required two puts to go through, launching his first outside the sector, before landing his second just 8cm short of his former training partner's at 20.81m.

Rutger Smith of the Netherlands was the leading qualifier (21.04m) and the other advancers included 2003 World Champion Andrei Mikhnevich, Denmark's Olympic silver medallist Joachim Olsen, Ralf Bartels of Germany (20.33m), Yury Belov of Belarus (20.26m), and Poland's 2005 World Student Games Champion Tomasz Majewski (20.25m).

Russia's Anton Luboslavskiy, ranked ninth in this year's world's list, missed out on qualification by just 1cm with his best of 19.91m. Germany's Peter Sack, another of the year's top ten athletes had no mark and the United States' Daniel Taylor, who could only reach 18.45m (Taylor had a sector foul in the second round around 20.60m which would have gotten him through).

(August 25)

(temperature 30C/86F humidity 65%)

FINAL

The 29 year-old Hoffa produced five puts of 21.50m or more to bring the United States its sixth world shot put title in the 11 editions of the IAAF World Championships. He approached the meet in the same manner as the U.S. Championships by ending the competition on his first throw. The drama took place behind Hoffa as Nelson, Mikhnevich, and Smith never gave up trying to hip a big throw. Hoffa won the competition with a best of 22.04m in round three, even though his first throw would have won. In the process he added the world outdoor crown to the indoor title he took in 2005. So dominant was his performance that four of his five valid throws would also have brought him victory.

Despite losing his title, Nelson's second place came thanks to his best of the year, 21.61m. He maintained his streak of having won medals at every global outdoor championship since 2000. Nelson is one of the world's best competitors of all time. He does not have the phrase 'I give up' in his vocabulary. Not taking away from the other top athletes, Hoffa and Nelson proved they were the best prepared athletes in the competition.

The bronze went to Belarussia's European champion Andrei Mikhnevich, who also produced his best form of the year when it mattered most. The 2003 world champion threw 21.27m (69-9.5) in round two, but in truth no-one else was ever in the hunt. There was just a battle for third place between the big Belarussian and Smith.

Hoffa opened his quest with a put of 21.81m (71-6.75), a distance only he and Christian Cantwell have surpassed this year. The 32-year-old Nelson, ever the showman, wasn't going quietly into the night, equalling his season's best with 21.47m. Then Nelson turned up the heat on Hoffa in the second round as he closed in with 21.61m, but Hoffa bettered that with a 21.64m. The fans could see that Adam was capable of more as they waited to see what would happen next.

Smith of the Netherlands and Mikhnevich continued their hunt for a medal in the second stanza, with both breaking 21 metres. Mikhnevich – wearing red and white striped calf length socks – moved into third with 21.27m, his best of the year, while the giant Dutchman, the leading qualifier for the final, threw 21.13m to shift into fourth.

Hoffa improved to 22.04m, the eventual winner, in third round. It was the furthest winning put since Switzerland's

Werner Gunthor won with 22.23m in Rome back in 1987. When Reese hit that throw it was obvious that the other throwers were either out of the competition or they were trying too hard. He put a great final touch to a season of throwing that many throwers dream about.

Olympic silver medallist Joachim Olsen had a disappointing competition, failing to register a fair throw. There was a noticeable difference in the way he competed in the prelims earlier in the day. Joachim had very little rhythm and explosion maybe due to illness, because he is a good competitor (he was seventh two years ago). He also qualified for the final in 2003 but was then unable to compete because of an injured hand.

The second half the competition was played on without any significant movement as the medal positions remained the same. The two principals both deliberately fouled in round four,



Hoffa

and Nelson did again in five, although Hoffa again fell fractionally short of the 22m line at 21.92m. Adam was doing his best to regain his title when he fell after his 4th round throw, reminiscent of his fall at Olympia at the 2004 Athens Games. Clearly it was all or nothing, because he fouled his last 4 attempts.

Hoffa wrapped up his evening with a closing 21.58m, then walked up to every official and shook their



Nelson

hands, bowing his head as he did, before greeting the crowd. Also, a memorable moment was when Adam went to congratulate Reese with a huge hug for a fine competition. It marked the first time since 2001 that Team USA went 1-2 in the event.



Mikheevich

Nelson's Osaka silver also makes him the only American athlete in any event to medal in every World Outdoor and Olympic competition since 2000 (2000 Olympics, silver; 2001 World Outdoors, silver; 2003 World Outdoors, silver; 2004 Olympics, silver; 2005 World Outdoors, gold; 2007 World Outdoors, silver).

"When I finally won, it was a huge relief that it was over," related Hoffa. "I know there are a lot of expectations on myself being the world No. 1, having the best throw in the world, and the huge expectations going 22 meters. I'm glad I could execute. Just being an American shot putter, there is a lot of pressure and expectations. That's because we have tons and tons of world champions coming out of the U.S. with John Godina and Adam Nelson. It's a lot of pressure to live up to those athletes. For me to finally win my first outdoor championship, I couldn't pick a better setting."

"Hey, I got a silver," said Nelson. "Have I done that before? It was a great competition. I went out and did a season's best, and given the year I have had, I'm very pleased with the performance."

Results

1. Reese Hoffa (US) 72-3 $\frac{3}{4}$ (22.04);
2. Adam Nelson (US) 70-10 $\frac{1}{4}$ (21.61);
3. Andrey Mikheevich (BLR) 69-9 $\frac{1}{2}$ (21.27);
4. Rutger Smith (Hol) 69-4 (21.13);
5. Tomasz Majewski (Pol) 68-5 $\frac{1}{4}$ (20.87);
6. Miran Vodovnik (Slo) 67-9 $\frac{1}{4}$ (20.67);
7. Ralf Bartels (Ger) 67-1 $\frac{1}{4}$ (20.45);
8. Yuriy Belov (BLR) 66-8 $\frac{1}{4}$ (20.34);
9. Dylan Armstrong (Can) 66-4 $\frac{1}{4}$ (20.23);
10. Pavel Sofin (Rus) 64-4 $\frac{1}{4}$ (19.62); Joachim Olsen (Den) 3F; Dorian Scott (Jam) 3F;.

WOMEN'S SHOT PUT QUALIFYING

World leader and defending champion Nadyesa Ostapchuk (BLR) struggled a little in qualifying, just slipping into 12th place to qualify for the final with a below-par 18.23m. She easily had every warm up throw at or above the 20m mark. Sometimes pressure makes for an interesting story-line. She hit the 12th place mark on her first throw, but there was still a little speculation on whether she was going to be a finalist. Two other ladies came within 4cm of her mark then the results ended in her favor.

Meanwhile New Zealand's Valerie Vili, second in the world this summer, moved on with one effort - 19.45m. Athens Olympic silver medallist Nadine Kleinert of Germany had the top qualifier at 19.17m with just one throw. One other woman, double Asian champion Meiju Li of China, was the only other over 19 meters with a personal best of 19.05m. Among the other qualifiers were Petra Lammert (GER), Belarus's former World and Olympic champion Yanina Karolchyk-Pravalinskay, and Pan-American Games silver medallist Yumileidi Cumba (CUB).

Two significant absentees from the final were the European Indoor champion, Assunta Legnante (ITA), who could only

manage a best of 18.19m and 2006 World Indoor finalist American Jillian Camarena (Tucson, Ariz.) who threw 16.95m/55-7.50.

The other Americans not making it through to the final were 2007 US Champion Kristin Heaston (Palo Alto, Calif.) who had a best throw of 17.40m/57-1 and 2007 NCAA Indoor champion Sarah Stevens (Tempe, Ariz.) who had a best toss of 16.87m/55-4.25. Stevens is still a collegian and gained valuable experience being in Osaka. There is hope that she will do great things for the U.S. in the future.

(August 26)
(temperature 31C/88F;
humidity 54-60%)

FINAL

With a last ditch of 20.54m heave in round six, Valerie Vili snatched victory from defending champion Ostapchuk and injected life into a contest that sorely lacked drama otherwise. Vili's dramatic blast was an improvement of 34cm on her previous best (2006) and doubled her country's all-time gold medal tally in the history of the IAAF World championships (Beatrice Fiamanu, discus, was the other).



Vili



Opstachuk

The bronze went to Germany's Nadine Kleinert. She is an impressive specimen who showed great fortitude to try and win the championship. She continued to progress during the competition still her strong performance rewarded her with the third place finish.

There had been a delay before Vili threw as the women's 100m quarter finals got under way after two false starts. But while the delays seemed to frustrate Kleinert, Vili appeared unphased. Guaranteed at least silver, Vili launched her bomb, and her reaction was immediate and swift as the ball left her hand. Valerie was very consistent near the 20m mark throughout the competition, so for some it was no surprise to see her catch that big winning throw.

Her winning distance was also a new Commonwealth and Oceania record and the 18th national record of her career. She is a true champion who showed a great deal of

confidence though out the competition. On her winning throw she was very aggressive to the front of the ring as she finished the throw.

Ostapchuk was clearly a different athlete in the final, returning to her previous form and she pushed the shot out to 20.04m on her opening effort. After that throw Vili responded with a respectable 19.89m, but if she was going to win she would have to beat her season's best. Vili rose to the challenge as Nadyesa left the door open by not throwing close or beyond her opening mark.

Germany's Petra Lammert, in third at the end of the opening round, threw a respectable 19.33m and looked thrilled enough to go into the bronze medal position. Kleinert responded with a second round 19.45m and to pass Lammert move into the third position.

Round three ended with no-change at the top, with the two Germans occupying positions three and four. The two Cubans, reigning Olympic champion Yumileidi Cumba and this year's PanAmerican champion, Misleidys Gonzalez, were eliminated. Other casualties were Russian champion Ana Omerova and former Olympic and World Champion Korolchyk-Pravalinska (BLR).

There was no change in round four for Lammert, but

Kleinert improved by 32cm to a season's best 19.77m to sniff silver, just behind Vili. The New Zealander responded with a mild improvement to 19.95m, just 18cm ahead of Kleinert. The final stanza saw China's Ling Li overtake Lammert and go into fourth.



Kleinert

The fireworks started as Vili stepped into the ring after yet another delay for a second false start at the other end of the track. It did not faze her. She remained focused and

kept her head into the competition.

Ostapchuk, after taking the lead in round one, had been mediocre thereafter, with three of her five subsequent efforts had been fouls. But she managed to give Vili a scare with a season's best 20.48m.

"It feels absolutely marvelous (to win)," Vili said afterward. "Before the sixth attempt, my coach (former Commonwealth javelin silver medallist, Kirsten Hellier) told me, 'You've got one more throw to prove yourself, where you come from, who you are. Do it for your father.' I didn't know what it felt like to win a World title and now I know. The celebrations I had here in the stadium were just amazing. I just can't wait to see my coach, my husband and the people who supported me."

Results

1. Valerie Vili (NZ) 67-4¼ (20.54); 2. Nadzeya Ostapchuk (Blr) 67-2¼ (20.48); 3. Nadine Kleinert (Ger) 64-10¼ (19.77); 4. Ling Li (Chn) 63-7 (19.38); PR (59-9, 61-11¼, f, 62-1, f, 63-7); 5. Petra Lammert (Ger) 63-5 (19.33); 6. Meiju Li (Chn) 61-9¼ (18.83); 7. Lijiao Gong (Chn) 61-2¼ (18.66); 8. Chiara Rosa (Ita) 60-4 (18.39); 9. Anna Omarova (Rus) 59-8¼ (18.20); 10. Yanina Pravalinskaya (Blr) 59-7¼ (18.17); 11. Misleydis González (Cub) 59-6¼ (18.14); 12. Yumileidi Cumbá (Cub) 58-10 (17.93);

MEN'S DISCUS THROW QUALIFYING

Alekna, the double world and Olympic champion looked less than spectacular, requiring all three attempts to surpass the automatic qualifier (64.50m), topping out at 66.54m. Gerd Kanter, this year's world No. 1 and a silver medallist behind Alekna at both the Helsinki Worlds and Olympics, showed he was battle ready as the top qualifier at 67.45m, also taking three attempts. It appeared that there was a lot of pressure on these competitors, and as each round went on they each relaxed and threw better.

Rutger Smith posted a personal best 66.60m, after getting only three hours of sleep the night before (4th in the shot). The US duo of Ian Waltz and Jarred Rome found the same end – elimination, but by different margins. Waltz, the world No. 5, missed the last slot by a single centimeter. Rome (No. 3) could fare no better than 61.87m.

Other qualifiers included Zoltan Kovago (HUN), Mario Pestano (SPN), Robert Harting, Gabor Mate (HUN), Ehsan Hadadi (IRN). All throwers easily moved on to the final.

(August 28)

(temperature 30C/86F; humidity 68–64%)

FINALS

For too long, Kanter has played the role of Joe Frazier to Alekna's Muhammad Ali. Kanter, always the worthy opponent, was routinely relegated to second to the Lithuanian legend. That would change in Osaka.

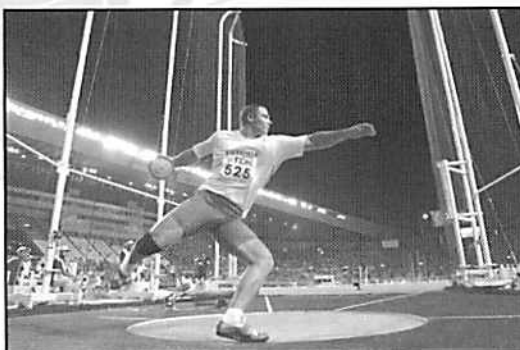
The 28 year-old Estonian added an important jewel to his crown by taking World gold with a best of 68.94m. It was only the second time in his career that Kanter beat the

Lithuanian. In each of the first three rounds, Kanter continued to improve as he hit his best throw in round three.

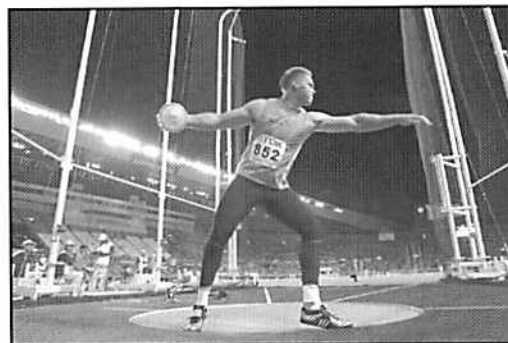
Kanter opened with a solid 64.89m. He was followed by Harting (64.62m) and Smith (64.32m) with good openers. Alekna hovered in fourth at 63.68m. All three of the medal positions registered 65m throws in the second round, but the order was inverted: Smith- 65.98m, Harting – 65.59m, and Kanter – 65.37m. Alekna fouled.

Kanter separated himself in the third stanza, blasting a 68.94m effort that put him well clear of his competition. At this point, Alekna appeared to be the only opponent who could go with Kanter in a stadium setting. It was evident to those who have seen Virgilijus on several occasions that something was not right in his throwing and energy level.

Smith improved to 66.42m, but Harting and Alekna could not produce improved efforts.



Kanter



Smith

Alekna closed the gap (65.24m), but remained out of the medals. He still showed some hope that a big throw might be there. Also in this round Ehsan Hadadi of Iran had a very good showing as he improved to (64.10m), then further improved on two of his last four throws. He had the showmanship of a discus thrower of Iranian descent and American citizenry - Kami Keshmiri. Raising his hands after each of his improvements, he brought great excitement to the competition.

Another great performance came from Gabor Mate of Hungary. Since competing at the university level in the US he struggled with injuries and adjusting to the big time. In the third round he produced his 5th place performance (64.71m), which is a break through for bigger things in the future. Also, El Ghazaly from Egypt produced a good mark (64.58m) for 6th place competing in his first World Championship meet.

There were no changes in the medals in the fourth round as Kanter and Harting produced fouls, but in the fifth frame Harting tacked on a meter to reclaim the silver slot from Smith. Harding was tough and aggressive while improving in the fifth round. Outside of his great throwing performance, he performed again by ripping off his shirt after the competition in celebration.

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There were no improvements in the final round, even from Alekna, who had snatched victory from Kanter at the 2005 Worlds with a dramatic 70.17m toss. Kanter closed the proceedings with his second 68m effort (68.84m). "When I woke up this morning I was thinking about the gold medal," Kanter said. "There will be a big party tonight." And he was right, Alekna did not surpass him and he did have a big victory party.

"In my eyes Virgilijus Alekna is the best discus thrower ever," he continued. "So it is a great feeling to have finally beaten the number one. I had struggled to do so in recent championships."

And what should we make of the Great Alekna's pedestrian results? "Eight days ago I injured my calf muscle and I was not able to train for six days," said Alekna, whose last defeat came on August 16, 2005, more than two years ago, and his first non-gold at a major since the 2001 Worlds where he captured silver. "It became almost impossible to win, but I hoped to have a small chance for a medal."

Results

1. Gerd Kanter (Est) 226-2 (68.94); 2. Robert Harting (Ger) 218-9 (66.68); 3. Rutger Smith (Hol) 217-11 (66.42); 4. Virgilijus Alekna (Lit) 214-0 (65.24); 5. Gábor Máté (Hun) 212-3 (64.71); 6. Omar El-Ghazaly (Egy) 211-10 (64.58); 7. Ehsan Hadadi (Iran) 211-8 (64.53); 8. Aleksander Tammert (Est) 211-0 (64.33); 9. Zoltán Kövágó (Hun) 206-10 (63.04); 10. Mario Pestano (Spa) 205-8 (62.70); 11. Rashid Al-Dosari (Qat) 205-4 (62.60); 12. Piotr Małachowski (Pol) 199-4 (60.77);.

WOMEN'S DISCUS THROW

QUALIFYING

Americans Suzy Powell (59.57m) and Becky Breisch (58.42m), boasting the number two and three distances of 2007, were the two biggest qualifying victims, finishing 15th and 19th, respectively. Vera Cechlova (CZE), the bronze medallist in Helsinki (2005), was also unable to reach the qualifying distance.

World leader and defending champion Franka Dietzsch lead the qualifiers with a second effort 65.17m. The second furthest qualifier was European bronze medallist, Nicoletu Grasu of Romania (64.26m), followed by Cuba's Yarelis Barrios (63.44m). Also advancing were European champion Daria Pishchalnikova (RUS), Iryna Yatchenko (BLR), Joanna Wisniewska (POL) and Taifeng Sun (CHN).

The other American not moving on was Cece Barnes, (53.02m). She was called upon just before the start of the championships to throw. She had been working in a fish packing company in Alaska after the U.S. Championships. She replaced Summer Pierson who was unable to hit the 'A' qualifying standard.

(August 29)

(temperature 29C/84F; humidity 71-69%)

FINALS

Dietzsch drew a figurative line in the sand with her 66.61m opener and none of her peers could touch it. It was similar to the men's shot put where the first throw took the air out of most of the competitors. The German was following a tried and true script - two years ago at the World Championships she had thrown 64.89m (she later improved to 66.56m), a mark that struck gold in Helsinki. The battle for silver was on, and Barrios struck first with her 63.90m opener. Sun (61.21m), Wisniewska (61.35m) and Semenova (61.17m) all posted 61m-plus openers.

The second round saw Dietzsch taper slightly to 66.48m, while Pishchalnikova leap-frogged to the second spot with a 63.10 toss in the second frame, and then improved again to 65.14m. Suddenly Dietzsch no longer looked insurmountable. Daria had a little confidence that she may make a run for the gold.

There were no significant improvements in round three. We saw Grasu (63.14) and Sun (63.22m) improve in the third round, sitting at fifth and fourth respectively. This still was not enough to get into a medal position.

The fourth stanza passed with no significant movement, but in the fifth round Pishchalnikova improved to 65.78m, less than a meter behind Dietzsch who appeared to have nothing better in reserve.

Pishchalnikova was gaining ground and looking for a kill. She launched another long effort (65.55m) on her last toss, but it was not enough to topple the German.

Like Dietzsch, Barrios had earned her medal position (bronze) on the strength of her opening effort.

There is something to be said about opening up big in a major competition. The pressure of a big opening throw



Dietzsch



Pishchalnikova

can either put the heat on the other competitors, or conversely, fire them up.

"I realized after my opening throw that for a long time there was not much happening," said Dietzsch. "During the competition some the other throwers came to me and congratulated me on winning. But I said, 'Hey wait girls, this is not over yet. Always wait until the last throw.'"

"This is crazy! This is my third world title - I had some tears of joy in my eyes after the competition. It is very surprising for me as I am the second oldest in the field and today I beat all the young girls. Some weeks ago I had problems with my Achilles and thought about not going to Osaka at all, but my coach advised me to go. I am so glad he did." It was a record ninth consecutive appearance for Dietzsch. Only one other athlete has competed in as many World Championships: 800m runner Maria Mutola.

"Of course I am satisfied," reflected Pishchalnikova. "Who would not be with a personal best and World silver."

Results

1. Franka Dietzsch (Ger) 218-6 (66.61); 2. Darya Pishchalnikova (Rus) 215-10 (65.78); 3. Yarelis Barrios (Cub) 209-8 (63.90); 4. Nicoleta Grasu (Rom) 208-0 (63.40); 5. Taifeng Sun (Chn) 207-5 (63.22); 6. Olena Antonova (Ukr) 204-9 (62.41); 7. Joanna Wisniewska (Pol) 201-3 (61.35); 8. Nataliya Semenova (Ukr) 200-8 (61.17); 9. Xuejun Ma (Chn) 194-9 (59.37); 10. Irina Yatchenko (Blr) 192-6 (58.67); 11. Yania Ferrales (Cub) 190-11 (58.20); 12. Mélina Robert-Michon (Fra) 189-8 (57.81);.

MEN'S HAMMER THROW QUALIFYING

Perhaps the athlete feeling the most pressure in Osaka was native son and Olympic Champion Koji Murofushi. Before his first throw, the stadium had been the loudest up to that point of all athletics competition. The Japanese supporters had packed in to see Koji perform. His first effort fell short of the auto-mark (73.11m), but he rectified the situation with his next effort of 77.25m. The 2007 world leader and Helsinki silver medallist Vadim Devyatovsky (BLR) also required two attempts to proceed to the final as well as defending champion Ivan Tsikhan.

Slovakia's Libor Charfreitag provided the only 80m toss (80.61m) of the session and his countryman Miloslav Konopka posted a season's best 79.83m. Throughout warm-ups these two men came ready to play. This year's world leader and Helsinki silver medallist, Vadim Devyatovsky of Belarus, finished at 79.30m to join his fellow Belarusian Tsikhan. Also among the finalists were Hungary's Krisztián Pars (79.11m), Primož Kozmus of Slovenia, 2000 Olympic Champion Szymon Ziolkowski

(POL), Olli-Pekka Karjalainen (FIN), squeezed through in 11th overall. Americans A.G. Kruger (73.19m) and Kibwe Johnson (three fouls) failed to advance.

(August 27)

(temperature 31C/88F; humidity 54-63%)

FINAL

Kozmus posted the first 80m effort of the competition with his opener (80.68m). Conversely, Tsikhan struggled initially, something he has done in major competitions before. His first whirl was a sector foul, as would be his follow-up. The defending champion would go into his third effort needing not only a fair throw, but a substantial one. And as he has done before after backing himself into a corner, Tikhon made the necessary adjustments and landed a fair 79.35m third throw to earn three more attempts. Before that throw it appeared that Tsikhan was definitely out of this competition, but as we say in America, "It's not over until the fat lady sings."

Elsewhere in the prelims, Konopka lost his balance during his release, and the hammer slung through the netting across the track and into the long jump pit on the back straightaway. After a prolonged repair, Devyatovskiy made up for his initial effort by taking the lead with 80.95m. To the delight of the crowd Murofushi went over 80m for the first time this season with yet another best for the year of 80.38m to improve to fourth. Kozmus improved in the third stanza to 82.12m and Charfreitag, the leading qualifier, then set a new season's best 80.93m to move into silver.

Moving on to the finals, Devyatovskiy then bettered his mark to 81.22m while Tsikhan advanced to 80.77m, replacing Murofushi in third. The Japanese crowd could will native son Murofushi to no better than a sixth place finish, albeit a season's best 80.46m. Koji is well respected by his competitors; he still joined in on the victory lap where there was mutual support on all sides.

Tsikhan entered the circle for his last attempt and a test of his will after a subpar competition. And he did not disappoint, nailing a world-leading 83.63m, and placing him in position to win his third consecutive world champion-



Kozmus, Tsikhan and Charfreitag

ship. Kozmus and Charfeitag (81.60m) could not respond and settled for silver, and bronze respectively. Devyatovskiy improved to 81.57m, narrowly missing the medal stand. It was an impressive competition to have seven men over 80m.

"As you saw, everything is possible," said Tsikhan. I always think in a way that competition has six rounds or the first part three. I was ready just could not put it together in first two throws. My legs were not working as I wanted. Before the last throw I said to myself that I can do it. How could I do it? It is hard to describe, you must feel it."

"All of my three victories at World Championships are for me equally important and I got them after hard a fight. Our President did not call me yet. I think he will send a telegram."

"I knew that I am very strong and expected a throw over 80, 81 metres and to get a medal," said Kozmus. "Osaka is the highlight of my season and we planned my training for that. I am very pleased about the outcome, it is great."

Results

1. Ivan Tikhon (Blr) 274-4 (83.63); 2. Primo• Kozmus (Slo) 269-11 (82.29); 3. Libor Charfreitag (Svk) 267-8 (81.60); 4. Vadim Devyatovskiy (Blr) 267-7 (81.57); 5. Krisztián Pars (Hun) 265-6 (80.93); 6. Koji Murofushi (Jpn) 264-0 (80.46); 7. Szymon Ziókowski (Pol) 262-9 (80.09); 8. Markus Esser (Ger) 261-4 (79.66); 9. Olli-Pekka Karjalainen (Fin) 257-0 (78.35); 10. Miloslav Konopka (Svk) 256-2 (78.09); 11. Esref Apak (Tur) 251-3 (76.59); 12. Ali Al-Zinkawi (Kuw) 249-6 (76.04);.

WOMEN'S HAMMER THROW

QUALIFYING

Two well-credentialed veterans fell to the wayside during qualifying. Former World and European champion Mihaela Melinte set six world records in the 1990s, but was unable to get beyond 62.40m in a third round effort after two fouls. Reigning Olympic champion Olga Kuzenkova was making a comeback after maternity leave, but despite finishing second in the Russian championships, looked distinctly ring rusty as she could manage no better than 22nd overall with a best of 66.56m. Olga Kuzenkova (RUS) failed to progress.

The qualifying competition started out slowly with few hitting the automatic mark, then things started to heat up. Cuba's Yipsi Moreno, Eileen O'Keefe (IRE) and Croatia's Ivana Brkljacic all passed the 71m qualifying mark on their first attempts. Medal hopefuls Betty Heidler (GER), Russian champion, Yelena Konevtseva, China's Wenxiu Zhang and former Olympic champion, Kamila Skolimowska (POL) all qualified. Also advancing were Gulfiya Khanafeyeva (RUS), Clarissa Claretti (ITA) and Yunaika Crawford (CUB).

On paper the Americans had personal records that would have gotten them through to the finals. But this was a first for all three, and the pressure to perform was relentless. The three Americans, Brittany Riley of Carbondale, Ill, Krystal Yush now in Baton Rouge, and Jessica Cosby of Los Angeles all did not move on to the finals. The best showing came from Cosby who was sitting 12th going in the final round, and then she bumped to 15th to finish out the finals.

(August 30)

(temperature 30-29C/
86-84F; humidity 64-
71%)

FINAL

A significant surprise came from Russian Khanafeyeva who had a poor night, not reaching 70m and did not move on for the final three throws. Moreno was the first to exceed 70m with a 72.84m opener. 2000 Olympic champion Kamila Skolimowska (POL)

followed with a 73.75m toss to take the lead. Then Ireland's Eileen O'Keefe, moved into fourth with 70.93m.

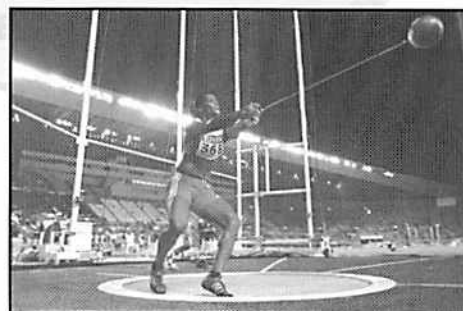
Konevtseva opened at 72.45m, a mark she would not better.

Heidler's second attempt 74.76m

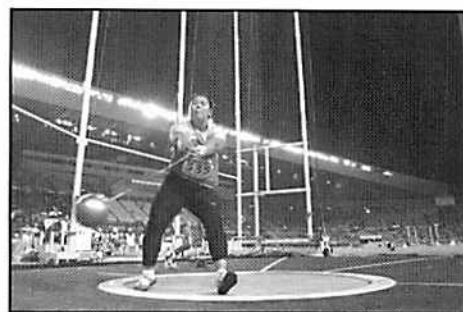
served notice to her counterparts and changed the face of the competition. Only Asian champion Zhang would respond, hitting 73.11m to move into bronze, trailing Heidler and Skolimowski. That throw also cooled down the third round with three others improving, the most extensive coming from Claretti of Italy (70.73m). Khanafeyeva, in 11th after two efforts, could produce only a 69.08m and she



Heidler



Moreno



Zhang

left the infield in tears. Cuban Olympic bronze medallist Yunaika Crawford was also denied access to the finals. Zhang fouled a long effort that would have taken her into second had she not stepped on the edge of the circle.

In round four Moreno stepped it up, improving to 74.33m, still short of Heidler. Zhang then turned her way to a 74.21 and positioned herself for bronze. At this point you could see the fight start as the ladies were trying to position themselves for one of the top three spots.

In the fifth round Heidler remained secure, but had no improvement. Zhang leapfrogged Moreno for silver with a 74.39m whirl. This was in the same area as the one she fouled in round three. Claretti had slight improvement, but again the others remained in the same position.

In the final round the Cuban was to come back with a huge effort that secured the silver, and sent chills through the new champion Heidler, falling short by a miniscule 2cm. The margin was the closest in the history of the event at the World Championships. Many held their breaths as Moreno's mark was measured.

Though the championship record of 75.20m survived, other records tumbled. In all, there were nine women over 70m, a feat never before achieved in the World Championships. All three medalists' went over 74m, another unique statistic, and for the first time there was incredulity as Russia was absent from the medals, with Russian champion Yelena Konevtseva managing no higher than fifth.

"It is very nice to be the first in the world," reflected Heidler. "Before the final, I was not too nervous, I wanted to have fun and enjoy the atmosphere and - of course - throw far. After my second attempt, I thought 'Oh, this is enough for a medal.' And I was really pleased. After the fifth and sixth attempt, I was afraid to lose my gold medal, very nervous - I trembled. But nevertheless, I am the winner now. After Yipsi's last throw I thought for a tiny moment 'Oh, I am only second now.' But then, with the official result, I was relieved."

"I tried my best, just not enough," said Moreno afterward. "I was thinking that last throw would be enough to win, but it was not. I'm disappointed, because I was so close to gold. Technically I knew I can do 75 metres, it just did not work out. I do not have really any explanation why. But let's put this behind and concentrate at future events."

Results

1. Betty Heidler (Ger) 245-3 (74.76); 2. Yipsi Moreno (Cub) 245-2 (74.74); 3. Wenxiu Zhang (Chn) 244-0 (74.39); 4. Kamila Skolimowska (Pol) 241-11 (73.75); 5. Yelena Konevtseva (Rus) 237-8 (72.45); 6. Eileen O'Keefe (Ire) 232-8 (70.93); 7. Clarissa Claretti (Ita) 232-1 (70.74); 8. Manuela

Montebun (Fra) 230-10 (70.36); 9. Arasay Thondike (Cub) 230-4 (70.20); 10. Gulfiya Khanafeyeva (Rus) 226-8 (69.08); 11. Ivana Brkljaèi?? (Cro) 223-7 (68.16); 12. Yunaika Crawford (Cub) 221-8 (67.56);.

WOMEN'S JAVELIN THROW

QUALIFYING

Czech Barbora Spotakova launched her spear out to 63.77m with her first throw, easily surpassing the automatic qualification mark of 61m. Christina Obergfoll (GER) had to sweat out her 60.77m, which eventually made the grade. Sonia Bisset (CUB) managed 60.25, which was good enough to qualify.

Other qualifiers included Russia's Mariya Abakumova (60.55m) and Romania's Felicia Moldovan (60.07m) and Savva Lika of Greece (62.38m).

Germany's Linda Stahl was a first-throw qualifier (62.80m personal best), as was Brejchova, who threw the furthest of the morning (64.29m). She was the only automatic qualifier from Group A. Among the six automatic qualifiers from Group B was Olha Ivankova, of the Ukraine, who established a personal best 61.68. There were two seasonal bests from Paula Tarvainen of Finland and Sávva Lika of Greece.

The lone American in the competition was Dana Pounds, the U.S. Champion who came into the meet with a rotator cuff impingement and finished 14th in group A with (55m). The American Record holder Kim Kreiner did not compete due to a forearm injury she incurred prior to the US Championships.

(August 31)

(temperature 27C/81F; humidity 63-61%)

FINAL

The top eight finishers in Osaka include three Germans and two Czechs. And the top four finishers were two apiece from each country. Spotakova, a former heptathlete, broke her own Czech national record with a 66.40m opening throw. The gauntlet had been laid down, and it was for the rest of the field to chase her. Obergfoll also opened well, laying claim to second place with a 64.01m. Also topping 60 meters were Brejchova (60.25m), Abakumova (61.43m) and Stahl (60.10).

Obergfoll (65.26m) and Brejchova (61.93m) registered second stanza improvements and Brejchova further improved to 63.73m in the third round. Obergfoll looked strong and was capable of challenging Barbora, but could never catch that big throw. At the conclusion of the preliminaries, Spotakova was still pacing the field followed by Obergfoll, Brejchova and Bisset (61.74m).

As the finals began, the 35-year-old Nerius leaped onto the podium with a 64.42m effort, displacing Brejchova, who



Spatakova



Oberghöller



Nerius

as Helsinki, but her mark of (70.03m) there would have been gold in Osaka.

Barbora's gold medal-winning 67.07m placed her seventh on the all-time list. The 26-year-old's best before tonight had been the 66.12 she threw last year in qualifying for the final of the European Championship.

Results

1. Barbora Spotáková (CzR) 220-0 (67.07); 2. Christina Oberghöller (Ger) 218-0 (66.46); 3. Steffi Nerius (Ger) 211-4 (64.42); 4. Nikola Brejchová (CzR) 209-1 (63.73); 5. Sávva Líka (Gre) 207-1 (63.13); 6. Sonia Bisset (Cub) 202-7 (61.74); 7. Mariya Abakumova (Rus) 201-6 (61.43); 8. Linda Stahl (Ger) 200-2 (61.03); 9. Barbara Madejczyk (Pol) 191-6

(58.37); 10. Olga Ivankova (Ukr) 189-10 (57.87); 11. Felicia Moldovan (Rom) 182-9 (55.71); 12. Paula Tervahauta (Fin) 175-6 (53.50);

MEN'S JAVELIN THROW

QUALIFYING

Before the competition started, a slight rain storm came through to make things interestingly slippery. In group A, besides Jarvenpää of Finland and Thorkildsen of Norway, the rest of the field seemed hesitant on the run way in the first round of throws. Greer slipped badly on his opening throw. Defending champion Andrus Varnik, who had held up best in the cold, wet and windy conditions of Helsinki in 2005, would enjoy no such happy ending in the warmer, but drizzly climes of Osaka. The Estonian season's best 75.96m was not enough to advance. The longest qualifier came from Vadims Vasilevskis (LAT) who threw 87.37m on his third effort. Favorite Tero Pitkämäki (FIN) was only 10th overall with a best of 80.62m and World leader, Breaux Greer also needed three throws to notch 86.78m. Olympic champion and World silver medallist, Andreas Thorkildsen advanced on the basis of his second effort 82.33m. Three athletes qualified on their first effort: Tero Jarvenpää (FIN, 84.35m), Magnus Arvidsson (SWE, 84.17) and Guillermo Martinez (CUB, 82.99m).

(September 2)

(temperature 30C/86F; humidity 61%)

FINALS

Russian Aleksandr Ivanov stepped up and launched his opener 85.18m to take the early lead. John Robert Oosthuizen (RSA) fell into second at 84.52m. Thorkildsen was third at 82.78m. Neither Ivanov nor Oosthuizen would improve on their openers and would not be factors in the medal race.

In the second round the podium began to take shape. Pitkämäki exploded with an 89.16m blast, followed by 88.61m from Thorkildsen. The two Scandinavian rivals were in the midst of another personnel duel with the rest of the field apparently battling for bronze. Vaselkis edged past Ivanov by a single centimeter (85.19m) into third and the dangerous Greer showed signs of life as he improved to 84.31m.

The finals were relatively uneventful with the exception of Greer putting together an 86.21m toss to move into the bronze position. This was Breaux's best conclusion at the Worlds. Everyone knows he is capable of a big throw, so there was a sign of relief from the top two finishers when his 5th round throw came up short.

Thorkildsen could manage only 87.33m final effort and Pitkämäki was secure as he launched a competition best 90.33m on the final throw of the competition. These were the only improvements in the final round of throwing. These two men have been here before and showed why



Pitkamaki



Thorkildsen



Greer

they are the elite class of javelin throwing.

In sixth and seventh, there was an illustration of how important championships are, even in the lower placings. Both Robert Oosthuizen of South Africa and Poland's Igor Janik

left with personal bests of 84.52m and 83.38m respectively.

Pitkamaki had gone unbeaten all season apart from the freak accident in Rome when his errant spear hit French long jumper, Salim Sdiri, putting the Finn off the competition. He later said, "The party at home in Finland will be pretty big," said Pitkamaki of his javelin mad countrymen. "That was my dream, to win the gold medal. Our team did not win a medal here until today so in javelin was the last chance. Today was my day. I am so happy also because in Helsinki before two years at home I had a black day. "

"I was looking for the gold," Thorkildsen said afterward. "But it was all the matter of who was the best today and Tero did a good job. I've been injured, so some small things are missing. I just wasn't able to do what I wanted. I tried my best but it wasn't there."

Both of Breaux's 90m throws this year have come within his first two attempts in each competition. When he does that it brings great confidence to him and solidifies a victory.

Unfortunately, it did not happen in Osaka. Greer said, "I hope that next year will be better. Sometimes you take what you can get. There were some technical problems, but nothing that I could not fix. I was just off. It would have been nice to catch one really good throw. I had planned on coming out on the first throw - over 90 metres - BANG! But it did not work."

Results

1. Tero Pitkämäki (Fin) 296-4 (90.33); 2. Andreas Thorkildsen (Nor) 290-8 (88.61); 3. Breaux Greer (US) 282-10 (86.21); 4. Vadims Vasilevskis (Lat) 279-6 (85.19); 5. Aleksandr Ivanov (Rus) 279-5 (85.18); 6. Robert Oosthuizen (SA) 277-3 (84.52); 7. Igor Janik (Pol) 273-7 (83.38); 8. Tero Järvenpää (Fin) 269-4 (82.10); 9. Guillermo Martínez (Cub) 269-1 (82.03); 10. Magnus Arvidsson (Swe) 268-11 (81.98); 11. Eriks Rags (Lat) 262-6 (80.01); 12. Teemu Wirkkala (Fin) 255-11 (78.01); .

L&S

**GLOBAL
ATHLETICS**
POWERED BY IAAF

1 GOLD, 1 SILVER, 1 BRONZE

BY GLENN THOMPSON

It's not likely your going to hear Tony Kornheiser and Michael Wilbon debating the state of American throwing on ESPN's Pardon The Interruption. Nor will you find CNN's Anderson Cooper reporting live from the javelin runway at the U.S. Olympic Training Center.

But had they been so inclined, they could have found at least a .1% market share evaluating the performance of the U.S.throws team in Osaka. As the results rolled in day by day, the pattern was less than encouraging for the small, but devout American devotees of our sport. On the opening day (Sunday) of competition world leader Reese Hoffa and 2005 Worlds champion Adam Nelson performed spectacularly nabbing gold and silver respectively.

Unfortunately, the weekdays were not so kind to the U.S. contingent, as no American thrower, female or male, advanced past the qualifying round. Discus thrower Ian Waltz produced the closest call, finishing one centimeter out of the finals.

Breaux Greer finished up the week on a high note, bringing home a bronze and completing the medal set.

As the week progressed, the howls went up on The Ring (www.effortlessthrow.org) with the grumblings of posters who questioned the quality of the American performances in Osaka..

"Is anyone really that suprised by the results of the American men and women in disc? I'm not trying to bash them but throws in a stadium without wind are the ones that count....," howled one poster. The sentiment was backed up in one form or other by several posters.

Make no mistake, there were defenders as well. Chief among them were two coaches, Bud Rassmussen (Waltz, Jarred Rome, Becky Breisch) and John Smith (Dan Taylor, Brittany Riley), who had throwers in Osaka, all of whom were qualifying casualties.

What follows are the thoughts of Rassmussen, Smith and Kent Pagel, whose wife Ramona is a four-time Olympian ('84, '88, '92, '96) and the American record holder in the shot put (66-2.5), as they appeared on The Ring..

OSAKA THOUGHTS

Bud Rassmussen

First off, I would like to express my sincere apology to those colleagues, competitors, and fans for our sub-par results that my training group produced this past week in Osaka. All I can say is we picked the worse possible time to have an "off" day and we are in the process of reviewing our performances so to be sure that we won't repeat them in the future. Perhaps what has been most difficult for us to come to terms with is that we had a great month of training leading up to the meet and had solid practices in recent days and solid throws in our warm-up reps both inside and outside the stadium on the meet days. This being my first major championship meet I really came to realize that the margin is very slim between those succeeding or failing to advance into the final. Plus once the final arrives it is wide open and anything and everything can happen (i.e. Tikhon and Alekna), which will definitely help to guide me in the future.



Ian Waltz missed the discus final by a single centimeter.

Since so many people had voiced their concerns and opinions in the past few days I thought it would be best to offer some statistical information on each of my athletes so that you might better understand the whole picture of our 2007 season (which will be posted next). Please feel free to look over the information and email me directly with your thoughts if you'd like. Otherwise I'd greatly appreciate it if you could stop bashing the athletes as they are truly striving to do their best and have worked extremely hard to achieve at their highest possible levels..

2007 Review

Becky Breisch

Age: 24

Lifetime best: 67.37m (Maui, 2007)

European stadium best: 62.48m (Belgrade, 2007)

American stadium best: 62.92m (Carson, 2005)

2007 Season average = 62.86m (17 meets)

2007 U.S. meet average = 63.55m (13 meets)

2007 Foreign meet average = 60.63m (4 meets)

Notes:

- *13/17 meets over IAAF "A" standard.
- *Increased her meet average by over 2m from previous year (60.82m in 2006).
- *Foreign meet schedule was limited due to women's discus meet offerings and also a problem obtaining her visa for a multi-meet series in Brazil this past May (Osaka marked just the 5th time that Becky has competed overseas in her career; 57.16m from Helsinki WC qualifying round in 2005 was her previous foreign meet best mark).
- *Wasn't able to enter U.S. Olympic Training Center until January due to USOC delays which greatly compromised her general preparation period.
- *Competed and trained with a strained right knee from mid May until present that altered throwing volumes and lifting protocols at times.

Jarred Rome

Age: 31

Lifetime best: 68.37m (Maui, 2007)

European stadium best: 66.51m (Rethymno, 2006)

American stadium best: 66.84m (New York, 2007)

2007 Season average = 64.36m (18 meets)

2007 U.S. meet average = 65.84m (11 meets)

2007 Foreign meet average = 62.03m (7 meets)

Notes:

- *8/18 meets over IAAF "A" standard.
- *Competed and trained with a strained left Achilles tendon from early April until present that altered throwing volumes at times.

Ian Waltz

Age: 30

Lifetime best: 68.91m (Salinas, 2006)

European stadium best: 65.10m (Athens, 2006)

American stadium best: 64.52m (Indianapolis, 2006)

Season average = 64.54m (17 meets)

U.S. meet average = 65.44m (9 meets)

Foreign meet average = 63.52m (8 meets)

Notes:

- *7/17 over IAAF "A" standard.
- *Spent entire month of July in Germany which helped to eliminate excessive travel.
- *Changed lifting program from previous years in attempt to diversify and add later peak to season.

HOW TO MAKE A WORLD FINAL

John Smith

This is my take on it after 20 years of having throwers in them. I also had two throwers that failed at the Worlds.

1. Experience, Experience, Experience. This is the most important factor. This is only achieved by lots of overseas competition and experience at the world meet level. If you don't think this is important I will point out that Reese Hoffa's gold medal is the first time he has made an outdoor world final and he has been throwing all over the world for the last 4-5 years. It took my wife (Connie Price-Smith) about the same amount of time to learn how to make these finals.

2. You have to be over prepared and have a reserve of power. Every World final that my wife ever made she left the States 2 feet better then what she needed to make the finals. The times she placed in the top 5 she was in 64-65 foot shape and ended up throwing 62.4 and 63.0. I have seen the technique reasoning over and over and over again. If you really watch the throws and especially the women throws you will see a huge amount of sloppy technique out of the Europeans. These girls have simple techniques and big-time specific strength and power. Now this will bring up my next point.

3. Since Bud was so gracious to give out his yearly numbers, I will show you that his athletes actually threw well. Jarrod's overseas average for the year was 62.03m and he threw 61.87m. Ian's overseas average was 63.52m and threw 62.67m and just missed the cut by a centimeter. Becky overseas average was 60.63m which is very good for her first year over and she threw 58.42m. It took 60.89m to make the cut. In her first Worlds I thought that was very good. I thought the whole group competed well but they were looking for better throws off their overseas best average and didn't get them, which is very tough to do in that high pressure situation.

4. Many years ago when Connie made her first Olympic Team I asked George Woods how to prepare for an Olympic Games shot competition. I will never forget his answer. He said, "You can't, you just survive them." The more you do, the better you survive. My two athletes didn't survive like many don't the first time through. Physically they were both ready, but World qualifying is something else. No matter how many times I have had athletes go through it and no matter how well they are prepared, the survival rate is very low. Dan was throwing well and Brittany was throwing the best of her young career. The failure will make them better throwers in the future. Brittany put throws into the right side of the cage (which she rarely ever does) and Dan pulled the ball (which I haven't seen in practice since I started his left foot in the middle 3 months ago)

5. The solution to this World qualifying problem is fairly simple but the powers to be ignore it.

- A) Overseas competing takes money and many of our kids can't afford to go. The shot putters in this country get their experience and make money doing it. The rest of the throwers have little support and love

their event, seem to do well despite the system. Overseas experience is the most important factor, and without it many of our throwers will fail at a high rate and have been for years.

- B) After all these years we have to start developing specific strength of the throws. We have too many people concerned about looking pretty in the ring. Pretty doesn't get it done at the World level, especially with the women. Throwers have to start to learn to throw heavy implements. The transfer of weight lifting strength to specific throwing strength (heavy implements) is the most important area that we are lacking. Until we address this problem we will continue to wash out of qualifying.

We have to learn to train for the bottom. What I mean is what is the worst an athlete can throw in an overseas meet? Whatever that number is, that number has to move up. When it is above what it takes to make a final then qualifying becomes easier. I told Brittany when she left it would take around 67.50-69.00 meters to make finals. That is above her bottom at this point. She had to throw hard and hope she got one out of the cage. The women's shot has been the same for years. If you want to make finals you have to throw between 18.00-18.30m. 18.30m is the bottom and this is why Connie made so many finals. Specific strength and power is a huge part in developing the bottom end of throwing. Complex technique breaks down in high-pressure situations high levels of strength and specific strength does not.

6. Our throwers have a hard enough road without the armchair quarterbacks giving their 2 cents worth. It makes the throwers bitter and question why they even do what they do. Early in Connie's career she received so much of this she one day just closed up and refused to read any articles, Track & Field News, clinics, interviews etc. To this day she refuses to read boards such as *The Ring*. You have to remember many of our throwers are fighting an upward battle. There are still many dirty countries out there in the throws. There are still many throwers hiding and evading the testers. Everyone on this board wants throwers to throw without the use of drugs, but then they criticize when our throwers go into battle a lot times spotting the competition a 5-10% advantage. When a thrower reaches a final and they are clean, that in itself is a fantastic accomplishment in today's throwing world.

TASK VS. GOAL ORIENTATION

Kent Pagel

After going through the entire career thing with quite a few athletes in all of the throws, I have to make a few observations about the current discussions about qualifying for championships. Before you can medal, you have to make finals, and before you can make finals you have to pass through the qualifying round. This sounds like a real

"duh", but it is true. You must learn how to plan a complete championship competition to be successful, and this includes all facets throughout the training and competitive seasons.

You are allowed three throws to qualify in international competition, and this is where I have some problems with the "big mark" meets; there is a difference between goal orientation and task orientation, and they can work together or against each other. Having two or three competitions in a two-day period in near perfect conditions brings out one of the greatest joys of our sport: throwing far! However, it does nothing for the other joy of our sport: winning, placing well and throwing well under pressure. I don't believe that the wind/stadium argument in the discus is as important as the "big meet / big pressure / few throws" paradigm against the "perfect conditions / unlimited throws" scenario. It has been proven over and over again that pressure affects performance, and greater specific preparation improves the management of such pressure, improving performance under such pressure. Time changes, limited number of competitive efforts, limited warm-ups all increase demands in unfamiliar situations already holding pressure. In other words, you don't practice green jacket putts for the Masters by figuring out how to get through the windmill in miniature golf.

There should be serious qualifying rounds at nationals, no matter how many throwers we need to let into the competition. The concept of the two-day competition with qualifying a large part is important at a high level. The focus needs to be on competition and not simply distance. This is not purely a discus observation; not one single American woman thrower qualified in Osaka, and only medallists Adam, Breaux and Reese have among the men. Admittedly, the hammer throwers and javelin throwers are considerably behind the best of the world, with the exception of Breaux and Kim, so their events are different in that an outstanding performance would be necessary, which rarely happens. But the M&W Discus and Women's shot have no such differences. The qualifying marks for finals were well within reach of our throwers.

After reading John Smith's writings while writing this, much of what he states is true, especially the importance of experience. After Ramona was 13th in qualifying in 87, 88 and 91 (in Tokyo by 1cm, like Lance in the same meet) she swore never to miss another final in her career, and she didn't; 92 Olympics (11th), 93 Worlds (10th), 95 Worlds (7th) and 96 Olympics (9th). Her emphasis changed from trying to throw far to competing well at the biggest meets. In addition the 20 some years of training was catching up with her body and the training required for real far throws was remote. No medals, but she was more pleased with her efforts, even though she placed higher in earlier competitions (5th World Indoors and Pan Am Champion 1987 - no qualifying rounds in those meets!) So from experience

comes the knowledge of what is important. But we need to emphasize that importance earlier in their careers. Ramona coaches Kim Kreiner, and after one Olympics and two world championships she has figured it out as well; too bad she is hurt now, but will be back next year with that knowledge. We took Kim over to Europe for years starting in 1999 before she was a world-class thrower and she competed in "B" meets, just for the European experience.

So, in many ways John Smith and I agree about what is important for international competition. However, we don't worry about the drug situation since we can't do anything about it and it is negative to focus on it, as it gives the criminals too much invulnerability. Besides, it didn't hurt Adam or Reese much. And like Connie, Ramona refuses to read the message boards or respond.

OSAKA MEDAL COUNT (By Country)

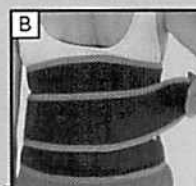
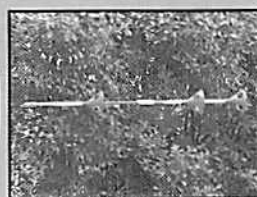
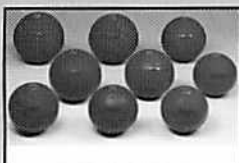
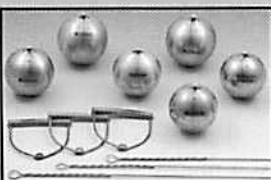
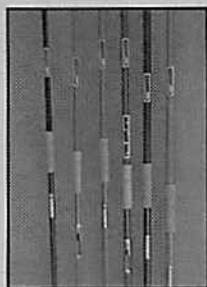
WOMEN					MEN			
PTS	WSP	WDT	WHT	WJT	MSP	MDT	MHT	MJT
10	NZL	GER	GER	CZE	USA	EST	BLR	FIN
8	BLR	RUS	CUB	GER	USA	GER	SLO	NOR
6	GER	CUB	CHN	GER	BLR	NED	SVK	USA
5	CHN	ROM	POL	CZE	NED	LTU	BLR	LAT
4	GER	CHN	RUS	GRE	POL	HUN	HUN	RUS
3	CHN	UKR	IRL	CUB	SLO	EGY	JPN	RSA
2	CHN	POL	ITA	RUS	GER	IRI	POL	POL
1	ITA	UKR	FRA	GER	BLR	EST	GER	FIN
MEDAL COUNT					MEDAL COUNT			
	G	S	B			G	S	B
NZL	1	0	0		BLR	1	0	1
BLR	0	1	0		GER	0	1	0
GER	2	1	2		USA	1	1	1
RUS	0	1	0		EST	1	0	0
CUB	0	1	1		NED	0	0	1
CHN	0	0	1		SLO	0	1	0
CZE	1	0	0		SVK	0	0	1
					FIN	1	0	0
					NOR	0	1	0

Reaching the final today is now where near as amazing as making one in the 80's, which is why Carol Cady is still one of my all time favorite throwers for her preparation abilities. In the '88 trials she threw over 190' in the worst discus conditions I have ever seen when Connie and Ramona were struggling to throw twenty feet less. The next day in finals she threw about 199' while Connie and Ramona both threw 201-11'. What an impressive competitor, as then Carol made the 1988 Olympic Final in 9:00 am qualifying

while Connie and Ramona did not. That is an example what we are missing today, the ability to throw far when it matters most. *L&S*

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NUMBER ONE GUY

By GLENN THOMPSON

Reese Hoffa's 2007 was a Secretariat kind of year, notching a Triple Crown of his own. Hoffa blasted through the outdoor season sweeping the U.S. and World Championships, with a huge PR in London in between. It could only be bigger in an Olympic year.

After concluding his season, Hoffa talked with L&S about his PR, championships victories, and planning for 2008.

L&S: *You have to admit, you've had one helluva season. So how do you prepare for next year? Are there things you could have done better this year?*

RH: The way I will prepare for next year will be the same as I did this year. I am a big believer in not changing a thing, because everything over the last five years has been so good with high throwing performances and a number one ranking. I think Don [Coach Babbitt, University of Georgia] does a great job of putting the right amount of lifting and throwing early in the year so that I can continue to get stronger and continue to work on my technique without feeling too run down. This is a key for me to continue to put up big numbers in the ring and stay consistent.

One thing I would change is to not do as many meets. I think that I did too many meets back to back without enough rest and recovery. I did have some technical flaw in my technique that started during indoors, but I was too afraid to go back and try to fix the problems. Luckily for me I went to Madrid and had a technical meltdown. The performance in Madrid made me fix the problem and the rest is history. I also feel that I should have brought my wife over to Europe at least one time because she is missing out on some cool things that the meets are doing specifically for the shot put. Like in London when they put the shot in the middle of the field.

L&S: *What do you think were the keys to your success this year? Stronger? Technique? Better competitor?*

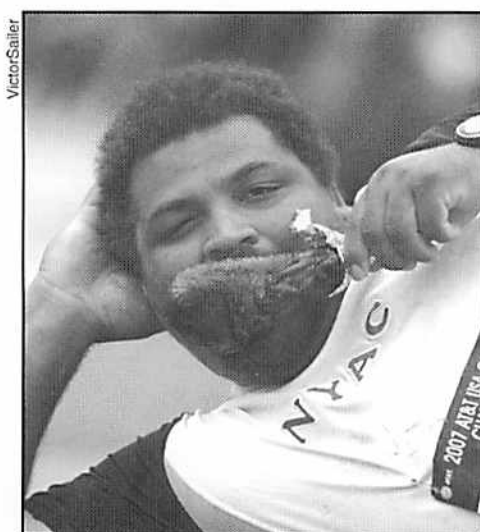
RH: The key to my success is to not follow the latest fad in training and doing what makes me great which is

following the same routine as I have done for the last eight years. I can definitely say that I have gotten stronger but I have not made big jumps in strength. As I improve in the weight room I also make improvements in the ring. For me they have to go hand and hand because if I get too strong too fast then I would lose my feel in the ring and lose control of how I throw. My technique on the other hand is always a work in progress I have some aspects of my throw that are staying the same but I have made slight changes in the way that I come out of the back of the ring and even foot position out the back of the ring. I have changed a few cues to help me with the feel of my body as it moves through the ring. I am very much a feel thrower, and for

some reason I cannot focus on something while I am throwing. To me, it is as if when I hit the single leg out the back of the ring I go blind all I have is the feel of where my arm or foot is in the ring I cannot see them to make sure they are in the right position. It is all of the little things that Don and I do during the season that has dictated my success and consistency over the course of this year.

L&S: *Would you consider Osaka the highlight of your year? If so, what would you rank it on a scale of 1 to 10 (highest). And how would you rank your monster throw in London and the USATF victory?*

RH: Osaka would have to be the highlight of the year. I would have to give it a '10' in terms of where I am in my career to date. I hope to have more throws at important meets that are equal to or better than the mark at Worlds. The performance that I gave on that day is incredible. I would give London a '9' because I did not expect to throw that far. I was only hoping for something that was just far enough to win. The mark at London just showed me a little bit of what I can do if I am properly motivated. It also showed me that one small technical change could yield a monster throw. USA Nationals was more of a '7' because not all throwers were on that day. I think that I went into that meet and focused on the throw, not the wet ring. I hope that next year we will have dry conditions and all the throwers can put on a show for the fans during the Olympic Trials. I definitely want show the people in the U.S. that I can throw 22 meters on American soil.



Most prefer cigars...Hoffa does turkey legs after a big victory.

L&S: Tell us about your new PR effort (73-7). Did you know it was a bomb when you hit it? The new PR has to be one of those days in the office where it all came together on one throw.

RH: When I went to London I was in good shape. I think I was in better shape at Pre, but for some reason the ball just flew at London. The week before London I was struggling with my technique, so Don and I sat down and talked about what I did in the past when I was throwing well. Then we modified my technique over two practices to reflect what I used to do right. When I went into the London meet I did not know what to expect. I thought it could be Madrid all over again, but to my surprise, it turned out great. As the meet started I got more comfortable with the changes that we made and I hit the ball hard. When the ball left my hand I did not know that it was going to go as far as it did. I was thinking more 21.70m to 21.8m range, which would have won. When 22.43m came up, I could not believe that I pushed the ball that far. After the throw, I knew that I put myself in position to get the gold at Worlds. All in all it was a great throw, but I could only enjoy the throw for as long as it took for me to get on the plane back to Georgia. I had to focus on Worlds and I had to treat that throw as if it was just another throw. I couldn't let it consume me as a throw I will do all the time. I had to put the throw into perspective because the throw that I needed to win Worlds was just 22 meters and not 22.43m.

L&S: With Adam gone to Virginia, has your training routine changed at all? Did the two of you train/throw together that much when he was in Athens?

RH: When Adam left for Virginia not much changed here in Athens for me. I took over as the top guy and became the face of the training group here. In some ways with Adam here I was the number two guy and in a small way it got to me, because everyone wants to be number one. While Adam was here we trained a little bit together, but for the most part I trained by myself. Usually I would see Adam when he was ready to throw far and those were the days that I miss the most while he was here. For me it was a reminder that if I did not stay on top of my training, I would not be able to keep up with the best in the world. I have to hand it to Adam, he knows how to train to throw far in a short period of time and that is one of the things I learned from him.

I miss Adam here in Athens, but I do think it is best for him to do his own thing in Virginia. I now have a new training partner, Rhuben Williams, to whom I am passing on my knowledge of throwing. *L&S*

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ON THE MEND

BY GLENN THOMPSON

The 2007 World Championships shot put competition in Osaka went off without a standard component:

John Godina, the 1999, 2001 and 2003 World Champion and 2005 U.S. team member, was at home in the Phoenix area, his season having come to a premature end due to injury. Godina had spent the 2007 indoor campaign working his way back into shape while settling for fourth and fifth place finishes at major meets.

While the U.S. shot team (gold and silver) showed no signs of missing the 35-year old two-time Olympic medallist in Osaka, surely he missed being there. Or did he?

L&S spent some time catching up with the rehabbing shot veteran discussing his thoughts on his recent physical challenges and his future in the game.

Long & Strong: *You looked like your normal self indoors in 2006. When did you realize you were injured and you were going to need some down time?*

John Godina: I knew during the season. I was not able to train properly (bench press or any upper-body training), so I knew the shoulder needed work. Also, the foot was still not healed from the injury in New York the year before.

LSTJ: *What was the diagnosis?*

JG: The foot had a torn ligament, and the shoulder had two tears in the labrum and a tear in the rotator cuff.

L&S: *What procedure did you have done to repair it and who did it?*

JG: A full repair was done on the shoulder by Dr. Freedberg in Scottsdale. He really made it strong, but it took a full year to recover. As far as the foot, it was in a weird spot and has yet to be repaired (probably never will be). It hurts on occasion, but who cares? I just want to throw far again.

L&S: *What type of rehab did you do?*

JG: I actually did rehab for about four hours a day at Athlete's Performance in Tempe. They were amazing, and I also learned a lot about human movement during the process. Most of what we did was teaching the scapula to move properly and stabilize the shoulder. You would be amazed how little you can do when the shoulder is out of commission. It stops you from any other work ... even legs.

L&S: *How long did you have to wait to start serious training again?*

JG: I started lifting in October, but I didn't really get fully back until March or April.

L&S: *Do you have to train around the repaired shoulder?*

JG: I am careful with it, but I don't really have much I can't do. I have to watch in some over-stretched positions, but the strength is not even close to an issue.

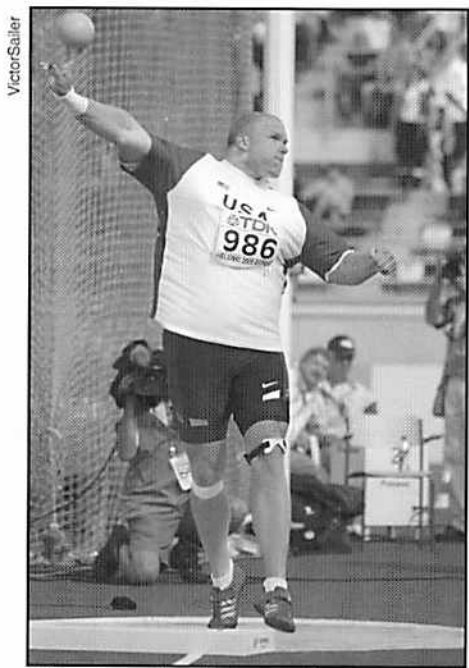
LSTJ: *You spent the 2007 indoor Visa series stuck in a distant fourth place behind various combinations of Cantwell, Hoffa and Taylor. Your face seemed to register somewhere between frustration and resignation. What were your expectations coming into the indoor season?*

JG: I really thought I would be better technically. I have thrown for so long that I couldn't imagine how far the surgery would throw me off ... especially my timing. I really felt frustrated. I knew I was doing the right things to throw far, but the

distances weren't clicking like all of the other years. That was really a test of patience and maturity.

L&S: *Was it largely a strength issue? Your technique appeared to be reasonably sharp.*

JG: I think strength did play a role because at that time I was not all the way back, and I couldn't seem to move out of the positions that I use in the circle. I really use some good depth and trick balance spots which are hard enough when you are in shape let alone when trying to recover



After struggling for more than a year with injuries, Godina hopes to be whole again during the campaign for Beijing.

from surgery. I did, however, know what I was getting myself into. I felt that if I could just get some good meets in the timing would come. I just hated the results. I am not used to being the cellar-dweller.

L&S: *At what point did you decide to shut it down for 2007?*

JG: I had to shut it down because of severe heel pain in my left foot. I kept trying, but it was just not getting better. I took a four-week period mid-season to get it better. I had some cortisone. Nothing worked. I could not even walk on it. I went to Nationals just hoping for a miracle (again, not what I am used to) and got nothing out of it. Live and learn I guess.

L&S: *How did you spend your summer?*

JG: Upon returning from Nationals I had Ossatron done on my heel. It's an orthopedic version of the same ultra-powerful ultrasound they use to break up kidney stones. After that I had to take a month off from everything, and now I have begun training again. I have to say, it seems to have worked, and I think I may get my healthy body back.

L&S: *Did you spend much time taking in the action from Osaka? What did you think?*

JG: None. I don't really know what to make of not being there, so I just ignored it. I actually didn't even know when the meet was. I saw the results, and I thought it was a good showing for the shot guys. Reese did a great job as he has all year, and Adam was impressive, especially considering he only had four meets all year.

L&S: *Tell me a little more about the original foot injury from 2006?*

JG: The 2006 injury was different from last year's heel injury. 2006 was a torn ligament in the top of the right foot. Last year was tendonitis in the heel of the left foot.

L&S: *Physically where are you at now?*

JG: I am healthy. I have learned to be careful at age 35. My volumes have to be lower than when I was younger, but it doesn't matter, because I am having no problems staying strong.

L&S: *Has the injury affected your long-term outlook regarding your career?*

JG: At this age, your long-term career outlook turns decidedly short-term. I worry about today and this week. I do enjoy it more than ever before ... maybe because there's not that many seasons left ... I really do appreciate all that I have done in and received from this sport. I feel like it's been a storybook career. I will say that I have just a few more things to accomplish before I am through. I am not ashamed to say that I want to leave the sport as the greatest thrower of all time.

L&S: *How much longer do you think you have in the game?*

JG: I don't know. I still see myself as a great thrower, and I still know the path back. I just have to keep walking it.

L&S



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An Interview With Summer Pierson

BY BEAU FAY

For the better part of the 20th century, the world of Scottish Highland Games saw its share of USA's finest track and field athletes come and go. Names like Oldfield, McGoldrick, McKenzie, Plucknett, DeSoto, McKee and countless others traded their track shorts for kilts in the ever-present search for the perfect throw. Nowadays, while many field eventers turn to the Heavy Events after their time in the ring is over, one athlete in particular continues her quest for the "effortless throw" both on the grass and in the ring. This athlete is Summer Pierson. A former Stanford discus standout, Pierson winds down her 2007 campaign with impressive victories in the inaugural Women's World Highland Games Championships and the U.S. Heavy Events Championships, as well as an impressive 3rd place showing at the 2007 USA Nationals in the platter. With her combination of athleticism, power and grace, this versatile thrower will undoubtedly keep the sport of women's Heavy Athletics exciting for years to come.

L&S had a chance to chat with Summer after her recent victory in the U.S. Championships in Pleasanton, CA over Labor Day weekend.

Long & Strong: Could you provide some general background information about yourself?

Summer Pierson: I am originally from upstate New York, and currently reside in Phoenix, AZ where I work and train. During the day I work as a genetic counselor in a high-risk pregnancy private practice and help families make decisions regarding testing options, interpreting results and locating resources based on those results. I completed my undergraduate education at Stanford University where I majored in Human Biology with an emphasis in genetics. I threw discus all 4 years on the varsity squad. I obtained my Master's degree in Genetic Counseling from Cal State Northridge. While attending school at Northridge I trained at Moorpark Junior College with Bob "Coach Mac" MacKay.

L&S: Describe your sporting background. How did you get involved in track and field?

SP: I started my career in athletics at the age of 6 when I joined the club softball team. I played for 10 years until I retired at the ripe old age of 16. By that time I had started to play basketball (junior high through high school) and wanted to try something new to do in my "off season" to stay in shape. I had wanted to sprint or hurdle, but was informed that the track team at my high school was already equipped with enough of those athletes. I was directed to the throws circle since, "You're a big girl." It is never nice to refer to any high school girl as "big" regardless of intent....ahem. Lucky for me, I was picked up by a coach in the area who had knowledge of throws— Ralf Moore, and with him managed to win the state championship before it was all said and done. I think my high school record still belongs to me, but I have no idea what it was. [Author's note: Pierson's prep PR in the discus was 160-8.]

Later I added volleyball to my list of teams and by the time I graduated I had 10 varsity letters. I was also recruited for each of my sports...but I fell in love with Stanford and felt that an individual sport would be far better option for me, as it made my academic calendar a little more flexible.

L&S: Were you solely a discus thrower as a prep, or did you compete in other throwing events, as well? Did you add events as a collegian?

SP: I threw both shot and disc in high school. Jav wasn't legal and I never saw a hammer until I got to college. I just kind of stunk at the shot put. I think my best put was around 40 feet, and that was with a ton of adrenaline mostly. For a while my frosh year (Stanford coach) Robert Weir encouraged me to stick with the shot, but we finally had a long heart to heart about it, and the issue was laid to rest. Until of course, I got into Highland Games. Now I have 2 stones to put. Gee whiz.



Gary Ellis

I think it was my sophomore year in college that I decided to throw the indoor weight because I hated having to wait until spring to travel and compete. At one point I had the school record (57-11), but I think it was later dissolved by a hammer thrower. One of my regrets while at Stanford was not full-heartedly pursuing the hammer throw. If I were born all over again, I probably would have been a hammer/disc combo thrower.

L&S: *What was the atmosphere like at Stanford for a student-athlete? There are few schools that seem to have the balance of excellence between academics and athletics.*

SP: That's a hard one, because I don't really have much to compare and contrast with. At Stanford, it seemed that enough people had enough of their own thing going on that being an athlete didn't seem to me to be that big a deal. Everyone had some sort of interesting project going on. Sure there were inconvenient times, like NCAA's where you're faxing your finals over, but it wasn't like I didn't know what I was signing up for in the first place. For the most part the professors I had were receptive and willing to work with a funky schedule...but I did make an effort to have as few Friday classes as possible to avoid travel conflicts. I knew that what was most important to me was that my sport didn't dictate my major, and Robert Weir was very accommodating. For a few semesters I took afternoon classes at the medical school and would train at off hours so I could get everything done in a day. My ability to communicate and connect well with Robert was a major deciding factor in the process of selecting a school. I think he recognized in me that if he could be flexible, I was more than willing to get work done and accomplish something.

I absolutely loved training with Robert—we had, and still do have, a very good relationship. As a matter of fact, he designed the last 7 weeks of my training program leading into the National meet this past spring. I think over the course of our knowing each other, we only ever had one disagreement—and it was quickly resolved. I would guess that training with Robert is a unique experience in that since he's such a popular guy there always seemed to be "special guests" that would come and train, or even just hang out around practice and offer insight and their experience. I was also training with Robert while he was still competing. There were several evening throwing sessions that I had the opportunity to train along side him, and I think that experience and exposure helped a great deal in my personal development as an athlete, and later as a coach. (I volunteer as a throws coach for a youth team. Go Bobcats!)

L&S: *What titles and/or honors did you win in college?*

SP: Hmmmm, I'm not very good at statistics or keeping track of things like this (there is a personal philosophy goes into that) so here goes nothing:

I was a competitor at the NCAA nationals all four years I was a competitor at the Senior Nationals 3 out of 4 years I think. I was a competitor at the Olympic Trials after my senior year. My best discus throw while at Stanford was 190-0, and I think that's #2 on the all time list. *[Author's note: it is #2 behind former AR holder Carol Cady's 207-8 from 1983.]* My best throw to date is 195-0, but as always

the absolute best is yet to come. I gained All-American honors at some point. That's all I can recall at the moment.

L&S: *Many throwers have a difficult time continuing their careers after leaving the support system of a top university. You have continued to post PR's. Could you describe how you have overcome the challenges of being a post-collegiate thrower?*

SP: At first, it wasn't so hard to do, because I remained near Stanford for work following the Olympic Trials. I really didn't know what to expect from the Trials, but I was so excited and so motivated by the experience I elected to "try again." I found a job working in dot.com land and trained under Robert's supervision. This seemed fine enough until dot.com evolved into dot.bomb and I sustained a pretty nasty strain to my abductor muscle. Out of work and hurt is not a good combination—talk about depression. From that injury I learned that I really do have to be training...if for nothing else than my mental health.

Shortly thereafter I decided I wanted to go back to school and pursue the career I had intended on when I started my undergrad work, and moved to Southern California when I was accepted to CSUN. I tried to get in touch with coaches in Southern Cal to inquire about training, but never really found a welcoming environment, I think mostly because training was admittedly not my top priority. I needed to (1) take care of school, (2) take care of my job that was paying for school, and finally, (3) train.

I found myself sneaking over fences at the crack of dawn and tip toe-ing around trying to get in a circle to throw. I was angry and very frustrated. On a whim I posted to a message board essentially saying "Hey! I need some help here!" and that's when Coach Mac started to e-mail me about Moorpark. It took about 3-4 emails from him before I finally decided to go check it out—and we had several discussions about what precisely my priorities were and he was willing to work with me. Our first season together had the theme of, "Let's see, here." low pressure and just learning how we might work together and how the training would work. This was the season I improved my personal best to 195 feet. I think we decided that this training schedule would work just fine.

L&S: *ou achieved an impressive 3rd place finish in the women's disc at this year's USATF's, beating some very elite throwers. Would you consider this your best showing to date in the sport? Could you provide some thoughts on the meet?*

I am exceedingly proud of my performance at this year's USATF competition. It is my highest finish at the meet to date, and it was a solid performance for me, which was the goal I had set for myself at the beginning of the season—just to have a solid performance I could be proud of. A lot changed in my training last season, going from supervised

to unsupervised, obtaining training programs from e-mail correspondence, and critiquing my own technique via videos, trying to actively train in two different events. To make the decision to commit to these changes—that was a scary thing to do. To add to it, there were some people who were not very shy about expressing their own uncertainty in “my plan.” At times, it was hard to maintain confidence, but it was a complete and total learning experience. I had to learn how to manage my time even better, I had to become honest with myself and really listen to my body to know when I was too tired, or when to adjust a workout (and not feel guilty of all things) and pay close attention to cause and effects in training. Also, I had to learn when I do need to ask for help, and from who to get help from.

The National meet was where I had to rely on the knowledge I had collected about myself to perform well. I think the experience made me more independent, more comfortable in my own skin and more in control of the inevitable emotional response that can sometimes make or break a performance in a big meet. I think this was the key to my performance that day. In all honesty I didn’t realize my positioning at the meet until I think my last throw. It came over the loudspeaker. I also had no idea about the team selection process, so I think it was John Frazier who brought it to my attention. And even still I didn’t take it seriously until Connie Price-Smith was on my cell phone wondering why I hadn’t made it to processing yet. All I knew at the time was that I was focused in on the cues I had been working on, and focused on making progress with each throw. I was also determined not to disappoint myself, as the year before I dropped out of the meet because I didn’t feel that I could perform to my standards. It also helped that it was the first track meet my parents had been able to attend since I was a freshman at Stanford, I think. I was glad to have been able to perform so well for them as well.

L&S: *How did you get involved in the Highland Games?*

SP: Coach Mac is also who introduced me to the Highland Games. Again, it took some negotiating because I never really thought of myself as a strength athlete. At Moorpark, Kenny Lowther, John McClure and some of the other Ventura-area heavies would practice and our objective would be to not have the hammers and my disc collide. Finally, I gave in and decided to try it, just for something fun to do. My first Games was at Pleasanton and I placed

third and was absolutely clueless, just having a good time. Someone invited me to Fresno, so I went to Fresno...then someone mentioned the Ventura games, so I figured, why not? Then everyone was talking about the Women’s Championships in Mesa and I figured, if I qualified, why not? The next thing I knew, I had two competing schedules: One for Highland Games the other for the disc.

I left Los Angeles because my job had become unbearable and there was little relief in sight. I relocated to Phoenix and roamed around looking for a training “home” again. Again, I had little success. At the end of the season I realized that I had spent so much energy on finding someone to “look after me” that I had ignored the possibility of self-management. Again, trying an unconventional approach I asked Coach Mac to kindly write a lifting program for me, and bought a camcorder to record and review my throws. I’m still trying to process all the things I learned along the way, but over all it was a very positive experience.



At the same time, I connected with Andrew Hobson and the rest of “Team AZ” for training in the Highland Games. They are a very welcoming, supportive and encouraging group, which I enjoy immensely. They are the reason I am able to compete at the level I do in the Games. This training group environment is a very welcome contrast from my solitary training in the discus.

I guess if I had to be brief, there are a great number of very real challenges (time management, financial, emotional) in continuing to compete as a post-grad, and that in my experience you have to get creative to overcome them. It also helps if you can find someone who’s willing to be a little unconventional with you.

L&S: *Did you find your transition into Highland Games was easy thanks to your track background? What were your impressions of the Games?*

SP: I think the transition to the Highland Games was facilitated by more body awareness than track background. It seems to me that a lot of people think the weight throws are essentially heavy discus throws, but in reality they are quite different, and the technique for one certainly can negatively impact the other, so training both requires some focus and discipline. In the discus throw, the objective of my technique is to gain maximum separation between the hip and the disc. If I do that with the weights, it’s a disaster. The weights need to be pushed forward with the

hip...oh the technicalities...oomph! Also, since I've never considered myself a shot putter, having to deal with the two stone puts in each Games is entertaining to me.

The caber, of course, was/is the event that I would call the "off guard" event. There is nothing really similar to it, and there's no other way to learn but to get out there and try. And try. And try. I've gotten much, MUCH better after my first Games. After my first trip to Scotland where I got some much needed help/suggestions, things finally started to click. There's room for the caber and I to become friends, I think.

As for impressions, I didn't know what to think going into my first Games. I knew at least I'd have a coach, Kenny, and a few other friends at the games to nudge me along, point me in the right directions. I really had a hard time wrapping my head around the idea of throwing in a kilt, but once everyone else was on the field and kilted up, then I figured it'd be best just to blend in and go with the flow. My first Games were also memorable in that it was such a fun day. It was competitive but at the same time kind of an escape because the Games to me weren't as pressure-laden as track meets. Go out, have a good time, throw stuff around, make friends, party a bit and head home. It was just what I needed.

L&S: *Do you have a preference between Highland Games or track and field? What do you like about each?*

SP: I wouldn't say I have a preference at the moment. They serve different purposes for me right now. For instance, the Games go year round, so I can use the autumn competitions to stay competitive, and have more to look forward to outside of regular pre-season workouts. I kind of treat the heavy throw workouts like Olympic lifting days. The fact that each event in the Games only has 3 regular attempts changed the way I mentally approach competition. You have to be more aggressive, because there are going to be fewer opportunities for redemption during any one event. I re-learned how to attack individual throws, which I think helped my competitive performances with the discus. On the other hand, if one event does not go well in the Games, there are usually a few other events that give the opportunity to make up for it. As a discus thrower, it was either a good day or it wasn't. The Games are also nice in that I'm still relatively new and learning, so the opportunity to have more frequent PR's makes for less frustrating training.

L&S: *How do you currently set up your training for both disciplines? Do you find that training for Highland Games helps the discus, and vice versa?*

SP: It's just been recently that I have actively trained for the Highland Games, so I'm kind of playing training by ear—and not everything went according to plan, but it has worked out for the best so far. I do most of my Games in

the fall, as I mentioned previously and use that training to break the monotony of a usually pretty boring grueling pre-season training for the discus. The hard part now is that the Women's World Championships is right about the time that I want to start throwing the disc, so that's a little challenging. I still haven't quite figured out what my approach will be for that conflict, so we'll see. I'm having mixed emotions at the moment.

The biggest challenge this past season was that my trip to Ireland to throw at Glenarm fell directly before travel to Rio for the Pan Am Games. I had already committed to the games in Ireland long before I qualified for the Pan-Am's, so I made the best of it. The week before departure to Ireland my training partners, Andrew Hobson and Mike Susmark, helped me "cram" a little bit to try to get some timing down to get an adequate performance. When I got to team processing in D.C. before Pan-Am's the day after my return from Ireland, I spent a long throwing session readjusting timing and focused on that aspect of the throws during training sessions in Brazil. I am continuously working on being aware of the timing of the throws and being able to "feel" the difference.

The largest benefit I have gained through the addition of the heavy throws is learning more about what my body is capable of. As I mentioned earlier, I never thought of myself as a strength athlete. I always thought of myself as a technician and relied on speed and flexibility to propel the disc. Discovering that I can generate some power has seemed to give me a little bit more confidence in my throws, and I am starting to learn how to utilize it in my throws. At least, I think I am. We'll see.

L&S: *Could you describe your approach to weight training? Has it changed at all since you have begun the Heavy Events?*

SP: One of the major things that have changed is my willingness to be in the weight room. Way back in the beginning of time—or, when I was Stanford, I wasn't the best lifter. I found the weight room to be a rather intimidating place that offered many opportunities for one to hurt ones' self, so I always tended to err on the side of caution, unless I had a loud and trustworthy spotter. I'm not sure if it was the switch from training in a group to solo or if it was in relation to the addition of the heavy events, but I'm a lot more comfortable in the weight room, and there are quite a few days now where I look forward to a heavy/intense workout. I wouldn't say that the programs themselves have significantly changed, but the intensity and effort has which I think makes a huge difference.

L&S: *What are your PR's in the major lifts?*

SP: Oh dear. I can honestly say I don't know off hand. I'll have to fetch my training diary and fish out some numbers, but I don't think they are all that impressive, relatively speaking. For instance I know my upper body is rather

wimpy and it's a good day if I can maneuver 140 lbs. on the bench press. On the other side of that, my upper body is quite bendy—Sometimes I think my shoulder joints are made of string cheese, which helps to hit some interesting and useful positions in the disc—so I don't worry about it so much.

To try something new, I tinkered with deadlifting last fall—but most of my lifts were front squats, and snatches. I also like to do weighted box jumps—I have no idea how tall the tall box is at the gym, but that's the one I like. It is a deliberate decision on my part to not keep track of numbers very well. The way it seems to me is that I have a certain amount of brain space for training. I can either fill it with numbers or it can concentrate on techniques—so the numbers usually find their home in my training diary. When inevitably I need to know numbers I can always look them up, and usually tell you how the lifts felt that day (if it felt easy or if I struggled or if I needed a few sets to hit rhythm). Also I have found that when you hit a certain number and it's of significance, someone out there will be more than willing to point it out to you.

I did dig up my last time doing max work, which was about this time last year: max on cleans is around 85 kilos (187 lbs); I think I just missed 90 kilos (198 lbs) in that session.

Front squat max is around 270 lbs.
Bench is right around 140 lbs. (yes, wimpy. I'm very well aware)
Deadlifts in the hex bar It looks like 150 kg. (330 lbs), probably could have gotten 160 kg. (352 lbs), but I started too light. I don't think I maxed on snatch.

Re-testing should probably occur pretty soon I suppose.

L&S: *The women's Highland Games circuit has been growing in popularity over the past few years. In your opinion, what are the keys to expanding opportunities for women in the Games? Where do you see it heading?*

SP: It's hard for me to compare and contrast the popularity of the women's circuit mostly because I'm still relatively new, I haven't been around long enough to witness any sort of "evolution". As far as I can tell it's always been the way I've experienced it—which I know cannot be true. I haven't personally felt like I have had a limitation in opportunity to compete, but I know there are some Games that other women have had a difficult time with. I think we can only continue doing what we are doing. From the little that I know, there seems to be a trend towards more competitive women in the classes, which is producing better results, and I'd like to think the overall quality of

performance is directly related to the increase in popularity. I have also noticed that the crowd's interest can be related to the positioning of the women's class. If the women compete alongside the A class and/or Pro men with a good announcer who's familiar with the women, the crowd is far more interested in the performances, but this may be a side effect of the crowd who self selects to see the Pro class/A class based on interest in performances. It's hard to say.

With respect to where it's going over the years? I don't think there are limits depending on what we want to do. If left to the devices of the fine, upstanding young gentlemen on the rail at Pleasanton this year, they are suggesting calendars; however, I'm not sure how I feel about that.

L&S: *Who are your chief opponents in the games?*

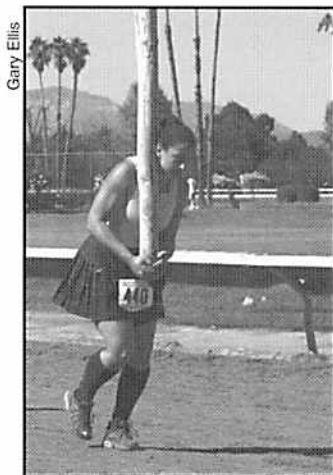
SP: There are two answers to this question. The first answer is that I am my own largest critic, which can make life a little difficult from time to time. I think anyone who's been around me long enough would back that up wholeheartedly. I would far rather be beaten after a phenomenal performance than win competing at a level less than I know I'm capable of. That is where my ego primarily lies. The second answer, and probably the answer you are more interested in, is that my chief opponents are whoever shows up on that day. It makes life simple for me, albeit briefly.

L&S: *You made the USA team for the Pan American Games this year. Was this your first international competition? What is the selection process for Pan-Am's? How was the experience?*

SP: The Pan Am Games were my first *truly* international experience with a National team. Several years beforehand I competed for the US in San Antonio, Texas in the NACAC under-25 competition. More recently I got my feet wet in international competition when I was invited to come to Scotland for a series of Highland games last summer. I

turned out to be an excellent primer for the Pan Am Games. I am not entirely certain of the criteria to make the Pan Am Games. I know that my placement at the National meet was a major contribution and I had hit the qualifying standard of the Pan Am meet. I also had the opportunity to try to chase the A standard for the World Championships and be selected for that team as well, but other professional commitments inhibited my ability to chase at that time.

The experience over all was a very positive one. It was exciting to be "on a team" again and have so many logistics taken care of (travel, food, practice). I also found it great to have Connie and Rita supervising everything so that logistical things were virtually seamless for me. I



hadn't anticipated that level of dedication and support; it was really wonderful. Getting team uniforms in the mail is a bit of a thrill and a certain form of validation in some respects. Being in Rio was an interesting mix of excitement and a bit of tension. An added fun moment was getting to visit the Redeemer, and see at least one of the new 7 wonders of the world. I suppose now I have 6 to go.

L&S: *What are your ultimate goals in both track and field and Highland Games?*

SP: Ultimate goals: At this precise moment in time I'm having a hard time with "the big picture." There are days that it's clearer, today's just not one of them. Of course one of the obvious "ultimate" goals is to make an Olympic team; but that's kind of too large for me to think directly about. Right at the moment, I'm more focused on training smart, and preparing to compete well.

In the Highland Games realm—I don't know. It'd be nice to set a world record, but it's not something I deliberately focus on. I only really focus on improving my marks and making progress. I suppose now that I look at it, that's just the problem. My goals are always to progress, so I never really achieve them—as soon as you get close, they've shifted again. That's kind of an evil thing to do to yourself....hmmmm.

L&S: *Do you intend to continue to pursue both sports at the elite level, or do you see yourself specializing in one in the future?*

SP: That I think also qualifies as a "big picture" concept. I don't know. I've come to half a conclusion that as long as I'm happy, I'll do things this way. If I find that I'm not as happy, I'll make adjustments. Maybe one day I'll just be a civilian sipping coffee and reading the paper at a cafe on a Saturday morning. Who knows? Okay, so I'll probably not be anywhere leisurely sipping coffee, but still, I could if I wanted to.

L&S: *Do you have any interesting or funny throwing stories, anecdotes, etc. that you would like to share?*

SP: Usually everyone enjoys the "Summer's First Trip to Pleasanton" story.

My first Highland Games ever was the Pleasanton Games and I had no idea what to expect. I had been working with Coach Mac and Kenny to sort of get a feel for the events and merrily drove up to the Games, brand new sport kilt in hand. The first day was rather uneventful and going into Sunday afternoon I was kind of getting the hang of things. Until... the challenge caber. Shannon Hartnett had selected "Frankie Boy II" (and I'd like to point out that there is only one caber's name I know by heart) and off we went. Now, at practice with Coach Mac, the caber we used was rather

small, I think it was a piece from one of Kenny's larger cabers that had broken, so I had only experienced flipping a fairly small caber. In retrospect, at some point someone should have given lessons on what to do when the pick goes wrong. Anyway...

I half picked the caber and right from the start had quite a struggle. I was entirely focused on my handgrip that I temporarily forgot how tall the caber was. So I'm struggling, dancing with the caber, pulling in pulling in (kind of being a big jerk about it too, as I didn't want to "give up"). I could very well hear the people near by saying "Drop it, Drop it!" I just plain didn't want to. And I was getting more and more tired when I finally just thought "Fine. I'll drop it." So I simply let go. Dropped it. This ultimately caused the caber top to crash down on to the ground and the handle to smack me right on my shoulder. Apparently it made a large noise because the next thing I knew the whole crowd gave a collective "gasp." Which was kind of embarrassing. Stunned and embarrassed I stood there waiting for an idea as to what to do next. The judge for the women, Michelle Crownhart decided I must have been hit on the head and lost consciousness so, she ran over to me, grabbed my shoulders and started to shake me, screaming "Are you okay? Are you okay!?"

Well that was far more embarrassing, so I finally said, "Please stop shaking me." Next thing I know Shannon had grabbed one of the 20 lbs. bags of ice from the drink coolers and was sprinting across the race track. She promptly threw it on top of the shoulder that had just bore the brunt of Frankie Boy II. I now was standing, stunned, embarrassed on the race track with a large, 20lbs. boom box shaped bag of ice on my shoulder—just then starting to hurt. I retired to a tent where Coach called my cell to ask me why I didn't get out of the way.

Finally in the evening, when everything started to settle down I meandered with some friends to the hotel pool/hot tub to unwind when an elderly couple shuffled up to the fence and shouted "Excuse me! Aren't you the girl that got hurt?" And there I was having to say "Yes, that's me. The girl who got hurt." Thus, I'm always a little jumpy around cabers. But as I said before, we're working on improving our relationship. *L&S*



BEAU FAY

Highland Games athlete
and Throws Coach @
J.W. Robinson H.S.
(Fairfax, VA)

Larry Brock

ON THE RISE

BY MARK VALENTI, DYNAMO SPORT ATHLETICS

Larry Brock is not interested in waiting his turn. He is not patient enough to wait for the old guard to retire before he takes his place among the elite on the Pro Highland Games circuit. When he decided to turn pro he shot to the top of the national ranks and in 2007 started to make his mark on the world stage.

Still in his twenties he has a long way to go before he reaches his peak. That is a scary thought for a lot of people. The kid has huge throws and you just know he is about to find the key to start smashing records and dominating the circuit.

L&S took a minute to sit down with the Southern Prince of the Highland Games circuit.

Long & Strong: *How did you get started in the Games?*

Larry Brock: In high school was this first time I heard about the Games. My cousin showed me all of these medals he had won competing at the Scottish Games, but I was not very interested because I was throwing the discus and had my mind set on doing that. I never really took interest in listening to him.

The first occasion I had with actually throwing and learning about the games was from Meg Ritchie Stone. She was my throws coach at Appalachian State University where I was on a football scholarship. She suggested that I try out the Games at Grandfather Mountain so I had to find a kilt. Well I called my cousin and asked to borrow his and a fellow teammate and I made our way up to Grandfather Mountain and competed. I can say I had immediate success and then it all came crashing down. I won the stone put because it was similar to a shot put and then I think I threw 12 feet in the heavy weight for distance...what a reality check!!

LSTJ: *What sports did you do in high school? And what were your marks and accomplishments in them?*

LB: I played football and track and wrestled for a year. I was an All-State offensive lineman and was

captain of the East-West All-Star team in North Carolina. In track I was a three time All-State performer in the discus and I won the state championship my junior year in the discus. In my senior year I finished 2nd in the indoor shot, outdoor shot and discus at the state championships. I was also a three time Junior Olympic All-American in the discus. My high school personal records were: discus - 185-5, shot- 54-4. I also threw the javelin in Junior Olympics and I made it to Nationals in that event.

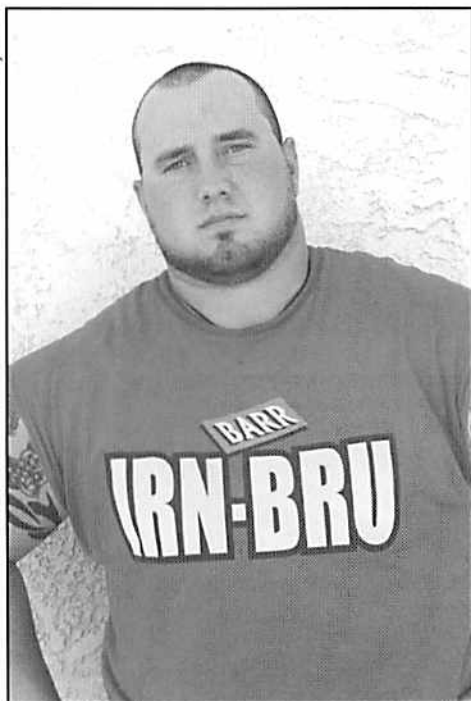
L&S: *Tell us about your collegiate athletic career.*

LB: I went to Appalachian State on a full football scholarship and they allowed me to participate in track when football was not going on. If you know anything about college football you know that it never is *not* going on, so my track career in college was really hit or miss. I was always tired from running and lifting for football, so I never got to train much. At one point I was waking up at 5:30am and running for two hours with football from 6:00am-8:00am, then going to class all day, then I would go to track practice from 2:00-3:30pm, then I would lift from 4:00pm-5:00pm. I would then collapse and eat and then wake up and do it all over again.

I lost so much weight I was being accused of trying to pursue underwear model ads. I went from 305 pounds to 258 in a matter of a couple of months. It was rough stretch. With that said, I was a two-time Southern Conference discus champion, runner-up in the javelin two years with a personal best of 187'-plus and many times All-Conference in the shot and discus. I qualified for Junior Nationals in the discus, but the school was too cheap to send me to the meet.

The football team averaged ten wins a year when I was there and we made it all the way to the semi-final game in the Division I-AA championships before losing to The University Of Montana in overtime. I was on the team for five years I redshirted my first year, then I played my redshirt season in every game and then started at left guard my last three seasons.

Gary Ellis



L&S: What is your current height and weight?

LB: I'm 6'3", 285 pounds.

L&S: What are your current PR's in each Games event?

LB:

16# Stone: 55'1" Standing Stone Highland Games, Tazwell TN, 2003; **56# Weight Throw:** 48'9" Cumberland Gap Highland Games, Harrogate TN, 2005; **28# Weight Throw:** 90'8.5" Celtic Classic: US National Championships, Bethlehem, PA 2006; **22# Hammer:** 119'6.5" Woodland Scottish Festival, Woodland, CA 2007; **16# Hammer:** 144'6.5" Loch Norman Highland Games, Huntersville, NC 2007; **20# Sheaf Toss:** 32'0" Loch Norman Highland Games, Huntersville, NC 2007; **56# Weight Toss:** 18'6" Uwharrie Scottish Festival and Games: Albemarle, NC 2007

L&S: What are your weight room numbers like? What are your PR's in squat, front squat, bench, clean, snatch, deadlift, vertical jump, etc.?

LB: I can honestly tell you that I do not max lift. I can't really tell you how much I lift because I do not do it, but if I had to guess, I would say in my lifetime I have benched close to 400 pounds, squatted over 500 pounds, and front squat I have no clue. I do not max lift in this. I have full cleaned over 300 pounds, snatched over 225 and deadlift I have no clue because I don't do them. Vertical jump I'm not really sure.

L&S: What is your philosophy on weight training for the throws?

LB: My philosophy is lift to throw farther, don't lift to lift more. In the winter time I train 4-5 days a week in the weight

room. I squat twice a week and pull twice a week. I throw 3-5 times a week. I do lift hard and I do throw a lot, but I do not, and will not, try and be a powerlifter or anything of the sort. I am a thrower and that is my focus. I like to get strong, but I will not neglect my main goal of being a good thrower so I can tell people, "Hey, I squatted 600 or 700 pounds," or "Hey, I benched 500 pounds." That is not what I'm about. I never get caught up in the weight room numbers. I get caught up in the throws on the field!!

L&S: Can you give us a rundown of a basic week of training for you both in-season and out of season?

LB:

November-February/March:

Lift 4 days a week

Monday: band stretch, overhead squat, back squat, lunges, Romanian deadlift, Incline, shoulder work, tricep work, abs

Tuesday: band stretch, overhead squat, drop squat, pulls from the floor, pulls from the hang, hang clean and press, push press, abs

Thursday: same as Monday but I front squat instead of back squat

Friday: same as Tuesday but I add a snatch component

March-May: I cut it to three days a week, then in season I lift twice a week if I can.

L&S: What do you do for a living outside of Highland Games?

LB: I am a high school physical education teacher at Myers Park High School and I coach football (offensive Line) and indoor and outdoor track (shot and discus). I mainly teach male and female weight training, so I get a chance to lift everyday if I need to.

L&S: Who are your sponsors?

LB: Some great folks sponsor me. The Highland Brewing company in Asheville, NC is one of my main sponsors along with Powerbar. Just added this season and a great addition are IRN-BRU, the USA distributor which happens to be located in Charlotte, NC. (www.powerbar.com, www.highlandbrewing.com, www.irm-bru-usa.com).

LSTJ: You seem to love throwing over seas. What is it about getting to throw in Scotland and other countries that appeals to you?

LB: I enjoy different places and traveling. Scotland is the home of the Games...the heartbeat. And it's great to be able to go to the place that it started. The Highland Games are a pathway for my travel and leisure. I have been all over the United States, Ireland, and Scotland and yes, even Indonesia, although that's a different story. I like adapting to different styles of implements. I have throw a 28# weight that was 28 inches long and a 28# weight that was 12 inches long, all in the same week. I also enjoy the Scottish people, their culture, their food and their way of life and how it differs from the U.S.

L&S: Can you tell the folks about your trip to Indonesia last year and the horror show that followed? As I remember it, some really smart, good looking guy told you not to go, is that right?

LB: My trip to Indonesia was one that I do not regret. I did get very ill and had to go to the hospital, but it was



Gary Ellis

neat to get over there and see a place that I never would have gone to. The ticket alone was over \$2,000 and if you know me...if I had to pay for it, well I never would have made it. I got over there and I inherited a small parasite called amoebic dysentery. Which includes massive explosive diarrhea and vomiting. Loads of fun, but that which does not kill you makes you stronger and after that trip I became the World's strongest man. (ha)

L&S: *You also had a serious neck injury and surgery last year can you tell us a little about that?*

LB: In December of 2005 I was incline benching. I was not going heavy, but doing a good amount of weights for the reps I was trying to complete. I rarely have a lifting partner because no one lifts on my schedule. I was driving up on my last rep and I felt something let loose in my shoulder and felt a great amount of pain, but I thought nothing of it and I finished lifting and just figured I would be sore the next day and it would all go away.

Well the next day I was coaching one of my shot putters and I picked up a high school girls shot put and I could not even throw it because I could not use my index finger or my middle fingers to flick the shot because of the nerve damage. I immediately had an MRI and found out that it was a herniated disc and it would require surgery. Dr. Tim Addamson completed the surgery and I was back to throwing in 6 -8 weeks. It was a very depressing time for me, but luckily the Good Lord took care of me and now I'm back to form.

L&S: *You were crowned World Hammer Champion this year. Can you tell us a little about your technique and what a perfect throw feels like for you?*

LB: The World Hammer Championship title was one I really wanted and the opportunity to compete against the best made it even better. It was my first major title in the Highland Games that I had won and I was extremely happy. It made all the work I put into it all worth it.

Regarding technique, first I set my feet with the left toe in line with my right instep and feet are just little bit wider than my shoulder, but not much. I take the hammer and I place it off to my right side with the hammerhead slightly in front of the trig. This allows my low point to stay far off to the right side. I then start the throw by pulling the hammer across and shifting the hips and then try and set up the first turn off by my right side and then all I do is go like a bat out of hell and keep my arms long and then the finish is

a hard block with the left foot and a rip up and out with the hammer

L&S: *On top of World Hammer Championship, you were also crowned World Stone Put Champion this year. Give us a look at a perfect stone put for you.*

Gary Ellis



LB: Let me say I never think I am a stone putter. I just got lucky that day. I am actually torn with the stone right now. I have been contemplating switching to the full spin because I feel that the South African style really takes away from what I could do out of the back. I spoke some with Scott Ryder, who I feel is one of the best stone putters ever, and he helped me with a few things and with a little bit of time I might be switching. I'm sure it will be a slow process but I will give it a go.

L&S: *So how was Worlds this year? A third place finish is a great feat for any Heavy Events athlete?*

LB: Well it was a cold rainy day and I had been sick for a few days and I really did not expect to throw well. Needless

to say I was lucky enough to throw pretty good and get third. I was very excited and felt that I worked hard to get where I was and third place with that group of guys was an honor. I really wanted to win but had a great time and I think it was a good building block for the upcoming years.

L&S: *Finally, What do you love about the Highland Games?*

LB: I love the atmosphere, I love the ability to show off hard work and God-given talent for a pure sport. I love the fact that I can get paid for something I like to do. All the guys that I throw with are great and we have a lot of fun together and I hope I can continue to do this for a few more years. I would like to thank my sponsors: Powerbar, Irn-Bru-USA, and The Highland Brewing Company. And a special thanks to my family for all their support.

L&S: *Thanks Larry and good luck the rest of the year!*
L&S



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The Importance Of...

BALANCE & CONTROL IN THE DISCUS THROW

BY JÖRG PROBST

What makes the technique of a proficient discus thrower look so fluent, graceful, and seemingly easy? Although no two throwers look the same, and although even some world class throwers show room for improvement in some aspects of their technique, all good discus throwers maintain balance in the circle. Balance, and by that I mean good balance, is the key to being able to execute a discus throw with sound technique. In fact, balance is a prerequisite for doing just about any other movement on feet from simply walking on flat ground to walking on a tightrope. Discus throwing requires perfect balance because it is a linear movement combined with one and a half rotations at high speed and with an implement at the end of one arm. In my experience as a coach of young athletes, most children when starting to learn the standard one and a half turn technique (I call it the 'full turn', also referred to as 'the spin') struggle with balance. Some youngsters even struggle with balance when performing the standing throw!

How Does A Lack Of Balance Manifest Itself?

One of the ways lack of balance can be recognized is in the way the discus is released. The thrower may struggle to stay inside the circle, or even foul many throws. The discus may land outside the right or the left sector line or it may even hit the cage. The discus may dip over to the left early in its flight, landing on its "side" edge (looking from the thrower's point of view).

Symptoms such as these can in many cases be traced back to a lack of balance at the beginning of the turn. There is no point in telling the athlete to hold the discus differently to avoid the excessive tilt or to throw it more in this or that direction, or to focus the his attention on staying inside the circle to avoid fouling.

Such errors in the later phases of the throw, i.e. at the release, are best fixed by improving the early phases of the throw, i.e. the wind-up and the entry into the turn. These first phases of the throw are of critical importance in setting up a good release.

How Can The Coach Recognize The Reasons Why The Thrower Loses Balance?

There are a number of reasons for loss of balance. The most obvious one is excessive speed during the wind-up and the initial phases of the throw. Many athletes wind up very fast and then rush into the turn. Some coaches and even text books describe



Figure 1

the required movements at the back of the circle by using the less than helpful words "sprint" or "jump." Leaning forward too much, as in the first few steps of a sprint race, or jumping upwards can throw the athlete off balance (see photo).

For convenience all technique descriptions refer to right-handed throwers

Frequently loss of balance is due to a wild and violent swinging out of the left arm at the start of the turn (*Figures 1,2*). Consequently the athlete rotates

because of the action of the left arm, and as a result veers over to the left, often falling out of the circle after release. Worse still, athletes can be observed swinging the left arm out and down, dropping their left shoulder, consequently spinning out of control.

Some throwers compromise a balanced throw by moving the throwing arm forward during the turn. This contributes to the thrower falling into the circle.

Others try to turn on the heel of the left foot or even flat-footed. The former was only ever used successfully by one world class thrower, Ilke Wyludda, who had to learn to throw this way due to an injury to her left knee, but children doing this will invariably fall backwards as they turn on their heel. The latter means that the athlete simply cannot turn effectively at all, leading to loss of balance and momentum, and the implement is likely to veer off to the right. Trying to turn on a flat foot also puts a lot of unnecessary stress on the knee.

Lack of balance can also be traced to the position and orientation of the head of the athlete. If she is looking down at the ground or turning the head quickly to the left (often accompanied by the fast swinging left arm), it is almost impossible for her to experience balance at any stage of the throw.

A further sign of poor balance is the position and actions of the legs at the entry of the turn, that is, from the moment the thrower finishes the wind-up until she lifts the right foot off the ground (also referred to as "first double support phase"). If she attempts to enter the turn with almost extended or even stiff legs, she is likely to "fall" into the circle resulting in a total loss of movement control over the subsequent stages of the throw. Some athletes may



Figure 2



Figure 3

the scenarios mentioned above can result in loss of control and balance at release (*Figure 3*), but note that difficulties with balance are all caused by errors made in the first phases of the throw.

How Is Good Balance Achieved?

From the outset the coach should impress on the athlete that an easy, controlled, relatively slow wind-up is better than rushing this part of the throw. Balance and control are ultimately the key to throwing further.

To that end the thrower should assume a slightly more than hip width stance at the back of the circle. He then performs one wind-up (one is enough!). An effective wind-up sets the tone for a controlled entry into the turn. This means the wind up is to be relatively slow and controlled, but smooth. This is best achieved by leading the discus relaxed in a long path and at shoulder height around the shoulders, first to the left, and then to the right. At the end of the wind-up the arm is as far behind the right shoulder as possible and the knees are somewhat flexed, with the body weight distributed about evenly between the legs. The right foot is firmly planted on the ground, whilst the heel of the left foot is raised. Further, a more than hip-width stance means a more stable support base, which further strengthens a balanced and strong position from which he can then begin to shift his body weight onto his left leg. It is important for the athlete to be completely comfortable handling the discus. Unless he is confident in swinging the discus relatively slowly and controlled, with a long, relaxed arm, the desired outcome is impossible to achieve.

The entry into the turn begins with the athlete lowering his centre of gravity slightly whilst shifting his body weight onto the left leg. Simultaneously the athlete starts to pivot (turn) on the ball of the left foot. The left arm should reach out to the left, remaining long and in extension of the shoulder axis, and the upper body remains almost upright.

The crucial balance point is reached when the left shoulder is located directly over the left knee and the left foot (*Figure 4*). With experience the thrower can feel when this position is reached because he is now able to lift his right foot off the ground whilst remaining on balance. At this moment, where the thrower's body weight is supported solely by his left leg, he now lifts off his right foot and begins to swing (sweep) it long and low around the left leg. As he turns to face the throwing direction, the right leg

wind up lower but then stand up or even jump up, which has similar consequences. A narrow stance at the back of the circle can also contribute to the loss of balance, for reasons that will be explained below. All

drives or kicks toward the throwing direction, with the left arm now in front of the body, also pointing in the throwing direction. These actions ensure that the thrower travels perfectly balanced toward the throwing direction, achieving the necessary horizontal drive. To keep the athlete focused on the desired direction, he may be instructed to look over his left wrist at an object located on the horizon in the throwing direction.

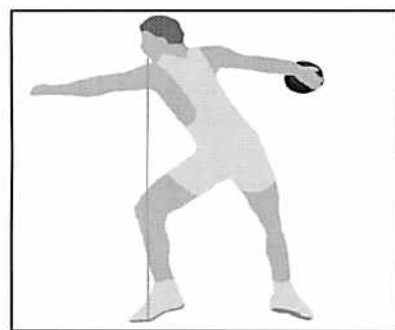


Figure 4

The movement of the right leg may be likened to a sweeping soccer kick, rather than the often-cited "sprint across the circle." In my view a sweeping soccer kick is a more useful simile because in a sprint step the knee is lifted quite high and straight, whilst in the discus throw the right leg is swept around the left leg rather than in line with the direction of the throw, and the right lower leg kicks out ahead of the knee. The purpose of this low sweep around the left leg is not only to establish better balance, but also to create rotational momentum, facilitating the right foot pivot in the centre of the circle, and to ensure that when the athlete lands in the centre of the circle, his body weight remains supported solely by the right leg, making possible an effective pivot on the ball of the right foot, before the left leg plants. In other words, the legs lead the body, not the other way round. This is also important to avoid a premature "shift" or "drift" of the body weight onto the left leg, which not only makes the pivot of the right foot impossible, guaranteeing an arm throw, but also shortens the acceleration path of the discus, which means the athlete is not able to accelerate the discus with a slinging action for long enough to reach a sufficiently high speed of the discus at release.

As is evident from this description of the discus throwing technique, all elements of the technique are connected, and an error in an earlier phase will inevitably lead to further errors in subsequent phases of the throw. This highlights the importance of the athlete commencing the throw in a balanced and controlled way.

Balance In The Standing Throw

It is common practice to teach novices the standing throw first, and this makes perfect sense. Unfortunately most children perform this movement in a way that can make discus throwing an unnecessarily complicated and frustrating experience for many, but also hinders their further development when they try to learn the full turn.

Learning a balanced standing throw goes a long way towards learning a balanced full turn, which in my view most children aged 8 and above should be taught as early as possible, and as soon as the child has a reasonable grasp of the standing throw.

A standing throw gone wrong in terms of balance is where an athlete takes the discus back too fast (rushed windup), looks at the ground, has a too narrow stance, and the position and orientation of the feet are incorrect.

A correctly executed standing throw is characterized by a correct, balanced stance, side on to the throwing direction. A long, relaxed windup includes the athlete looking in the opposite direction of the throw, and keeping his eyes focused in that direction for as long as possible, whilst the back is straight. The athlete shifts his entire body weight onto the right leg, bending only at the knee, swinging the discus back as far as possible, in a controlled fashion. At the end of the windup the heel of the right foot should still be on the ground, the entire body weight being supported by the right leg, the left arm pointing in the opposite direction of the throw (*Figure 5*). In order to commence the throw, the right heel must then be raised and the athlete actively pivots on that foot, bringing the right knee and hip to the front, whilst extending the right leg, keeping the throwing arm long and at shoulder height. In the meantime the left foot will plant firmly, the left arm will in most cases be taken naturally around the left shoulder, and the athlete can then simply let go of the discus tall and straight.

Drills

Learning technique is quite time-consuming, especially in the throws, where only a limited number of throws can be done in any one session. Young throwers often only have one or two throwing sessions per week, which is all they need. But the quality of the throwing is paramount for their further development.



Figure 5

Drills are basically imitations of an element of the throw that can be repeated many times in a session to emphasize correct execution of that element. They can be done in quick succession, often without actually releasing an imple-

ment, which allows the thrower to concentrate solely on the movement itself, rather than the result.

However, drills should only be used as indicated by the particular need of an athlete. Drills should never be done in isolation, that is, the athlete should be allowed to attempt to transfer the practiced skill into the complete throw within the same training session. Drills must be done correctly, otherwise they merely reinforce bad habits or create new bad habits.

One drill that is useful for learning balance and control for the full turn is the “360° drill,” and can be described as follows: Without a discus at first (later on this can be done with a shoe or a discus strapped to the hand) the athlete

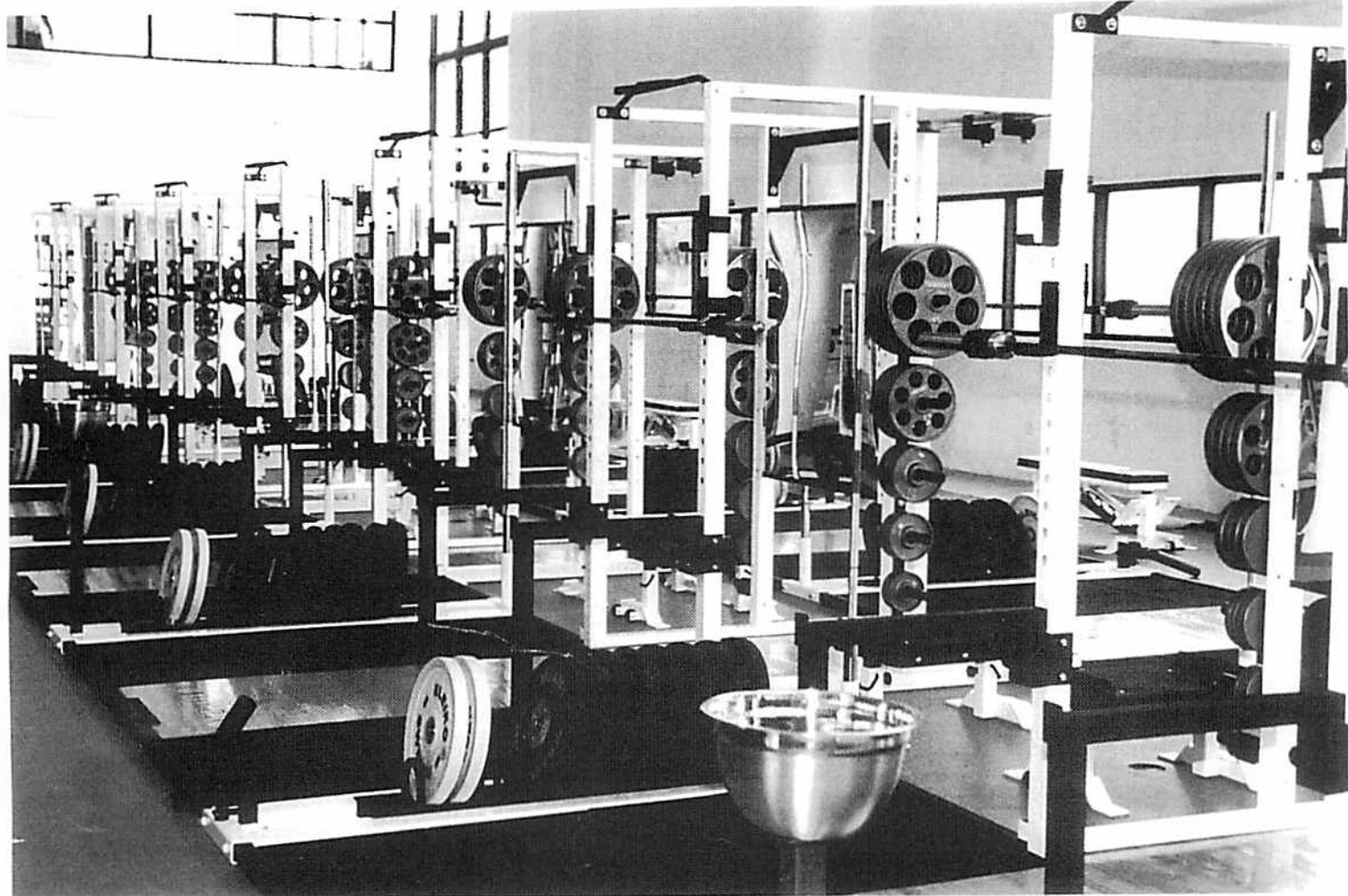
does a wind-up, then seeks the perfect balance point as described above. He then lifts off the right leg, but only sweeps it to -90° of the starting position, remaining balanced, with the left shoulder over the left knee and the left foot (balance spot). He then swings the right leg back to the starting position. If -90° are easy, the athlete tries -180°, -270°, and finally -360°. It is important that the athlete keeps his body weight fully supported by his left leg throughout this exercise. This drill develops both the technical requirement and the strength for a balanced throw.

Being able to do a full 360° turn on the ball of the left foot in a perfectly balanced manner gives the athlete confidence to find that position in the actual throwing movement. However, the coach needs to look out for athletes who simply take a step with their right leg across the left leg. This is a clear indication that they haven’t found their balance spot. It is most important that the athlete “goes low,” that is, they lower their centre of gravity as described above. Some athletes may respond quite well to being instructed to “sit down.” A balanced position is much more easily achieved with a lower centre of gravity. Of course this requires more work and strength from the legs. The degree of flexion in the left knee for this exercise and indeed for the balance spot position to be found in the full turn is individual for each athlete, and depends partly on the strength of the athlete’s legs, but should lie somewhere between 110-140°.

Another useful drill is what I call the “walk-and-turn.” This can be done on a straight line drawn on the ground, initially without any resistance. The athlete stands with both feet on the line, and the arms relatively extended but relaxed at shoulder height, knees slightly bent. He then takes a long, sweeping step with the right leg around the left leg, reach with the right foot towards the throwing direction. As soon as he lands on his right foot, he should keep turning on the ball of the right foot actively, so that the knee and hips, then shoulder and throwing arm follow in this sequence. The thrower then sets himself up again for another walk-and-turn. The focus is at first on getting the athlete to move forward and straight along the line, keeping the left arm pointing in and the eyes focused on the ideal throwing direction whilst the right leg sweeps through.

Conclusion

Discus throwing should not be perceived as an exceedingly difficult skill, but it is important that some basic principles such as balance are observed and learnt by the athlete from the beginning. Unfortunately this is rarely the case. Although this article is limited in its focus, I hope it will help other coaches and athletes understand this and other aspects of the discus throwing technique better. Questions and comments are welcome. *L&S*



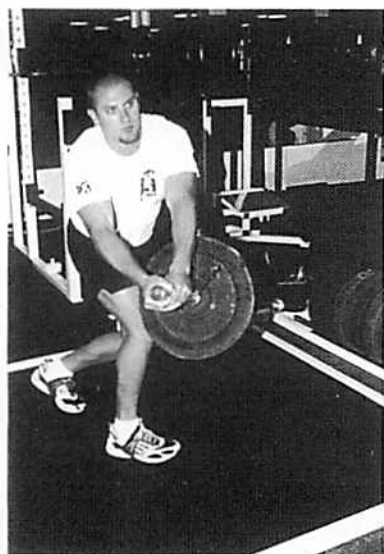
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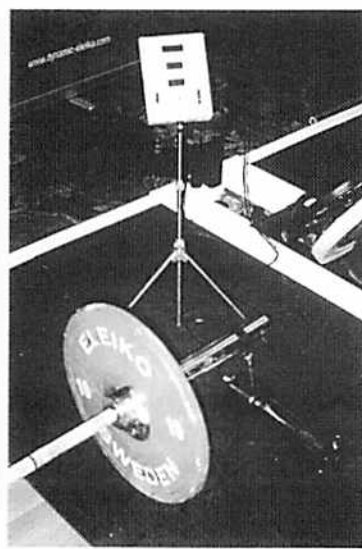
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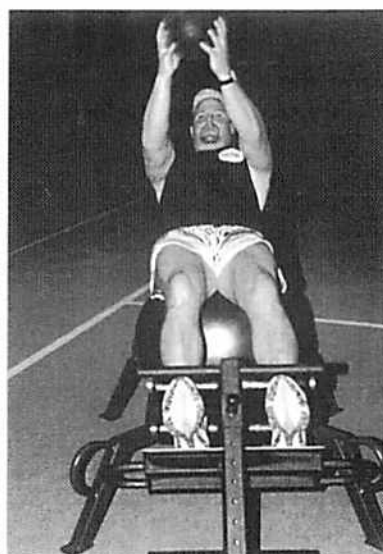
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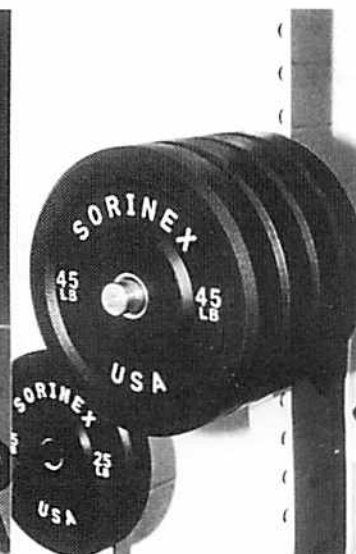
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Preparation and technique are vital but on the day, you might need to know your physics JAVELIN THROWING: THE APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

BY LES HATTON AND BRIAN PARKES

Preparation and technique have been comprehensively covered on a number of occasions in articles by distinguished coaches such as Wilf Paish but as all throwers know, the javelin and discus are strongly affected by their flight characteristics on the day and an individual throwing series frequently varies by 15%. If you can't read the conditions and the effect they might have on your performance, all that preparation and technique will not be enough when 1cm in 90m is enough to win or lose. The javelin is particularly susceptible to this variation and so we will focus on that aspect here.

This article arose through a recent detailed academic study on the aerodynamics of javelin flight and this seemed an excellent opportunity to assess the accuracy of much of the folklore surrounding this spectacular event. At any javelin competition, you will see stiff, not so stiff, thin, thick, Headwind, Tailwind, blunter-nosed, pointed-nosed and 'house' javelins with distance ratings anywhere between 50 and 100m. The relationship of these to physical characteristics such as drag, lift, the effects of cross-, head- and tail- winds, throwing 'through the point' and so on is opaque to say the least. In this article, we will discuss these factors with respect to basic physical principles and introduce a freely available piece of software which handles the complication for you.

Let's start with drag and lift. The two important points in a javelin are the centre of gravity where the mass acts, and the centre of pressure where the less tangible aerodynamic forces of drag and lift act. The center of gravity is fixed, but the centre of pressure moves a few cm. during the flight as it is dependent on the air-flow around the javelin. Until 1986 they were very close together most of the time, meaning that there was very little downward pitching effect on the javelin and in the hands of athletes like Uwe Hohn, it went a dangerously long way, (> 104m). In 1986, the centre of gravity of the men's 800gm javelin was moved forward by a few cm to bring the nose down early rescuing the event from banishment outside the arena and making it much easier to measure the distance. In 1999, a similar modification was done for the women's 600gm javelin. To understand the old-fashioned flight characteristics, just watch a 700gm javelin as used both by male U17 and also M50-59 masters throwers, (the 700gm has yet to be modified). This most frustrating implement leads to about half of all throws flat landing even as far out as 60m. Note that drag always acts on a javelin pulling it back but there is only lift if the javelin travels at an angle to the air-flow around it, (called the attack angle). Lift leads to greater drag but one may compensate the other and the dynamic relationship between them is very complicated.

The attack angle is quite subtle. Analysis of many video sequences suggest that throwers often throw with an

attack angle. However, this may only be apparent. Even if you throw 'through the point', there will still be an apparent attack angle if there is a head or tail wind relative to a camera fixed to the ground, (an appropriate point to make in Einstein's centenary year for the physicists out there). The parallelogram of velocities implies that a javelin thrown through the point will appear to have a slight down-angle when thrown into a head wind and a slight up-angle when thrown into a tail wind relative to a fixed camera.

Another misconception concerns the so-called Headwind and Tailwind javelins. The belief has arisen that the former is better in a head-wind and the latter better in a tail-wind. Sophisticated aerodynamic modelling suggested however that the Tailwind is always superior and the mystery was finally cleared up recently in a personal communication to one of us (Brian Parkes) from one of the pioneers of modern javelin design, Dick Held. Tailwind javelins are distinguished only by having a blunter point – the shafts are the same. When first introduced, nobody would throw them because 'they would increase the drag'. To counter-act this, Dick Held simply said to use the Tailwind javelin for tail-winds and so the myth was born. In truth, he knew that *the Tailwind javelin outperformed the Headwind javelin in effectively all winds*. The thrower's intuition about drag is simply wrong and a little marketing was needed.

It is not even clear that throwing 'through the point' is always the best strategy even when there is no wind. Before the 800gm javelin was re-balanced in 1986, Dick Held commented that the longest throwers of the day, (Uwe Hohn and Tom Petranoff) would deliberately deliver the javelin relatively low at unusually high speed (> 30m/sec) with a very large attack angle (quoted as high as 30 degrees, which caused the javelin to soar). The advantages of throwing low are that the thrower can hang on to the javelin a little longer and accelerate it a little more. This is a crucial factor as the distance a thrown object flies is basically dependent on the square of the velocity. The trade-off of course is that the distance is also dependent on the angle but the correct balance between them also depends on the thrower's bio-mechanical properties. Since the re-balancing of the javelin, it is still far from clear that throwing through the point is universally optimal. Our experiments suggest otherwise.

Other factors intrude also. Top-class throwers can induce an axial spin of as high as 25 revolutions per second. When this is combined with the pitching down motion of the nose, the conservation of vertical angular momentum means the javelin precesses a little to the left for a right-handed thrower just as a gyroscope precesses. This precession induces a lateral lift and drag but resists the

downward pitching motion. Whether this increases distance in all conditions is still a matter of conjecture although different grips will induce different axial rotation rates.

The interaction of attack and delivery angles, rotation and the prevailing wind speed and direction can all affect the distance the javelin flies very significantly, (see the figure for an example of getting the attack and delivery angle wrong in a head-wind) but to juggle these concepts during a competition is too much to ask of any competitor. To put all this on a more scientific basis, all of these factors are included in a recently developed and freely downloadable software package for Windows called the *Javelin Flight Analyser* available from http://www.leshatton.org/javelin_2005.html. This solves the full three-dimensional equations of motion and a complete technical description containing the mathematics and physics behind this is available from http://www.leshatton.org/jav2005_paper.html and should help throwers and coaches to understand and exploit some of the subtleties of javelin flight. The package has been calibrated on data acquired by eminent UK researchers Dick Best, Roger Bartlett and Calvin Morriss in major championships for throws in the range 55-87m and is within 1% with modest assumptions about the wind, (which was not recorded in their experiments unfortunately). We are continuing our researches into optimizing javelin and also discuss delivery as a function of both individual biomechanical properties and prevailing wind with an elite group of throwers in Sheffield to match

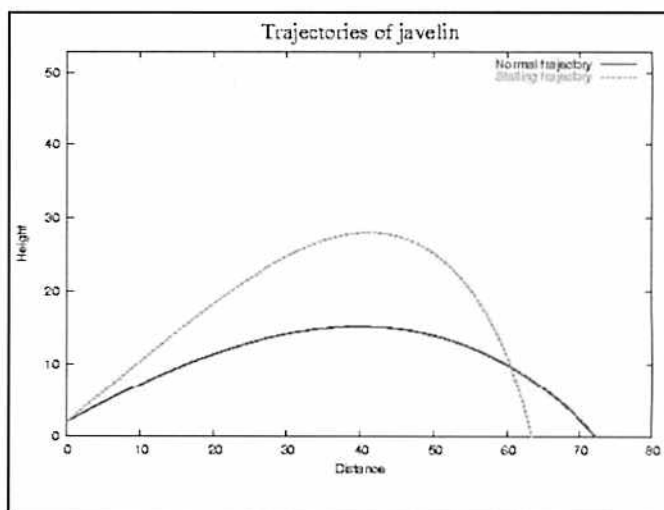


Figure 1: The flight of a javelin in a head wind with two different launch trajectories thrown at the same speed.

their individual talents with insights that only a calibrated scientific approach can provide.

*Brian Parkes is a UKA level 4 throws coach and Northern Region senior javelin coach based in Yorkshire and coaches and has coached many top-class javelin throwers including Mick Hill and David Parker; Les Hatton is a UKA level 2 throws coach at Kingston and Poly and is a Professor of Computer Science at Kingston University, London. He was coached by Tom McNab in his youth and still competes as a vet (until something falls off). *L&S**

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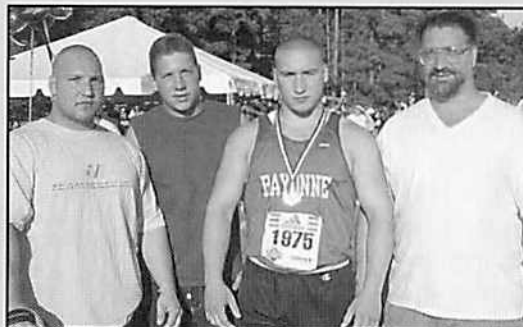
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Thank you,
Kevin DiGiorgio



From left: Kevin, Steven, Glenn and father Dominick

Maximizing Muscle Recruitment for the Throws

By PAT CORBETT

Training to improve muscle mass and therefore more muscle for recruitment is an age old question. With larger and/or stronger muscles, is the thrower able to recruit more of them during a throw? The following information will shed some light on this question.

To understand the different training methods used by throwers it must be pointed out that the physiology of a throw is not so much a "muscular" movement as it is a neuromuscular movement (neuromuscular; meaning nerves working with muscles to create movement and to a greater degree, the more speed, acceleration, power and strength that is produced the higher degree of neuromuscular stimulation and thus development). As the throws have a high degree of the neuromuscular component, it is important to know how current training methods affect its development.

The current trends for training muscular development seem to be a combination of both getting stronger and gaining weight with the idea that this added strength and weight will help to improve the distances on your throw. However, the latter is more of a problem than a solution for muscle recruitment and many times detrimental to improvement in distances thrown and to technique in general. In the weightroom, power and strength gains should be the priority. Not weight gain. Weight gain, while it can be beneficial, is often too fast and many times becomes more fat gain, thus slowing the thrower down.

Only through proper training techniques, nutrition, and consistent effort will power and strength improve and with that muscle gains and not fat gains. For the thrower to gain muscle mass and in the end recruit this added muscle for a better throw, all of the previously mentioned aspects of training must be part of your program. Along with these, i.e.-proper training techniques, nutrition and consistent effort, there must be *progressive improvement in throwing technique*.

Although there is no correlation between the relative strength

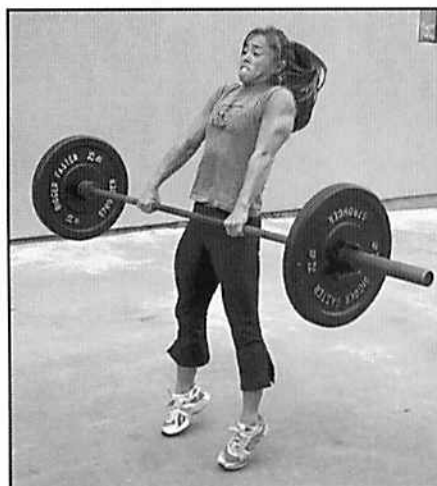
of the athlete and distances thrown (this may be true, but there is a connection between strength and the muscles ability to apply force and many times, especially in the early stages of development, improved strength will produce longer throws), larger muscles can produce more force and in theory, if proper throwing techniques are applied, longer throws. But too often throwers get obsessed with strength gains and concentrate too much of their energies in the weightroom. For example, statements such as these are often heard in locker rooms and weightrooms around the country; "If I can bench press 400 pounds I will throw 200'," or "If I can power clean 350 pounds and squat 500 I will put the shot 65'".

While these are admirable goals, the purpose in the weightroom should always be to improve technique (that is moving the bar more efficiently and with greater speed). Whether in the ring, on the runway or in the weightroom, "technique" is the most important consideration. Better technique usually equates to better performance.

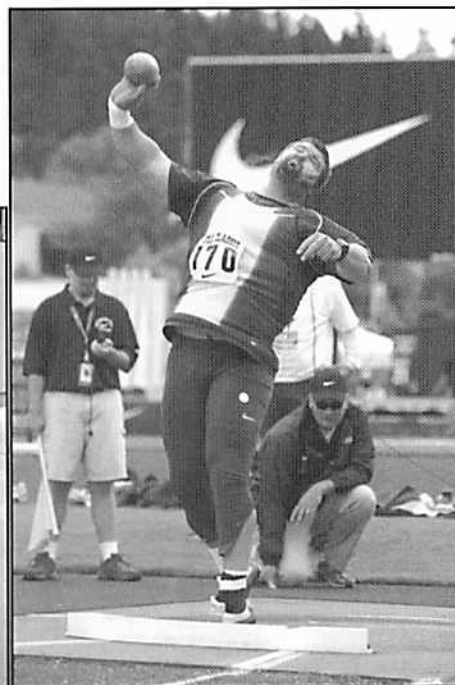
While there are many studies that discuss the percentage of muscles recruited during a throw and the Olympic lifts-i.e. - the snatch and the clean and jerk, their partial movements, powerlifting lifts and bodybuilder training and other types of lifting, it still comes down to technique. And if all of the muscles used in any particular movement are not fully engaged, the result will be less recruitment and

inferior performance. This again points to the importance of proper technique. Through proper technique, all muscles will be engaged and in proper sequence, hence better power and strength development and possibly better throws.

This brings us to what



The triple extension phase of an Olympic lift mimics the explosive phase of the release demonstrated here by Christian Cantwell.



Victor Sailer

type of training is best. Is it powerlifting, bodybuilding or Olympic lifting? Which of these is best for the development of strength, power and/or muscle mass and thus facilitating maximum muscle recruitment?

Before any conclusions can be made it is important to understand some simple physiology of the three distinct training methods.

Powerlifting (Bench Press, Squat and Dead Lift)

Powerlifting can give you great overall strength, but it has a built in component of slow movement. While large muscle groups are targeted and large amounts of muscle mass are recruited, the neuromuscular component is relatively small because of the slow movement (during a bench press, squat or deadlift, the nervous system is stimulated but to a lesser degree and powerlifting is for the most part simply an intense muscular contraction). This component of slow movement is very apparent when maximum weight is attempted. Also problematic is that too many times the athletes who focus on this type of training as their core lifts may become muscle bound and to heavily muscled and often this limits the full range of motion for many of the muscle groups and joints involved in the throws, especially the upper body. This will also limit full muscle recruitment.

Bodybuilding

Bodybuilding's emphasis is to create large muscles. To many, this would seem the best way for absolute muscle recruitment, especially because the trained bodybuilder knows that to increase muscle mass each lift must be very strict and in the full range of motion. But again, like the powerlifter, there is a built in component of slow movement. In fact, in bodybuilding it is one the major focuses. Although bodybuilding emphasizes full range of motion, the athlete can still become muscle bound. This too will limit the thrower's ability to recruit muscle for the throw. Also, because of the emphasis on slow movements, the neuromuscular component is also to a lesser degree and the development of the neuromuscular system is limited.

Olympic Lifting (Snatch, Clean & Jerk and the partial movement lifts)

Contrary to powerlifting and bodybuilding, Olympic lifting is not slow and does not produce big, bulky muscles. In fact, Olympic lifting is the only type of lifting that incorporates the same muscle groups with the same emphasis on speed and technique as the throws and has a very high component of neuromuscular development. Both the Olympic lifts and the throws combine the elements of technique and then speed to improve. Olympic lifting also emphasizes full range of motion and a maximum of muscle recruitment. In no other way will more weight be lifted or farther distances thrown without these components.

As stated, the correlation between weightlifting strengths and distances thrown is relative, and for the most part

unrelated, but there is a connection between how specific muscle groups are trained, how the neuromuscular system is developed, and the muscles utilized in a throw.

To understand this we can look at the connection between the muscles involved in the finish of a throw and those involved in the finish of the pull phase of a clean (a partial movement of the clean and jerk). The connection lies in what is called the triple extension (the full extension of the ankles, knees and hips). Both a throw and a clean begin in a slow controlled manner and then accelerate to the finish or the "triple extension". They both require speed and movement of the large muscles of the lower body and eventually the acceleration and extension of the ankles, knees and hips. In neither powerlifting nor bodybuilding is this action ever performed in this manner.

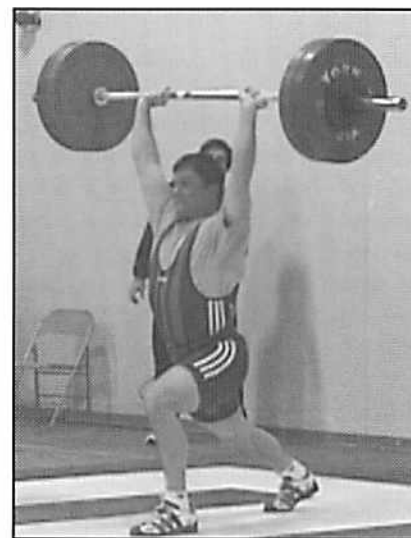
The end conclusion can be that in order to maximize muscle recruitment while training the muscles to become more powerful and stronger is to train them through the Olympic lifts. By designing a program that centers on the Olympic lifts as the core of training you can better facilitate the maximum muscle recruitment for a throw. This does not restrict you from doing other training, and in fact, it is beneficial to target problem areas or rehabilitate injuries using specific powerlifting and/or bodybuilding type training.

It is in the end most important to "plan your work and work your plan." Keep training loads low until you have mastered each movement. Focus on your technique and you will improve your power and strength and decrease the risk of injury. Remember, the last thing you want is to get injured in the weightroom. Be smart and train to get better, not bigger. If your program is planned correctly and you are consistent, you will grow naturally in weight and you will see power and strength gains in a safe and progressive manner.

Author's note:

Remember, the purpose for training in the weightroom is to help to improve your throwing, increase your work capacity and improve technique. As the saying goes, "A good lifter is a better lifter."

L&S



Pat Corbett

CLEANING OUT THE CLOSET

BY LANE C. DOWELL

Don't give up on the magic in those old throwing shoes. They are filled with your dreams, goals, and all the blood, sweat, toil and tears it takes to achieve them.

We are going to use the space kindly afforded us by our sagacious editor to perform a bit of cleaning in our "Wouldn't That Be a Good Story" file. Hopefully, one will find an eyebrow raiser in this jumble or at least a humorous antidote. What draws all this together is the love for the throws that we all have but may express in different ways.

Making Our Sport More Fan Friendly and Easier to Follow:

This piece was excerpted with permission from the *Eugene Register Guard*. The columnist is **Curtis Anderson**.

In my opinion, no other sport can match the simple humanity or pure emotion of "run faster, throw farther, or jump higher."

Unfortunately, to the average sports fan in America, track and field is largely irrelevant in a non-Olympic year. Even when attending a meet in person, such as the recent USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Indianapolis, it can be a very frustrating and bewildering experience.

At a championship meet there is simply too much for the announcers to provide timely updates for every event.

With the 2008 Olympic Trials less than one year away, and the promise of a new state-of-the-art video board at Hayward Field, there is an opportunity to correct these wrongs.

Here is what I think should happen:

Create a field scoreboard to be used for all throws and jumps. As each field event unfolds, maintain a list of the top eight competitors with their best mark of the day, the current round of the competition, and where they stand overall. Update those elements after each throw or jump. Make sure that every fan in the stadium can figure out who is performing and what the stakes are with one easy glance.

Utilize a sports ticker like CNN does with stock reports, or ESPN with daily sports results, producing a continuous stream of agate-style information at the bottom of the scoreboard with complete results of the day's events. Update and repeat this info throughout the meet, thus

giving fans an opportunity to catch up with any event by waiting for results to scroll across the bottom of the scoreboard.

Why not a radical concept for hosting championships meets? As far as mainstream America is concerned, one of track and field's main problems is that during a multiple-day championship meet, there are too many events, and it takes too long for a single day of competition.

The Prefontaine Classic is the gold standard. Unlike Indianapolis this year where each day's competition dragged on for eight to 11 hours, why not break up the competition into separate, smaller meets where each would be stocked with world-class performers. Using this form, an individual would receive more attention.

Each championship venue would get a three year deal. Stagger the meets so that they are not taking place on the same dates. Jack up the prize money and get live television involved. Promote and interview all of the athletes.

I think the *Register Guard* has given us some food for thought. It is my opinion that there are few who will argue the efficiency and coverage of the competition, athletes, and sport like they do in Eugene.

If You Build It, They Will Come:

For his Eagle Scout project, a Washington State high school hammer thrower is building a hammer cage on the property of Evergreen State College (Olympia).

The Olympia area has been very productive in producing many of Washington state's college hammer scholarship recipients, and there is definitely a need for quality cages for this fast growing event in our state's capital.

When *L&S* asked Chris Gage, a senior-to-be at Olympia's Capital High School, why he is taking on this project, he replied, "One of the things about the Eagle Scout project is that it should be something of interest to the person doing the project. I love hammer throwing (161' 2"), and someone needed to get the cage up, so it seemed a logical choice for my Eagle project."

Gage's crew consisted of his hammer coaches, Paul Kelly, Capital High of Olympia throws coach, and former Washington State University and USA Olympic team member, Dwight Midles. Also, lending a helping hand in Gage's endeavor will be Jerry Miller, head track and field coach at Capital, and the mentor in charge of the Evergreen program, Craig Dickson.

Gage feels that he will have a little over \$300 to spend on the Evergreen hammer cage but may not need that much. Due to donated labor and materials, Gage says that he would like use any monetary excess to establish a scholarship fund for those throwers who cannot pay the USATF entry fees or buy their USATF membership card.

Considering the question of use, Gage says, "The ring will actually be a hammer and discus ring that will be up to NCAA specs, so that the college can use it for practice and competition. Other users will include Senior Games throwers, and local high school throwers. My coach tells me that many local prep coaches have told him that they have throwers that want to try the hammer, only there is no real venue for it. I think that it will increase the number of hammer throwers in the area."

Gage maintains that the project should be completed this fall if the Boy Scouts approve the implementation of his dream. He says that two of the three agencies at the Evergreen State College have already given the green light to his endeavor. The prep master of the ball and wire says, "The Campus Land Use Committee, which will not meet until school starts in late September, is the final piece of the puzzle, though Craig Dickson, the head track and field coach at Evergreen College, assures me that they will approve it. The Boy Scout approval happening should be no trouble."

This is a labor of love in progress. Stay tuned.

Favoritism...justified or not, it hurts:

I hope that I live to see the day when FIELD and track is able to reward the youthful dreams achieved by countless hours of blood, sweat, toil and tears on muddy practice fields lighted by only the setting sun.

Do you find it strange that the two silver medalists in the hammer throw from this season's USA Outdoor Junior National Championships were denied membership on the National team?

I suppose there are many that should be cloaked with the mantle of blame for cutting any qualifier from international competition. But, one cannot help but wonder if this is in the best interest of the overall development of our sport?

Masters of the ball and wire were relegated to the back of the USATF bus over a half century ago, thus they are very accustomed to being denied a ticket to ride to events reserved for those in our sport with more star status. But, it ain't right!

Perhaps, when the uniqueness and beauty in motion of the hammer is discovered by the gods of USATF and the event is invited into the competitive arena instead of being contested out beyond where the sheep graze, the ball and

wire will receive an equal opportunity. Or at least promises made will not be broken leaving a trail of shattered, youthful dreams.

Bob Gourley's National Leader Board: (as of the end of August '07)

When considering the increase in participation in the hammer throw to other events in FIELD and track, none can match the growth curve of the ball and wire.

Nationally, the boys were lead this season by **Walter Henning (255' 11")** who finally eclipsed what appeared for years to be an untouchable national prep record for the 12 lb. ball. There were 77 teen males from 15 states who spun the "ball and chain" 150' or more in 2007.

Many hammer aficionados looked at Henning's meteoric rise up Gourley's leader board these past couple of years as an indicator that the renaissance of the event was finally on the horizon.

As these same hammerheads watch this year's weekly development of a high school junior from West Hills, California, **Conor McCullough (243' 11")** who is erasing Henning's standards before the ink is barely dry, they are even more in awe at the pace of the rebirth.

At the Senior Outdoor National Championship in Indianapolis this summer, no one could ever remember a National hammer title meet with as many throwers over 70 meters.

American teenage girls from 14 states have also discovered the beauty and potential for advanced education in the hammer throw. Sixty preps tossed over 120' this season and a pair of Georgia peaches, a couple of California girls (the **Kraychirs** - Casey, a sophomore -173' 4" and Katie, a freshman - 159' 10"), and others around the good 'ol USA have a shot in the very near future of erasing Maureen Griffin's long standing mark of 201' 7".

In the Evergreen State, the number of athletes who have received college scholarship aid since 2000 is in the low thirties. Four 2007 graduating seniors from the Evergreen State will attend major universities courtesy of their ability to spin the "ball and chain."

For a weekly update of the renaissance of the hammer throw in America, take a peek at the national leader board offered by the affable **Bob Gourley**. I am sure Bob will be happy to place your name on his mailing list. Contact him at rmgourley@fctvplus.net Hey, its FREE!

Frosh Breaks Washington Prep Hammer Record:
Yep, another one. **Olivia Midles (147' 10").**

At this year's National Junior Olympics Championship held at Mt SAC, Olivia Midles, a sophomore at Olympia's Capital High School set a Washington State High School Freshman Record of 147' 10" with her final toss of the competition. This was Olivia's lifetime PR and was needed to advance her from third to second place.

Olivia's cousin, Gabby, is a freshman at the University of Idaho this year and was a silver medallist at the 2007 USATF Junior National Championships in Indianapolis.

Olivia's older brothers Adam, a graduate of the University of Southern California, and Zack, a sophomore at the University of Washington, are both hammer throwers.

Competitive Juices Still Flowing at 94

At this year's Washington State Senior Games Championship, we encountered a truly remarkable and unforgettable character, **George Rowswell**, who at 94 was still pursuing his love by coaching at North Thurston High in the Olympia area.

My wife, Deanna, was asked to be the head judge of the discus. As she called, "Rowswell, On Deck," the coach slowly maneuvered his walker toward the cage. In transit, Rowswell said to my wife (of the thrower entering the ring), "He was one of my protégés." Being married to a football coach for 37 years, Deanna, retorted, "You were a coach, huh?" The 94 year old proudly shot back, "I still am a coach with North Thurston football."

Deanna took a shot and asked him if he'd ever heard of my coaching mentor, the legendary **Chuck Semancik**.

"Charlie," he bellowed. "That damn Semancik! Look at my ear! See my cauliflower ear? That damn Charlie did that to me when we were wrestling at Washington State! Yah, I knew Charlie!"

Coach Rowswell then left his walker, sauntered into the ring, and threw more than 33 feet for the gold. Deanna must have help rekindled that old competitive spark. *L&S*

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"I LOVE WHAT I DO"

BY GLENN THOMPSON

Making a living in track and field photography is a lot like paying the bills launching spheroids, platters and spears. Those who can do it are few and far between. All the rest pay the bills with a nine-to-five and capture the action for the love of the sport.

One of the joys of producing this publication is opening a string of 40 or so images after a major competition from the lens of Victor, a.k.a. "Victah," Sailer, the primary photographic source for *LSTJ*.

Sailer is one of those elite photographers who do it for a living, and his occupation represents the intersection of two passions.

"My father was taking a photo of me diving into the pool," he recalls from his childhood. "I must have splashed a lot. He thought his camera would get wet and he twisted and ruptured his knee. He was told to stop smoking and to get his legs back in shape and start running. I used to go running with him to keep him company."

Sailer played all sports prior to high school. At Archbishop Mallory High School he ran cross country and track and played ice hockey on a club team.

After graduating high school Sailer left the confines of the Big Apple for East Stroudsburg State College in the Poconos in eastern Pennsylvania. While there, Sailer majored in Physical Education and was a decathlete on the track team.

Sailer's love affair with photography also grew at East Stroudsburg. "I was going out with a girl from Northeast Philly, and she sold me a Bell and Howell camera. "I took photos of the cross country team and more."

Nearing graduation, Sailer realized he had some immediate career choices/opportunities to explore.

"I was disgusted that I would be paid so little for being a Health and Physical Education teacher," Sailer recalls. "I would be offered \$10K a year. Over Thanksgiving of my senior year, the NYPD offered me \$19.9K to start, so in January I took a job with [them]. I made 30K my first year."

"My dad was a firefighter," continues Sailer. "He told me it was a better job, so I took it after 18 months with the NYPD I retired after 9/11 (after 20 years of service), in February, 2002. I didn't retire because of 9/11, but rather because I had made a great career of being a track and field/road racing photographer.

The self-employed Smithtown, Long Island resident, spends 120 days a year on the road, hitting virtually every exotic locale on every continent where an elite road race or track and field event is being held. He's even photographed a marathon in Antarctica and has visited in excess of 70 countries.

Sailer recalls the good old days of air travel when, "Prior to 9/11, you could board a flight 10 minutes prior. It was nuts, especially when I was late for work, asking guys to hold up for me. I worked with a lot of great guys."

When asked about his favorite destinations, Sailer responds, "I enjoy the islands of Greece, good food, good stories."

Sailer is a Canon equipment devotee. "I use the Canon Mark2. It works wonderfully, but digital is a lot more of a workload than transparency film."

Sailer's wife Lisa maintains their website (<http://www.photorun.net>) and assists with the photography. "She has done very well, as neither one of us ever took a photography course."

In his spare moments Sailer enjoys watching the Yankees, playing tennis, running and working out. He completed the New York City Marathon three times during the 1970's.

When asked to name some of his favorite athletes, Sailer first references, "Mike Powell is a great guy. We have gone out to dance clubs in Europe and other events over the years. He is very funny, down-to-earth guy. That is the great part of our sport; most of the athletes are grounded. Reese Hoffa is another fun, easy-going personality."

"I love what I do," reflects Sailer. "It's very time consuming, but very, very rewarding. I enjoy helping your magazine try to succeed. Keep up the good work, as we share the same passion for the sport."

Hey, thanks for everything Victah! *L&S*

Protocols to Minimize...

Injury, Death and Bad Results at the Courthouse

By J. SHELBY SHARPE

Athletic competition has an inherent risk of injury for the competitors, as well as those involved with the competition, including officials, venue personnel, media and spectators. Some injuries are not preventable, while others are. It is almost a certainty that when an injury occurs, litigation will follow. Following the recommendations made in this paper provides the best opportunity for avoiding these injuries, and if litigation comes, will place those sued in the strongest position possible to prevail.

It is the intent of this article to provide practical recommendations to help avoid the preventable injury with the consequences that grow out of it. The language in this article has been selected for persons who are not legally trained. There are sample questions at the end of each section of this paper to illustrate how an attorney for an injured person would seek to establish liability for failure to do what the law requires. There are also checklists at the end of the paper to assist in following the guidance given in the paper.

I. Legal Standard for Liability

When an injury is caused by someone who did not act as an ordinary, reasonable person, that person has legal liability for the injury with its resulting consequences. If that individual is acting on behalf of someone else, which is usually an organization, the organization will be liable for the person's negligence. Additionally, if the owner of the track and field competition venue has knowledge or should have had knowledge of a dangerous condition in the venue that causes an injury, this, too, creates liability for the owner of the venue.

In summary, any injury that could have been prevented by reasonable action by a person responsible for taking the action creates legal liability.

II. The Competition Venue

A. Owned or Contracted

Every track and field venue is owned by some party. Most of the time, the owner is a governmental or private educational institution. Less frequently, it is owned by a governmental recreational agency. Occasionally, a contract is signed for the use of the venue by another entity to conduct a competition. Examples of this are USA Track & Field, the National Collegiate Athletic Association, athletic conferences and other sports organizations. When one of these groups contracts for the use of a venue, the organization assumes liability for any conditions of the venue that are discoverable through a reasonable inspection that are reasonably likely to cause injury. Thus, it is incumbent upon the owner of a venue and anyone contracting for its use to eliminate any potentially dangerous conditions that

are known or should be discovered by a reasonable investigation.

The questions that an attorney for an injured person would probably ask concerning any dangerous condition in the venue are:

- (1) Did you have any person on your behalf examine the entire venue where the competition would occur?
- (2) Please identify every competition area examined.
- (3) What examination was made of each competition area?
- (4) Who conducted these examinations?
- (5) What are the qualifications of each person conducting these examinations?
- (6) Was a report written on what was found in each competition area of the venue?
- (7) Who received the report, if one was prepared, and when was it received?
- (8) Was anything discovered that might cause injury to persons in any competition area of the venue?
- (9) If the answer to the preceding question is "yes," what corrective measures were taken to eliminate the hazardous condition?
- (10) If corrective measures were taken, when were the measures taken and by whom?
- (11) Who took the corrective measures and were they successful?
- (12) Were the lights for each competition area checked for brightness and position and their effect upon those persons in each competition area?

B. Identifying the Potential Problem Areas

The following should be investigated before holding or contracting to hold a competition.

1. Adjacent Competition Areas

A determination should be made of whether competition areas overlap where an implement has the ability to reach from one competition area into another competition area. There are two options if this is the situation. Either schedule the use of the competition areas adjacent to one another so that an implement going into an adjacent competition area will not have any activity going on at the same time or, adjust the competition area so that an implement cannot reach an adjacent competition area. In a national meet, a tube for returning shot puts was used that was partially in an adjacent field event venue that was active. This problem was cured simply by moving the tube to the other side of the shot sector, which was out of the adjacent field event venue.

The questions that an attorney would probably ask where competition areas overlap are:

- (1) Did you have any person examine the competition areas

for overlap where competition in one area might affect persons in an adjacent area?

(2) Would an investigation of the competition areas have revealed that the competition in one area could affect adjacent areas?

(3) What precautions did you take to avoid injury to persons in adjacent areas?

(4) Could you have adjusted the competition schedule so that persons would not have been in an adjacent area and if not, why?

(5) Could you have positioned qualified individuals to protect persons moving in areas adjacent to the competition area and if not, why?

(6) Who was assigned to protect the adjacent areas?

(7) What qualifications and experience did these people have whose responsibility was to protect the adjacent areas?

2. Dangers Within a Competition Area

Every competition area should also be examined for dangers within the area. For example, some long jump-triple jump pits have metal grating around the pit. If the grating is broken, an athlete or an official stepping on the grating may be injured. Sometimes this grating is unstable so that it could give way causing an injury, such as a twisted ankle. At indoor competitions, the hardware supporting the running surfaces needs to be checked to be sure none is sticking out to injure a person walking next to these surfaces. All running and walking surfaces whether natural or artificial must be checked for hazards that could cause an injury.

Meet management must also be aware of any object such as an advertising sign that is covering an object that if an athlete fell into the sign would injure the athlete. All too often, these kinds of signs are found close to a running surface, such as the finish line, or near field events pits.

Lastly, has the competition area been properly prepared to prevent athletes or officials from being struck by an implement? For example, in a shot put venue, there should either be a warning line or an official positioned to prevent the competitors from going beyond a point where if a competitor's back is to the ring, the competitor could be hit by a shot. This can be done by placing a very visible line that no one should cross while anyone is in the ring or have an official positioned to prevent anyone getting into harms way. Persons bringing implements back to the competitors who are warming up or in the competition should never have their back to the area from which an implement is being thrown.

The questions that would probably be asked for dangers within a competition area are:

(1) Prior to any person being admitted to a competition area, was it examined for any discoverable dangers?

(2) What examination was made?

(3) Who made it?

(4) What is the experience of the person who made the examination?

(5) What precautions were taken to prevent an athlete or someone working the venue from being struck by an implement that might go out of the sector?

(6) Were these precautions reasonable?

(7) Were the running and adjacent surfaces checked for safety?

(8) Were areas surrounding each landing pit checked?

(9) Was a written report of the investigation of all competition areas made?

(10) Who made the report?

(11) To whom was the report given and when?

(12) Were all problems identified in the report corrected before access was given to the competition area?

3. Equipment

All equipment that will be used during a meet must be examined. This includes cages surrounding the circle from where an implement will be thrown. A cage should be checked for deterioration that would compromise its ability to restrain an implement from going through. Also, every cage needs to be checked for proper height and positioning. At a major national championship meet several years ago, the discus cage was positioned such that a left-handed thrower hanging on to the discus too long could put it into the stands where spectators would be sitting. This cage had to be repositioned before competition began.

As a part of the review of equipment, hurdles, starting blocks, landing pits, standards and bars all need to be examined to be sure that they are in proper condition to function as they are designed to function. Any of these found to be deficient in any way should either be replaced or properly repaired, if repair is appropriate.

The questions related to equipment that would be asked are:

(1) Was all equipment in the competition area that might cause injury checked before the athletes were permitted to use it?

(2) Were all landing areas, such as around the pole vault, checked for proper positioning and proper condition?

(3) Who checked these things?

(4) What was the experience of the person checking these things?

(5) Was a written report made prior to the athletes being given access to the competition area?

(6) Who prepared the report?

(7) To whom was the report given and when?

(8) Were all discovered problems corrected prior to access being given to the competition area?

4. Lighting

If a competition will occur at night, the lights should be checked for not only brightness, but positioning. At one national championship meet the lights were positioned so that the discus was lost in flight making it hazardous for the officials marking the landing. In fact, two officials were struck in the leg because of losing the discus in the lights.

The questions that would relate to lighting are the same as those found at the end of Section II A. of this paper.

C. When Liability Exposure Begins

Liability exposure begins when people who are involved with or in the competition are admitted to any of the competition areas. If practice sessions are permitted by the organization responsible for the meet, then the same precautions must be taken as if the meet had begun. For example, it is reasonably foreseeable that an implement being thrown during a permitted workout prior to the beginning of a meet is just as dangerous as one thrown during a meet. Thus, the same precautions that would be taken during a meet for the throwing of implements should be taken during a permitted practice session. Similarly, runners taking starts should be protected from interference during a practice as well as during a meet.

During a meet, liability exposure begins during a warm-up for the competition. This also requires the same protections as required for the competition. It is primarily the responsibility of marshals to protect against injury caused by an implement or interfering with an athlete during a practice or a competition. Adequate numbers of qualified marshals properly positioned are mandatory.

The questions related to injuries prior to and during a meet are:

- (1) Did you permit athletes into a competition area or know they would be there?
- (2) Is it reasonable that one could expect the athletes would be practicing with implements or running?
- (3) What efforts did you make to protect the athletes or others you could reasonably foresee would be there from being hit by an implement or a collision with a runner?
- (4) Did you have sufficient, qualified people to provide for their protection?
- (5) Who were these people?
- (6) What qualifications did each have?
- (7) Where were they positioned when the injury occurred?

III. Meet Management and Administration

A. Sufficient Personnel

A failure to have a sufficient number of qualified people to protect all involved in the competition from injury will create liability. Those whose duties involve providing protection in the field of competition are marshals and those responsible for providing hydration for the athletes and the officials are trainers or persons specifically assigned this responsibility. Around the perimeter of the field of competition, those responsible for protection from unauthorized people entering the venue are facility security or local law enforcement. The final group that must be present in adequate numbers has no responsibility for protection of those involved with the competition, but have the responsibility for treating injuries. These are trainers, emergency medical people and physicians. To avoid liability, there must be a reasonable number of all of these various classes of people, considering the inherent dangers

attendant to track and field competition. A failure to have sufficient numbers in any one of these areas can result in significant liability.

The questions on sufficient, properly qualified personnel to conduct a meet safely and reasonably address injuries requiring treatment are:

- (1) What was the length of time the athletes would be permitted in the competition area?
- (2) How many people were needed to reasonably protect those within the competition area from harm?
- (3) How many athletes were expected in the venue?
- (4) What arrangements were made for hydration of those in the competition areas?
- (5) By category, what healthcare providers were there and what were their responsibilities?
- (6) What equipment did you have to address injuries that could reasonably be expected?
- (7) What protection did you have to prevent unauthorized persons from being in the venue or to deal with a breach of the peace?

B. Assignment of Personnel for Prevention and Treatment of Injuries

1. Personnel Within the Fields of Competition

The most conspicuous need for marshals is the protection of individuals from flying implements. This means guarding sector lines and any area where a stray implement can reach. In connection with this responsibility, the marshals must work with the media so that the media can do their job with a minimum risk of injury. For example, persons operating cameras will need to be close to sector lines in order to get proper pictures. These photographers should never be permitted along the sector line where implements will normally land. In

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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: L&S, 3604 Green Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110.

Thanks for keeping me informed!

Glenn Thompson, Publisher

positioning persons operating cameras, it must be kept in mind they must be positioned where they have sufficient time to respond to a verbal command to move. For example, it is unwise to let these people within 160 feet of the ring during the discus competition because a normal person cannot move quickly enough to avoid a discus closer in than 160 feet. Yet, during the hammer competition, these people should be closer in than 160 feet because of the way that the hammer comes out even when deflected.

Marshals also need to watch the officials who are working in an implement sector whose responsibility is to mark the landing of the implement. If it becomes apparent that an official working in this area for whatever reason demonstrates a lack of judgment or ability to avoid being hit, this should be reported to the coordinator of officials immediately for his investigation. To assign marshals to an implement area who do not have the experience and the physical ability to discharge their responsibilities can create liability also. Similarly, to assign officials to mark implements who do not have the experience, judgment or physical ability to do the job can also create liability.

Concerning the horizontal and vertical jumps, marshals have the responsibility of protecting the approach to the pit so that no one is injured by a collision as an athlete approaches the pit. Similarly, the marshals have a responsibility for protecting the approach of the javelin throw and especially when it extends out into the running lanes to be sure that the runners as well as the javelin throwers are protected.

Lastly, concerning running events, the marshals have responsibility for protecting the start and the finish to avoid collisions there.

Turning to those responsible for hydration, hydration includes more than just water. Water cannot replace electrolytes. Those officials and athletes whose assignments require them to function in weather conditions requiring their bodies to receive water and electrolytes must have these available within or immediately adjacent to the competition area. While meet management often considers the needs of the athletes, there are too many meets where the needs of the officials who must be in a competition area for extended periods of time are often overlooked. An injury that results where water and electrolytes are not made reasonably available will create liability. Thus, meet management should regularly have the field of competition inspected to be sure water and electrolytes are continuously available during the competition.

Meet management and chief or head officials of a competition must never forget that the marshals' primary responsibility is protection. When a marshal is requested to escort an athlete, or group of athletes, the individual making the request needs to be certain that the absence of the marshal is not going to compromise safety. If safety will be compromised, then someone other than a marshal should be asked

to do the escort duty, which usually is the primary function of a steward. All too often, a meet does not have stewards or insufficient numbers of stewards. A steward does not have to be a certified official as a marshal must be. Stewards can be positioned so that they do not interfere with those watching the competition.

The questions on sufficiency and qualifications of personnel within the fields of competition are:

- (1) How many qualified marshals were selected and were actually present for the competition?
- (2) Were the marshals sufficient in number to cover every event for reasonable safety considering the schedule of events and when athletes could be expected to arrive in a competition area?
- (3) What were the qualifications, physical ability and experience of the marshals?
- (4) Were the marshals properly positioned?
- (5) Was a qualified and knowledgeable person assigned to supervise positioning of the marshals?
- (6) Was a qualified and knowledgeable person supervising the marshals to be sure they stayed in proper positions throughout the warm-ups and competition?
- (7) *Did the marshals properly protect those who were in the field of competition or adjacent to the field of competition?*

2. Healthcare Personnel

Trainers and other healthcare personnel need to be in sufficient numbers and positioned to be able to respond timely to an injury occurring within the field of competition. The numbers of these people will depend upon the numbers of competitors. These people need to be qualified to deal with every type of injury that can be expected at a track and field competition from a minor injury to a life-threatening one. In connection with major injuries, those responsible for the conduct of the meet need to be certain that there are readily available means of transporting an injured person to a local healthcare facility that is equipped to handle the injury.

Questions related to healthcare personnel are:

- (1) Were sufficient healthcare personnel at the venue at all times the athletes were practicing or competing?
- (2) Were they properly positioned?
- (3) Did they have adequate equipment for the injuries that were reasonably foreseeable?
- (4) Was proper hydration available to those in the competition areas?
- (5) Was the hydration regularly checked to be sure it was available in sufficient amounts?

3. Facility Security

The prime responsibility on who is admitted into any facility where a track and field competition is being held is that of the facility security force. This force may be local law enforcement hired for the occasion or it may be the institution's own law enforcement group. In any event, these people have

SITE CHECKLIST

- 1.Examine all field event areas for overlaps with other competition areas including running lanes.
- 2.Examine the sectors where implements will land.
- 3.Examine all pits and equipment for the competition.
- 4.Examine all implement cages and their positioning.
- 5.Check all running surfaces.
- 6.Examine position and brightness of lights if competition involving field events will be held at night.
- 7.Determine availability of health-care professionals for meet sufficient for needs of the meet.

responsibility to see that no one enters a track and field facility with a weapon. These people also have the responsibility for not allowing unauthorized people into the competition areas. This is not a function of the marshals.

There is, unfortunately, an occasional need for law enforcement to be within the field of competition. When law enforcement learns of physical threats directed at a competitor and it is determined that protection needs to be afforded within the field of competition, this activity must be coordinated with meet management and the marshals. Usually, these law enforcement officials who enter the field of competition will be dressed like the officials working the meet. Their positioning will be coordinated with the marshals. If it is a field event competitor, the chief or head judge should be discreetly notified of these additional people. This protection must be given as discretely and unobtrusively as possible.

The questions on adequacy of facility security are:

- (1) Were sufficient law enforcement personnel present at the venue to protect from unwarranted entrance into the venue?
- (2) Were they properly positioned?
- (3) Were they properly equipped to respond or prevent what could reasonably be expected?

C. Interference with Competition

Meet management is responsible for the public address system affecting the competition venues. This includes announcers and advertisements that come over the public address system. At first blush, it would seem that this aspect of meet management is unlikely to cause an injury. However, this is not the case. Any sudden loud noise can cause an athlete to be startled to a degree that the athlete can be injured. This has happened to athletes in the horizontal and vertical jumps. In any of these events, severe injury can occur.

The questions that would be asked are:

- (1) Could meet management have known in advance the sound level of an announcement or advertisement that would transmit over the public address system?
- (2) Could meet management have known what was happening in the competition venues at the time a sudden high-level sound was to be transmitted over the public address system?
- (3) Could meet management have restricted the sudden

high volume of sound so as not to occur during the competition or had the sound adjusted downward so as not to interfere with the competition?

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, if an injury is foreseeable to a reasonable person, reasonable steps must be taken to avoid the injury or there is liability. Having and following protocols will reduce injuries with the resulting consequences. *L&S*

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DATA MAN

BY GLENN THOMPSON

It was an innocent question. John Seto had returned to throwing in 2006 as a Masters M40 after being away from the sport since his high school graduation.

"I was quickly gaining new friends at the competitions," recalls the New York state resident. "I reached out to the USATF Rankings Chairman, Dave Clingan, who ran the rankings site to ensure that some of my new friends' results were posted."

"I asked a stupid question; 'Do you do most of this compiling by hand?' When he answered, 'Yes,' I mentioned there are easy ways to make this an interactive database and make his job immensely easier. I had developed these skills to fill the needs for a former client of mine so I knew that it could be done."

Seto burned a few brain cells and with the input of Clingan and Lary Patz, the new rankings system went on line in December. Clingan followed up by asking Seto if he would take over as USATF Rankings Chair, and he commenced on July 1.

Seto receives a small USATF stipend for his efforts. The expectation is essentially a 'deliverable' of the rankings list.

"We import the vast majority of the results you see, says Seto. "Right now (early August) for the 2007 outdoor season we have 3,940 individual results entered into our system, 17,556 results and 11,477 rankings. Since when we import, we import complete lists which will include many of the results athletes have typed, it is fair to say that we have probably imported over 90% of the results in the system. I think the system is policed by the people who routinely look at the rankings."

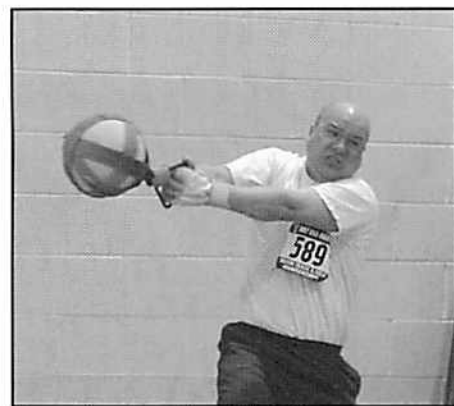
So does Seto have a drawer full of color-coordinated pocket protectors? Nope. By day his vocation is industrial and commercial construction.

"In our jobs, just like using spreadsheets and word processing, I found it handy to know databases," says Seto. "I had a client who had a need to provide interactive web based databases, so to satisfy the client I taught myself how to do that and created several web based database systems."

Seto looks for future improvements to the rankings system, "through improved navigation, better organization, more complete lists (more results), more accurate data and a means for someone to submit results for groups of people."

"I also think the people who know about the rankings really embrace it," he says, "but there are many people who

still do not know about it. I think many would like to know where they stack up so I want to get that publicity out there. Many meets can also be sending their results to us for importing. This is another of my desires which will lead to more accurate data."



Seto wrestling the 56# in Boston.

"The Troy Herr's (M40 hammer) of the world who compete at a high level but don't do it very often are out there and not in the rankings for their peers to strive for. I sent a survey out early this year asking the people who had submitted results to provide feedback on how the system could be improved. I was impressed when I received over 100 responses (about 25% of the people emailed). When things calm down and I get my five-meter improvement in hammer, I intend on working on the improvements."

Seto began in track and field in 7th grade as a long and triple jumper. He hurt his right knee ("I still feel it") and picked up a "12# cannon ball at home" and started chucking that. It was love at first sight.

"I never looked back," he recalls. "I have loved throwing from the moment I picked up that cannon ball. Threw from 8th grade right through high school graduation. Picked up the discus in 8th grade and hammer in 12th. I think I didn't do hammer earlier because of my lack of size."

"I was really just throwing hammer in practice 'just for fun' and loving it. My coach came to me before a very prestigious meet and told me that I was throwing hammer, throwing with turns and not to argue with him. My technique was pretty unsteady, but I got better with each throw while being heckled by one of my competitors. I made the finals and ended up finishing 5th while the heckler was 6th. The meet had to have 50 hammer throwers so it was an excellent showing."

Seto bid adieu to the ball and wire for twenty-plus years because he did not think he was big enough to handle the college implements."

"I had always missed it and found out last year that there were Masters competitions," he says. "I bought a 16# hammer just to see if I could throw it. After my second practice, I felt I could. I think I finally figured out just before Nationals last year that I didn't have a clue how to throw the hammer."

Masters track and field didn't know how much it missed John Seto. *L&S*

EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN YOUTH HAMMER THROWING

BY HAROLD CONNOLLY

The growth in American youth hammer throwing measured by the number of states participating (7 in 1997) and the number of ranked throwers competing (ranked = boys throwing 150 feet + and girls throwing 120 feet +) showed a significant increase from 1997 to 2003 (states up to 14 for boys, 10 for girls, and participation up 43% boys and 38% girls). However, in the four seasons since 2003 the number of participating states remained relatively constant, but three other factors showed significant improvement:

1. While the number of ranked boys increased only .02%.
The number of ranked girls increased 30%.
2. In the past four seasons since 2003 the number of boys throwing farther than 200' + increased 56%, and the number of girls throwing farther than 150' + increased 47%.

The increases that have been made in the numbers of youth hammer throwers and participating states and the increasing performance levels since 2003 can be attributed to the following factors:

- USATF began regularly offering Youth and Junior Olympics hammer-throwing competitions in 2003 and began including qualified American youth hammer throwers on their World Youth Track and Field Championships Teams;
- A growing number of hammer throw knowledgeable parent coaches and motivated youth club and high school coaches who teach youth how to throw the hammer;
- Parent and youth hammer throw coaches who are introducing 7th and 8th grade children to the fun and challenge of hammer throwing. See the following chart: Nationally Ranked Hammer Throwers Starting in Seventh and Eighth Grades.
- The inclusion of hammer throw coaching at influential and motivational summer throws camps - Ironwood, Carrie Lane's, Pete Kell's, John Powell's, Larry Judge's, Mike Judge's, Jud Logan's, and Don Babbitt's summer throws camps;
- The readily available and more widely disseminated digitized and printed hammer throw coaching materials;
- Growing interest in the event particularly among girls;
- The increasing awareness and motivational impact of Bob Gourley's lists (national boys and girls high school hammer throw performance rankings) and Martin Bingisser's high school hammer throw web site (www.hshammer.com);
- Mike Holman's USATF Emerging Elite Coaches' Camp during the summer at the U.S. Olympic Training Center;
- The national outdoor scholastic track and field competitions that include the hammer throw;

- Enlightened state high school track and field federations that have changed their policies to permit high school athletes while competing on their school's track and field teams to also compete in USATF youth hammer throw competitions when the hammer throw is not offered by the athlete's school's track and field program. (Rhode Island is the only state that offers the hammer throw as a regular part of its interscholastic track and field program);
- And the gradually expanding and improving hammer throw training and competitions offered by the USATF youth clubs program.

* The data for The Evolution of American Youth Hammer-Throwing 1997 – 2007 compiled by Bob Gourley can be found on www.HShammer.com.

Interesting:

Casey Kraychir in 8th grade - 152' 01" Katie Kraychir in 8th grade - 152' 10"

Closing Observations:

- The statistics indicate a significant advantage in higher hammer throwing results for seniors in high school who began learning the event in grades seven and eight (ages 12 - 13) under the guidance of knowledgeable hammer throw coaches.
- Youth throwers' annual throwing results progress may be an indicator of the effectiveness of the coaching strategies.
- Training opportunities (like that of the USATF Emerging Elite Coaches' Camp) should be initiated for USATF youth club throws coaches who provide 12 - 14 year olds ongoing hammer throwing and Javelin throwing coaching.
- USATF level 1 and level 2 Coaches' Training program might consider offering separate training courses in hammer throwing and javelin throwing for beginners, designed for coaches working with 12 - 14-year-old throwers. *L&S*

NATIONALLY RANKED HAMMER THROWERS

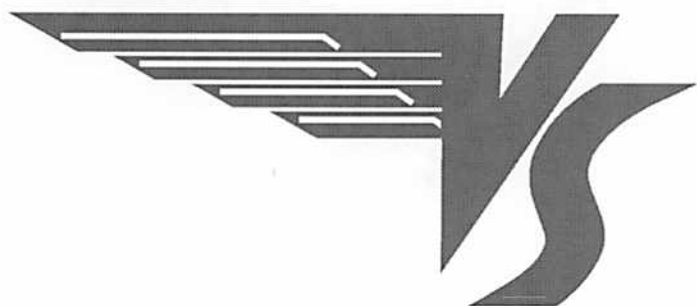
STARTING IN 7TH AND 8TH GRADES

Boys	First Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Zach Richards	8th	156'10"	182'07"	207'09"	221' 03"
Wes Wright	8th	165' 01"	189' 01"	216' 06"	219' 07"
Conor McCullough	8th		159' 05"	213' 00"	243' 11"
Girls	First Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Allison Homer	8th	131' 11"	159' 09"	167' 05"	177' 09"
Arianna Lugo	8th	140' 06"	155' 10"	162' 01"	161' 07"
Patrice Gates	7th		147' 06"	160' 01"	164' 02"
Casey Kraychir	7th		135' 01"	152' 01"	173' 04"
Michelle Poet	7th		131' 03"	123' 05"	136' 08"
Katie Kraychir	7th			141' 04"	152' 10"
Olivia Midles	8th			129' 10"	145' 11"

STRATEGIES TO MOVE U.S. HAMMER THROWING FROM A WEAK "B" TO A STRONG "A" WORLD STANDARD

By Harold Connolly

1. Begin hammer-throwing coaching of youngsters at 12 to 14 years of age.
2. Train (youth/high school) coaches in modern hammer throwing technique and age-appropriate training strategies, and make coaching youth challenging fun from day one.
3. In order to effect an increase in the numbers and throwing proficiency of youth hammer throwers across the country, train and motivate interested coaches to coach youth to throw the hammer through the formation of a USATF youth club.
Mike Judge's Throw 1 Deep youth throws club in Georgia is the beacon, prototype for training young throwers for college athletic scholarships and future Olympic participation. In the past four years Throw 1 Deep has been a major factor in the advancement of American youth hammer throwing.
4. For ages 12 - 14 provide hammer-throwing practice 3 - 4 times per week.
5. For ages 12 - 14 establish correct hammer throwing patterns of technique (with emphasis on rhythm, footwork with knees in tight, lift off foot stepping over rotating ankle, and relaxed countering.
6. Between ages 12 - 15 stress total body fitness, flexibility, and general athleticism with highly specific challenges to strength/power development through specific hammer throw drill movements with moderately shortened, heavier hammer-like implements, medicine balls, and other weights no more than a few pounds heavier than the age-appropriate competition hammer. The hammer throw is a high-speed, complex, rhythmical event.
7. Do not introduce progressive weightlifting training until 14 - 15 years of age.
8. For ages 12 - 15 emphasize throwing light hammers beginning at 2 kg incrementally increased to 5 kg/12 lbs, stressing acquisition of rhythm/speed.
9. When designing a hammer-throwing training program, be mindful of the sports science established precept "If you cannot throw a lighter than regulation hammer over 80 m consistently with rhythm/speed, you will not be able to throw the regulation hammer over 80 m."
10. If the Olympic hammer throw is the goal, begin hammer-throwing by age 12-14 to achieve the following performance levels by high school freshman season:
(boys, 12 lbs, 180' - 200') (girls, 4 kg, 160' - 180').
11. USATF should offer hammer-throwing at the youth division level (13 - 14) at association, regional, and national competitions where there are three or more entered, coached competitors and safe competition facilities.
12. USATF Youth Executive Committee assembles an advisory committee charged to recommend a feasible program of action for developing increased hammer throw coaching, training, and competition opportunities for youth ages 12 - 17, to be completed and presented at the 2007 USATF Annual Meeting. *LSTJ*



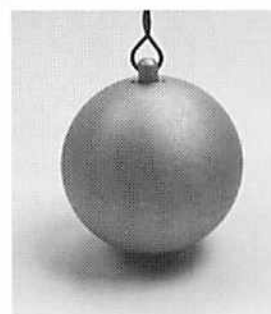
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