

# LOOKING & STROING

AUGUST, 2008

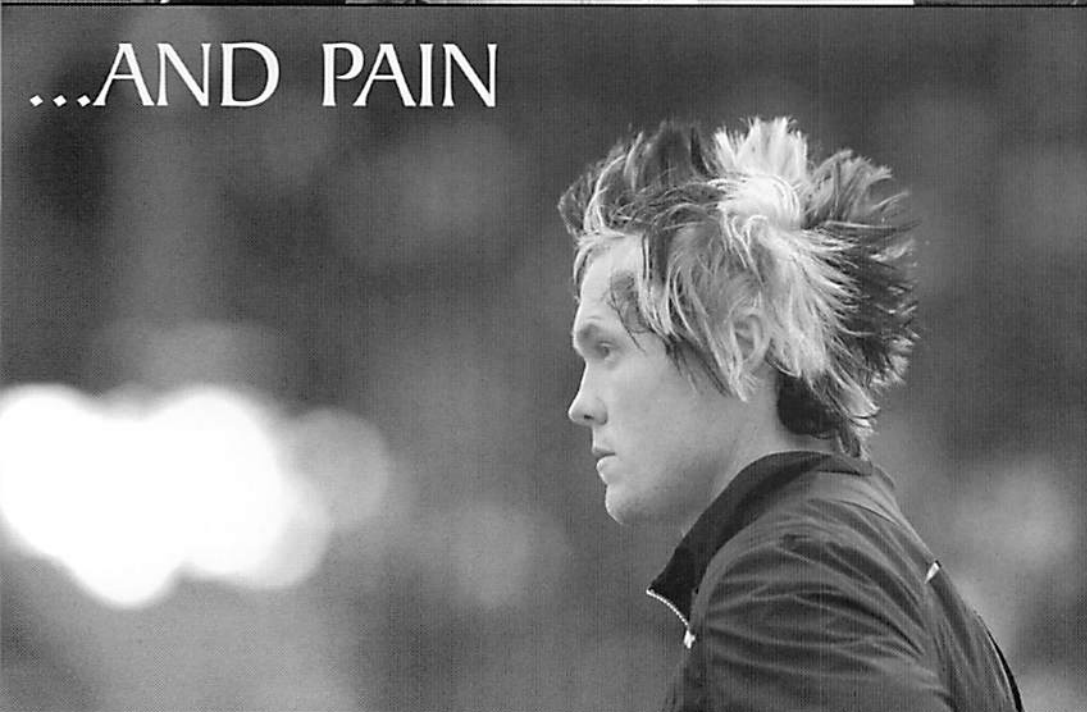
HOFFA LEADS  
TEAM USA  
TO BEIJING

INSIDE  
CHAMPIONSHIPS,  
HEIDLER,  
TECHNIQUE  
& MORE

# JOY.



# ...AND PAIN



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On the cover:  
Reese Hoffa  
won the men's  
shot and lead  
his  
U.S. team  
members  
around the  
track in  
Eugene.  
(Victor Sailer)  
TOP:  
The U.S.  
women's Olym-  
pic hammer  
contingent of  
Campbell,   
Cosby and  
Smith.  
BOTTOM:  
A perplexed  
Breux Greer  
made an early  
exit in Eugene.  
(Victor Sailer)

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- ◆ Pat Corbett
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- ◆ Don Amini
- ◆ Kurt Dunkel
- ◆ Brad Reid
- ◆ Mark Valenti
- ◆ Lane Dowell
- ◆ Jeff Gorski

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record holder

# Letter From The Editor

## CINDERELLA STORY

Given the scope of this publication, you've come to expect to read of the exploits of national and international-class athletes. In this issue alone you'll gain some insight into the careers of 2007 USATF and IAAF hammer champions Amber Campbell and Betty Heidler. You'll read of those elite athletes who have gained a spot on a NCAA podium or punched their ticket to Beijing.

Big names and big accomplishments sell. There's no secret why you could mistake *ESPN* as a Yankees or Red Sox affiliate, and why the Pittsburgh Pirates or Tampa Bay Rays won't see the light of day...unless the Yankees or Red Sox are in town.

But every so often, there is a story worth reading that is not found at the end of the tape measure, but in the feet, and even inches, gained in between.

Connor Whitesel, by way of introduction, which he badly needs, is a product of Hempfield High School in Landisville, Pennsylvania in Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

Never heard of him? No need to feel inadequate. His resume is far from high profile. He never graced the pages of *Track and Field News* or came within a standing throw of making the *Dyestat* rankings.

His high school coach, Terry Shuman, remembers the day that Connor came out for track, all of 170 pounds, spread over his 5 foot 10 inch frame. He was slight of build, but impressed Shuman with his attitude and athleticism.

During his two years at Hempfield, Connor never won a state championship. He never won a district or league title. Matter of fact, he couldn't claim a single dual meet win in the shot or discus. But Shuman never gave up on Connor, feeling he might be a good candidate for the hammer if he chose a college where he could get a chance to make the team and learn the event.

Shuman recommended the University of Delaware, and Connor matriculated there in the fall of 2006.

Larry Pratt, who coaches the throws at Delaware, recalls the first day Connor came out for track.

"I had him throw the discus and remarked that maybe he should think about learning to throw the hammer. He was small for a Division I throwing program, but there was something special about his attitude and his desire to make the team."

"Connor, like all freshmen at Delaware, began learning his turns on the road that leads from the football stadium," recalls Pratt. "Because there are no cage-like safety nets, Connor was told to never let go of the hammer, no matter

what, even if he had to leave his feet and fall on his face, he had to hold on to the hammer so as not to kill anyone, in particular, his coach."

Some weeks later Connor was moved to the hammer cage for safety reasons. There he slipped in the circle one afternoon and tried to stop his turns, but instead of letting go of the hammer, he held on to it, *just like he was told to by his coach*, and performed what is now referred to as the "Flying Connor." The hammer took the freshman off his feet and into the air and after a full spin in the air slammed him to the ground and he came up with a broken wrist. His freshmen season had ended before it started.

The following fall Connor was back with the hope of making the team as a hammer thrower. In an effort to expand their understanding of the hammer, Connor and several other throwers decided to drive to Virginia Tech and take part in Yuri Sedykh's fall hammer clinic. There they learned to "pusssh ball," "stop turtling," and become "more speedly" in the ring. When they returned home, they were energized and motivated and determined to throw throughout the winter in order to make the spring team roster. Connor spent that winter outside throwing the hammer with teammate David Schwartz before coming inside each day to work on the 35 lb. weight throw.

In his first outdoor meet at Towson, Connor was 5<sup>th</sup> with a throw of 157 feet, in his second meet at Maryland he was 4<sup>th</sup> with a throw of 159'11", and in his third meet at Rider he hit 160 feet.

In just his fourth meet, Connor competed at the Colonial Athletic Association Conference Championships at the College of William and Mary. And it was there a first occurred. Connor, the under-sized grinder with zero pedigree, launched a personal best 167'. And more remarkably, his first *ever* competition win happened to net him a conference title.

Early each spring March Madness strikes and some mid or low-major hoops program survives the first weekend gauntlet of major conference powers and advances to the round of 16. They are promptly labeled 'Cinderella.' These teams evoke a sentimental hope that those of us who are not endowed with six-foot, five-inch frames and large slabs of fast-twitch can, with hard work, excel beyond what anyone would expect.

*Long & Strong* celebrates Olympians and elite athletes for good reason. Their gifts fascinate us all. But for each one of these talented athletes, there are a thousand stories of athletes who are passionate about our sport, maximize their talents and pursue excellence out of the spotlight.

There's a little Connor in all of us. \*L&S\*

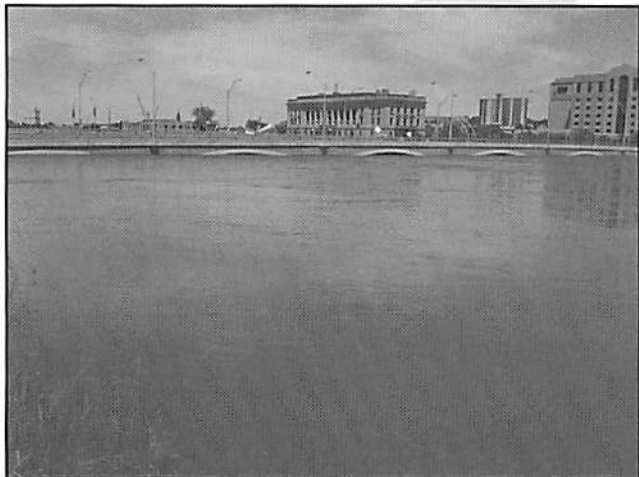
Drake University, Des Moines, IA, June 13, 14, 2008

# RISING ABOVE

BY DAN McQUAID & TIM BATTEN

## FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Tim and I arrived at the outskirts of Des Moines around 3:00pm, uncertain as to what we'd find when we entered the city. In many respects, it was a perfect summer's day. Bright sun. Light breeze. Eighty degrees. But we'd seen enough inundated fields, swollen rivers and coyote carcasses on our eight-hour journey to know that the previous day's storms had done some damage. Flooding had already forced us to abandon Highway 80, the main road into Des Moines from the east, and follow a long, looping detour across the northern part of the state. Weather reports warned that although the rains had passed, runoff from the storms might cause already bloated rivers to spill their banks, and the Des Moines River runs right through downtown Des Moines. As we approached our exit, a strange-looking convoy sped past us going in the opposite direction: three yellow school buses escorted by half a dozen squad cars with their lights flashing heading out of Des Moines. Was this the beginning of some sort of evacuation? Would the meet be cancelled?



The Des Moines River on June 13.

We didn't know.

Tim has enrolled at Drake for the fall semester and is familiar with the campus, so with him navigating we quickly found parking, slapped on some sun block and scrambled toward the stadium. Within minutes we'd secured our media passes and planted ourselves behind the discus cage just as round two of the men's discus final began. I took a moment to catch my breath and look around, and everything...seemed...perfect. Not a hint of flooding. No panic. No talk of an evacuation. The venerable Drake stadium, built of brick and situated in the middle of a neighborhood, exuded a quaint, old-school charm like Wrigley Field or Fenway Park. The throwing area, a large,

fenced-in square of plush grass attached to the north end of the stadium was alive with brightly uniformed athletes competing from two rings. The rings sat in different corners of the square field, maybe one hundred meters apart and connected by a long, low hill filled with spectators lounging back in the grass and enjoying the competition. A Sunday-school picnic could not have been more placid. It felt surreal, but Tim and I had work to do, so we whipped out our notebooks and got down to business.

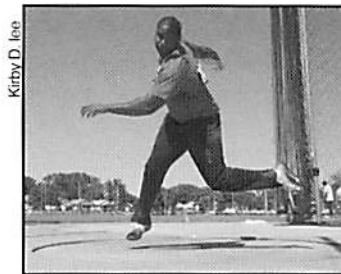
## Men's Discus

The early rounds of the men's discus final were oddly subdued. Whether because of nerves, a slight tailwind, or a combination of both, no one seemed able to muster Mr. Mojo. Many throwers struggled to get a proper flight on the disc, unable to keep the front edge from tipping up.

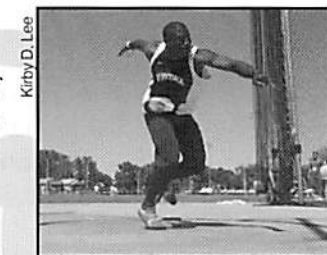
Everyone seemed frustrated. Leif Arrhenius, the sophomore from BYU, took the lead with a toss of 57.27m early in the second round, but that was only the first throw of the day past 57 meters. The next came from Russ Winger, the fine all-around thrower from Idaho whose 57.17m pulled him into second. There were no other changes in the top two until Liberty's Clendon Henderson stuck a 58.36m in round three to take the lead. At the break, the top five consisted of Henderson, Arrhenius, Winger, Jason Schutz of Colorado State (56.76m) and Greg Garza of UCLA (56.71m).

I have to think that Garza, a veteran of many big competitions and owner of a 64.53m PR, would have been considered the favorite coming in, but he could not find his timing out of the back and each throw saw him crowding the front of the ring near the left foul line.

While the officials calculated and re-ordered the nine finalists, several throwers took advantage of the delay to step into the ring and try to conjure some rhythm. At that point, every thrower who qualified for the final three rounds had to be thinking that he could win if he could just get a hold of one. Most took a couple of practice throws, and the disc seemed to be flying better out of everyone's



Scott



Ayeni

hand, Yemi Ayeni, a long-limbed University of Virginia junior sitting in eighth place at 55.17m, picked up a baseball and performed several dry throws. This apparently did the trick, as right after the break Ayeni, throwing second in the fourth round, stepped in and drilled a 59.50m to take the lead.

His reign was brief. Throwing third in round four was Rashaud Scott of Kentucky. Scott struggled mightily with his balance in the early rounds producing a 56.05m and two fouls, and Ayeni's throw had just bumped him into eighth place. A powerfully built junior, Scott stepped into the ring, wound, turned, and lurched badly toward the left foul line as he sprinted out of the back. He almost fell down during his reverse, and I commented to Tim that he looked "way off balance on that one." Balance, apparently, is in the eye of the beholder. Scott's throw measured 60.87m and put him in the lead.

Henderson also contributed a bit of round four excitement with his best throw of the day, 58.70m, which buttressed his hold on third place. Ayeni backed up his 59.50m with a 59.23m in round five, but no one could catch Scott.

As round six began, Art Venegas, the great UCLA coach, left his perch on the hill overlooking the throwing rings and slowly walked over to Garza. Facing the last throw of his college career, Garza looked glum as Venegas spoke to him, and I wondered if the pressure of being the favorite, of maybe restoring some of the luster that the UCLA program has lost in the last few years weighed too heavily on him. He looked listless on his final throw and intentionally fouled it.

No one was able to come within two meters of Scott during the last round, and when Henderson fouled the final throw of the competition, Scott became champion.

Afterwards, Tim and I attempted to interview Scott. We had a mini-tape recorder that a reporter who covers our meets back home lent us, and Scott was very polite about answering our questions. But warm-ups for the women's disc had just begun and every time a throw headed anywhere near one of the foul lines, an official let rip with a blast from an air horn as a way of warning the other officials to watch out, so the taped conversation ended up sounding like something from one of those reality TV shows where they bleep out all the cusswords. As best I could tell, though, Scott said that during the first three rounds he felt like he was close to nailing one if he could just stop dropping his left arm out of the back. Whatever adjustment he made, it certainly worked. He'll be back next year to defend his title, and if Ayeni remembers to pack his baseball, theirs should be one heck of a battle.

1, 821 Rashaud Scott, Kentucky, 60.87m, (199-08). 2, 1127 Yemi Ayeni, Virginia, 59.50m, (195-02). 3, 825 Clendon Henderson, Liberty, 58.70m, (192-07). 4, 669 Leif Arrhenius, Brigham Young, 57.27m, (187-11). 5, 788 Russ Winger, Idaho, 57.17m, (187-07). 6, 713 Jason Schutz, Colorado State, 56.76m, (186-03). 7, 1116 Greg Garza, UCLA, 56.71m, (186-01). 8, 686 Martin Maric, California, 56.64m, (185-10). 9, 629 Ryan Whiting, Arizona State, 56.27m, (184-07). 10, 814 Andy Fryman, Kentucky, 54.68m, (179-05). 11, 1122 Darius Savage, UCLA, 53.67m, (176-01). 12, 739 Wes Stockbarger, Florida, 53.32m, (174-11).

### Women's Hammer

A battle for first place between Eva Orban of USC and Brittany Riley of Southern Illinois started as a rout and ended with a close call. I'm kind of bummed that we couldn't track down Orban after the competition, because

she sounds like she'd make a great interview. According to a transcript that we found in the media room, a reporter had asked her after Wednesday's prelims if she was worried because Riley threw farther that day. "No," was her refreshingly honest reply. "The game's on Friday."

Indeed it was, and Orban made clear her intention of winning Friday's "game" with a round one salvo of 68.27m. Riley, the defending USATF champion and no shrinking violet herself,

answered with 65.26m. Orban extended her lead in round two by hitting 68.71m, and seemed to have the title firmly in hand when Riley fouled her next four attempts. In round six, however, Riley launched a throw that appeared close to matching Orban's best. It turned out to be 67.44m, which moved Riley from fourth place to second, but left Orban the champion. Orban later told the USC website that had Riley jumped into first with that throw, she (Orban) was "ready to throw it farther." Considering that Orban has never finished lower than third in the Pac-10, NCAA Regional, or NCAA Championship meets, it is hard to doubt her word.

Another bit of drama in the women's hammer was provided by the ladies of ASU. Defending team champions, Arizona State needed a boatload of points in the throws to have any chance of repeating. That's a lot of pressure to carry into the ring, but Sarah Stevens and Jessica Pressley both came through. In round five, Stevens launched a 66.37m throw to move from seventh place to third. Pressley did her part with a sixth-round 65.28m to nail down fourth place. As it turned out, those eleven points were just the beginning of a remarkable two days for the ASU women.

Kirby D. Lee



Orban

Kirby D. Lee



Riley

1, 419 Eva Orban, Southern California, 68.71m, (225-05). 2, 423 Brittany Riley, Southern Illinois, 67.44m, (221-03). 3, 25 Sarah Stevens, Arizona State, 66.37m, (217-09). 4, 24 Jessica Pressley, Arizona State, 65.28m, (214-02). 5, 200 Loren Groves, Kansas State, 64.12m, (210-04). 6, 543 McKenzie Garberg, Washington State, 64.09m, (210-03). 7, 534 Brittany Pryor, Virginia Tech, 63.42m, (208-01). 8, 6 Stevi Large, Akron, 62.88m, (206-03). 9, 525 Kristen Callan, Virginia Tech, 62.73m, (205-10). 10, 575 Kate Burton, Wyoming, 60.66m, (199-00). 11, 201 Laci Heller, Kansas State, 59.76m, (196-01). 12, 323 Veronica Jatsek, Ohio State, 58.76m, (192-09).

### Men's Javelin

As expected, the men's javelin competition came down to a battle between the only three collegiate throwers to break the eighty-meter barrier this year: Cory White of USC, Adam Montague of Florida, and Chris Hill of Georgia.

Of these three, White threw first in round one and opened with 73.49m. Montague followed and topped White with 74.48m. Hill then took the lead with a 76.21m opener. White improved to 74.57m in round two to move into second place, only to see Hill extend his lead to 78.41m. White had his best throw, 77.79m, in round three, but there were no changes in the top three places for the rest of the competition.

Hill's javelin title is the first in school history. Don Babbitt, Georgia's highly regarded throws coach, said Hill "did a very good job holding off a couple great competitors today. He executed well and handled his first national championship with great composure."

Hill returned the compliment saying, "There is no way I'd be where I am now without the help of Coach Babbitt."

1, 769 Chris Hill, Georgia, 78.41m, (257-03). 2, 1022 Corey White, Southern California, 77.79m, (255-02). 3, 733 Adam Montague, Florida, 74.62m, (244-10). 4, 845 Preston Chatham, LSU, 71.51m, (234-07). 5, 1106 Alex VanderMerwe, Texas-El Paso, 70.60m, (231-07). 6, 839 Jeffrey Kent, Louisiana-Monroe, 68.74m, (225-06). 7, 972 Alex Wolff, Oregon, 67.09m, (220-01). 8, 720 John Austin, Duke, 66.10m, (216-10). 9, 965 Mike Simmons, Oregon, 65.54m, (215-00). 10, 1036 Joe Brown, TCU, 64.54m, (211-09). 11, 1147 Jon Jeffreys, Washington State, 63.16m, (207-03). 12, 901 Austin Braman, Nebraska, 62.55m, (205-02).



Hill



White

### Men's Hammer

Heading into Friday's final, the men's hammer competition shaped up as a battle between Auburn's Jake Dunkleberger, the defending champion, and his teammate Cory Martin.

However, as Auburn throws coach Jerry Clayton sagely reminded us, "There's a big difference between coming in ranked one and two and actually finishing that way."

Though Clayton had faith in Martin and Dunkleberger, and referred to them both as "great competitors," he was worried that Igor Agafonov of Kansas might pull off an upset. "He's got a great coach, and he's really dangerous," said Clayton. "As long as he's got a throw left, the competition is not over."

It looked like Martin was determined to end the competition on the very first throw of the day, as he stepped into the ring and set a new Drake Stadium record of 72.83m. Agafonov responded with 69.51m, but the first round ended with Martin separated from the rest of the field by more than three meters.

Martin opened round two with 71.39m, and walked out of the ring hanging his head. Clayton told us that Martin had been throwing well in practice, and apparently the tall, bearded senior from Bloomington, Indiana, felt he was ready to go farther than that 72.83m.

The battle for second place heated up in round two. Dunkleberger showed some life with a 68.84m and Boldi Kocsor, much to the delight of the large UCLA cheering section perched on the hill above and to the right of the cage, knocked Agafonov into third with a toss of 69.92m. A fun moment came when Oregon senior Colin Veldman let loose with his second-round toss. Lance Deal, currently the Oregon throws coach, yelled "Come on!" as the hammer arced through the air, and the hammer wisely responded by traveling 66.94m, which would turn out to be Veldman's best throw of the day.

I asked Deal later if he was optimistic about the state of the hammer in this country. "When I see a big guy like Cory Martin throw with great technique rather than just muscling it? When I see Boldi Kocsor three-turn seventy-meters? Yeah, I'm optimistic."

The Auburn boys provided further justification for that optimism in round three, as Martin hit 72.43m (and once



Martin



Dunkleberger

again hung his head in disappointment) and Dunkleberger grabbed second place with a 70.51m toss. Rounding out the top five at the break were Kocsor, Agafonov, and Virginia Tech's Matej Muza in fifth with a third round 68.18m, which delighted his small, but vocal fan base so much that one of them screamed, "Let's go get some pizza!" Muza, showing remarkable restraint for a thrower, declined the offer and stuck around for three more throws. It was a wise choice on his part, because his best was still to come.

So was Dunkelberger's. Throwing eighth in round four he showed he was not ready to relinquish his title just yet. Clayton told us that Dunkelberger had been feeling sluggish during the last part of the season and had complained that the implement felt heavy, "So we mixed in some throws with an overweight implement to try to get him to work the ground better." Mission accomplished. Dunkelberger stepped in and smoked a 72.98m to take over first and set another new stadium record.

There was some late round maneuvering among the rest of the field as Agafonov jumped into third with 69.92m, and Muza tightened his grip on fifth with a 69.83m, but everyone's attention focused on the Auburn boys. Martin answered Dunkelberger's bomb with a 72.77m. Dunkelberger hit 71.90m in round five. Martin replied with 71.36m. Dunkelberger finished the day with a sixth round 69.72m and then stepped aside as Martin entered the ring for the final throw of the day. We asked Martin later what was going through his head at that moment. "Just that it was time to lay it all on the line, not worry about fouling or whatever. Just put everything into it. I really had nothing to lose, so why not go for it?" As his throw hung in the air, he bellowed, "Go!" The crowd roared when the hammer planted well beyond the 70-meter line. It measured out to 74.13m, a new PR for Martin and, of course, a new stadium record.

We spoke with Coach Clayton after the competition, and I was struck with how gracious and humble he was. If anyone had reason to crow at that moment, it was him, but he gave all the credit to Martin and Dunkelberger, praising their competitiveness and willingness to accept coaching. Before we parted ways, I asked if he thought that Martin would have anything left for the shot. "I think the hammer takes more out of your legs than the other throws do," he replied. "And, of course, you've got the big three in the shot: Whiting, Winger, and Lloyd. But I'd never count Cory out."

1, 651 Cory Martin, Auburn, 74.13m, (243-02). 2, 648 Jake Dunkleberger, Auburn, 72.98m, (239-05). 3, 803 Egor Agafonov, Kansas, 69.92m, (229-05). 4, 1119 Boldizsar Kocsor, UCLA, 69.92m, (229-05). 5, 1131 Matej Muza, Virginia Tech, 69.83m, (229-01). 6, 866 Steffen Nerdal, Memphis, 68.21m, (223-09). 7, 968 Colin Veldman, Oregon, 66.94m, (219-07). 8, 814 Andy

Fryman, Kentucky, 66.03m, (216-08). 9, 786 Marcus Mattox, Idaho, 65.39m, (214-06). 10, 864 Paul Peulich, Manhattan, 65.00m, (213-03). 11, 987 Timothy Morse, Radford, 63.20m, (207-04). —, 1100 Hans Eriksson, Texas-El Paso, FOUL.

### Women's Discus

Having gained momentum in the hammer, the ASU women spent the discus competition handing out extra-large slices of whup-ass pie.

The first three rounds saw ASU's Tai Battle locked in a struggle for first place with Texas Tech's D'Andra Carter. Battle improved on each of her first three attempts, culminating with a PR of 55.69m in round three. Carter stayed close with her own round- three bomb of 55.34m. Sarah Stevens, fresh off of her third place finish in the hammer, stuck a round two 53.44m which temporarily put her in third place here as well. Stevens and her teammate Jessica Pressley both had to report to the discus almost immediately after the completion of the hammer, and the quick turnaround may have flustered Pressley a bit, as she fouled her first two attempts and stepped in for round three facing elimination.

Stevens told us later that having teammates competing in the same flight really helped the ASU throwers to stay calm in high-pressure situations. She also credited her coach, Dave Dumble. "He's always so relaxed and positive, he makes it easy for us to be that way." Dumble, the former UCLA discus All-American who has built a powerhouse throws program at ASU, was a very busy man on this day, at one point having to hobble back and forth between the women's hammer and men's discus where Ryan Whiting ended up finishing ninth. I say "hobbled" because Coach Dumble spent the weekend on crutches after injuring himself demonstrating how to throw on a wet ring during a practice meant to prepare for the forecasted Iowa rains. "I'm thirty-two years old now," he explained sheepishly. "Not as young as I used to be."

Whether due to girl power, positive coaching, or simply out of determination to "win one for the Gimper," Pressley came through with a throw of 49.48m in round three, which put her in eighth place and qualified her for three more throws.

At the break, the top five consisted of Battle (55.69m), Carter (55.34m), Stevens (53.44m), McKenzie Garberg of Washington State (51.68m) and Khadija Talley of Miami (51.09m).

During warm-ups prior to the final three rounds, Stevens picked up a towel and performed several dry throws in the ring. She told us later that she felt like she had a big throw in her if she could just find her rhythm.

It turns out her suspicions were correct, as she nailed a fourth-round 56.14m to vault into first.

Battle responded with a 55.41m, and Carter finished her day with a 55.04m toss in the sixth round, but those were the only two throws that came close to matching Stevens. Meanwhile, Pressley finished with a sixth-round 50.27m which lifted her into seventh place and secured two more precious points for ASU.

After the competition, an ecstatic Stevens ran up the hill among the spectators to celebrate with her family and friends. Only a junior, she's already experienced a lifetime's worth of ups and downs at championship meets including a victory in the indoor shot in 2007, and a big disappointment in last year's discus competition when she was favored to win but did not make the final.

After each event, the top eight finishers were escorted through the media room and we found Stevens there radiant and surprisingly articulate at the end of what must have been an exhausting day. I asked her how she was able to keep her energy over this long day of competition. "It's easy, because this is what I love to do. Actually, throwing the hammer first today probably helped me in the discus because it let me work off some of my nervous energy."

1, 25 Sarah Stevens, Arizona State, 56.14m, (184-02). 2, 15 Tai Battle, Arizona State, 55.69m, (182-08). 3, 481 D'Andra Carter, Texas Tech, 55.34m, (181-07). 4, 251 Khadija Talley, Miami, 54.73m, (179-07). 5, 543 McKenzie Garberg, Washington State, 53.30m, (174-10). 6, 340 Rachel Talbert, Oral Roberts, 50.46m, (165-07). 7, 24 Jessica Pressley, Arizona State, 50.27m, (164-11). 8, 521 Billie-Jo Grant, Virginia, 50.26m, (164-11). 9, 200 Loren Groves, Kansas State, 49.24m, (161-06). 10, 359 Emma Schmelzer, Penn State, 48.80m, (160-01). 11, 427 Christina Mueller, Southern Methodist, 48.20m, (158-02). 12, 315 Rachel Jansen, Northern Iowa, 47.71m, (156-06).

By the time the throws finished up on Friday, Tim and I were exhausted as well. We dazedly watched a few running events, then headed to our hotel where we were again reminded of the flooding that was causing havoc all over Iowa. Some members of a minor league baseball team in town to play the Iowa Cubs were lounging around the lobby speculating on whether or not the flooded baseball stadium could be made ready for a game. "I don't think so," I overheard one of them say. "The groundskeeper told me there's fish swimming in the dugouts."

I also overheard a stranded railroad employee telling the desk clerk about an empty train that had been intentionally parked on a bridge over one of the swelling rivers as a way of helping to stabilize the bridge. The river swept away both the empty train and the bridge.

The nightly news reported that many buildings in downtown Des Moines were flooding, including the jail, which had to be evacuated. That explained the convoy of busses we'd seen leaving town as we drove in Friday afternoon.

## SATURDAY, JUNE 14th

Another surreal day. The morning news was dominated by images of flooding and evacuation, including a photo of a river running directly over Highway 80, the route Tim and I had hoped to take home that evening. There were also calls for volunteers to fill sandbags in downtown Des Moines. Once again, though, conditions at the track were perfect. And the people working the meet, the police officers directing traffic outside the stadium, the concession workers, the security guard who jumped up to open the door to the media room each time Tim and I approached, were remarkably polite and helpful as if they had nothing else in the world to be concerned about other than the comfort of the spectators. Amazing.

## Women's Shot

The field was loaded with former champions. Sarah Stevens won indoors in 2007. Jessica Pressley won outdoors in 2007. Mariam Kevkishvili, a native of the Republic of Georgia, won the 2008 indoor title throwing for the University of Florida.

Once again, the ASU women carried with them the pressure of keeping their team in the championship hunt, and once again they handled it magnificently.

Susan King of Memphis set the pace in the first round with a 17.02m toss, but Pressley, exhibiting a beautifully smooth spin technique, took over the lead for good in round two with a put of 17.94m. King launched her best throw of the day, 17.68m, in round three. Kevkishvili, a glider, hit her best throw of

17.43m in round three as well. Kevkishvili seemed a bit uncomfortable and repeatedly looked to her coach in the stands for guidance as to where to line up her right foot at the back of the ring. We asked her about this afterwards, and she told us that her coach, from his vantage point, felt that the left foul line was incorrectly angled and wanted to be sure that Mariam did not throw that way. From where we were sitting, we could not tell if there was a problem with the foul line, but I wonder if worrying about it may have cost Kevkishvili some of her focus.

The most exciting moment of the first three rounds came when Northern Iowa's Rachel Jansen, sitting on two fouls,



Pressley



King

drilled a PR of 17.36m. Jansen has a very aggressive spin technique with a violent right-leg action that caused Tim to dub her "Mrs. Kovago" after the Hungarian discus thrower. Jansen's throw moved her into fourth place and caused a joyous celebration among her fans.

Also in this eventful third round, Stevens hit her best throw of the outdoor season, 17.21m, to take over fifth place.

At the break, Stevens and Pressley came over to the stands to confer with Coach Dumble. He gave them technical advice, encouraging Pressley to let her right leg get ahead out of the back and Stevens to slow her shoulders and hit a more wrapped power position. The girls smiled frequently as he gently encouraged them, and I was impressed by their demeanor.

In the middle of this pressure-packed competition, the three might as well have been sitting around a Starbucks enjoying iced lattes. I complimented Dumble on his coaching style later that afternoon, and he told me that one of his former throwers who ended up studying sports psychology advised him that the best way to give technical suggestions was to sandwich them between two positive comments. I think most coaches would agree that it is best to stay upbeat during high-pressure competitions, but agreeing with it and actually doing it when your knee is killing you and the success of your team depends on your throwers amassing ungodly amounts of points is a whole different matter. Staying calm, though, seems to come naturally to the amiable Dumble, and his even-tempereness combined with his technical expertise make him a masterful coach.

With Kevkhishvili off her game, it seemed during the final three rounds that if anyone was going to catch Pressley, it would have to be King, an aggressive and explosive athlete. But Pressley extended her lead with a round five 18.13m, and the strain of trying to match that caused King to foul her final three attempts, including one that landed outside the left sector in round six. It appeared that Pressley's superior technique made the difference. Each of her throws was smooth and balanced. She swept a long right leg through the right half of the ring and let that carry her out of the back. All of her momentum traveled down the center of the ring and out into the throw. King, on the other hand, seemed to use her shoulders to develop momentum out of the back. This caused her to tip towards the left foul line and, when the heat was on, made it difficult to stay in the ring.

On her final throw, Patience Knight of Texas Tech hit 17.26m to knock Stevens down to sixth. But it was another great day for Dumble's women, who finished the weekend with a total of forty-four points.

Afterwards, Pressley, having successfully defended her title, dedicated her performance as a birthday present to her father. Like Stevens, she was gracious and articulate in victory, deflecting credit to the coaching of Dumble and the support of her teammates. I, for one, hope that Pressley finds a way to continue throwing as she looks to have the potential to someday succeed on the international level.

1, 24 Jessica Pressley, Arizona State, 18.13m, (59-05.75). 2, 243 Susan King, Memphis, 17.68m, (58-00.25). 3, 122 Mariam Kevkhishvili, Florida, 17.43m, (57-02.25). 4, 315 Rachel Jansen, Northern Iowa, 17.36m, (56-11.50). 5, 486 Patience Knight, Texas Tech, 17.26m, (56-07.50). 6, 25 Sarah Stevens, Arizona State, 17.21m, (56-05.75). 7, 493 Keisha Walkes, Texas-El Paso, 16.37m, (53-08.50). 8, 195 Stephanie Horton, Kansas, 16.12m, (52-10.75). 9, 223 Jere Summers, Louisville, 15.96m, (52-04.50). 10, 450 Annie Alexander, Tennessee, 15.71m, (51-06.50). 11, 534 Brittany Pryor, Virginia Tech, 15.70m, (51-06.25). 12, 207 Levania Henderson, Kent State, 15.22m, (49-11.25).

### Women's Javelin

Near the end of the women's shot, the stadium announcer encouraged spectators to head over to watch the women's javelin final which "featured four of the best throwers in NCAA history." I'm not sure if Oregon's Rachel Yurkovich was one of those "four greats" referred to by the announcer, but she came out on top in this competition.



Yurkovich

The first three rounds featured a tight battle between Yurkovich, New Mexico's Katie Coronado, Nebraska's Kayla Wilkinson, Purdue's Kara Patterson, and Andrea Kvetova of SMU. Yurkovich opened the proceedings with a toss of 52.53m and followed that up with 53.94m in the second round. Patterson (53.39m) and Kvetova (54.47m) stayed close, while Wilkinson briefly took the lead with her second round throw of 54.60m. Yurkovich responded with 54.71m to retake the lead in the third round. Also in that round, Coronado moved into fourth place with a 54.11m toss.

At the break, the top three were separated by little more than half a meter, but Yurkovich broke things open with her fifth round toss of 56.58m, the eventual winner. Meanwhile, Coronado moved into second with her final throw of 54.71m. Wilkinson's 54.60 held up for third, with Kvetova and Patterson rounding out the top five.

Yurkovich later told the Oregon athletics website that she "was really nervous going in, but once I got on the field, my goal was just to keep improving with each throw and it turned out great in the end."

Tim and I found Lance Deal, Yurkovich's coach, after the competition and asked if he was able to lend some of his vast experience to his athletes as they competed over this weekend. "They probably get sick of hearing all my stories. This morning I told them about the time at the World Championships that I traveled forty-five minutes by bus to a practice area then opened my bag and found out I'd packed two left shoes. I just wanted to remind them that everyone is human."

Just then, Yurkovich, fresh off the awards stand, came along and enveloped her coach in a long embrace.

1, 350 Rachel Yurkovich, Oregon, 56.58m, (185-07). 2, 303 Katie Coronado, New Mexico, 54.71m, (179-06). 3, 294 Kayla Wilkinson, Nebraska, 54.60m, (179-02). 4, 426 Andrea Kvetova, Southern Methodist, 54.47m, (178-08). 5, 370 Kara Patterson, Purdue, 53.93m, (176-11). 6, 270 Ruby Radocaj, Minnesota, 52.43m, (172-00). 7, 326 Amy Backel, Oklahoma, 52.39m, (171-10). 8, 119 Evelien Dekkers, Florida, 50.71m, (166-04). 9, 357 Karlee McQuillen, Penn State, 50.58m, (165-11). 10, 437 Danielle Maier, Stanford, 48.69m, (159-09). 11, 82 Stephanie Ralls, Cal State-Northridge, 48.39m, (158-09). 12, 183 Tammilee Kerr, Iowa, 43.75m, (143-06).

### Men's Shot

The men's shot, the most highly anticipated throwing event of the weekend, began much like the men's discus, with a tentative first three rounds. Whiting set the pace with a first round 19.83m, but did not look especially comfortable. He's an interesting thrower. There were probably half a dozen putters in the final with more refined technique, including Winger and all three Arizona guys. He tends to stay on his left a long time coming out of the back, something that Dumble told me was a result of relying on his upper body strength to initiate his spin. But he seems to have an innate gift of being able to generate a tremendous amount of force. Watching him, I was reminded of having seen John Godina throw the shot in 1998 or Robert Fazekas throw the disc in 2003. Those guys could just *bring it* better than any of their competitors, and so can Whiting. If he stays healthy for two more years of working with Dumble, and develops some of the rhythm that Godina possessed, holy cow.

Winger's first throw was a sector foul down the right side, as was his final attempt in the discus the day before. It seemed like he was just pulling the trigger a little early, which is understandable in a meet like this, but he needed to find his timing if he wanted to hang with Whiting.

The Arizona throwers, Zach Lloyd, Shawn Best, and Jarred Sola, looked very smooth, although none produced big throws in the first round. Lloyd hit 18.35m, Best reached 18.52m, and Sola settled for 17.74m. Cory Martin, fresh off his big win in the hammer on Friday, produced a first round 18.33m.

The second round developed similarly to the first, without much in the way of fireworks. Whiting fouled. Winger looked tentative but locked up a spot in the final nine with a toss of 18.84m. Lloyd improved to 19.19m, but did not look at all pleased with his effort. Martin showed some life with a 19.32m, which moved him to second.

Whiting extended his lead in round three with a throw of 20.24m. Winger, looking ever more frustrated, again threw down the right side of the sector and did not improve on his second round toss. Lloyd seemed to find a bit of comfort and moved into second place with a throw of 19.35m.

After three rounds, Whiting held the lead by nearly a meter, but neither he nor anyone else looked happy with their performance. Dumble told us later that Whiting said the throwing surface was slow, and this may have crossed up the rotational throwers. The lone glider among the twelve finalists, Justin Clickett of Virginia Tech, could not seem to get comfortable with his release. Maybe it was the pressure. Maybe these guys were a bit gassed at the end of a long season. Just about all of them compete in two events outdoors and some in even more. Julie Taylor, the Idaho throws coach told us that Winger, though sick with the flu at the time, insisted on throwing the shot, disc, hammer and javelin at their conference meet. That can exact a toll even on these great athletes.

Several throwers ratcheted up their aggressiveness after the break. Winger charged into second place with a 19.63m effort, by far his most comfortable and vocal throw of the day. Martin, throwing next, matched Winger's yell and bettered his toss by hitting 19.89m. Lloyd then produced his best effort of the day, 19.40m, to remain in fourth. Whiting finished the round with a 19.78m toss.

The fifth round was uneventful until Martin stepped in and consolidated his hold on second with a throw of 20.16m. Whiting fouled his fifth attempt, and so entered the final round with his lead cut to eight centimeters.

Winger finished a fantastic college career with his best throw of the day, 19.73m, to take third. Cory Martin entered the ring next, needing a PR to overtake Whiting. During the warm-ups between rounds three and five, Martin uncorked a big throw that traveled in a higher arc than any of his other tosses. From his perch in the stands, Jerry Clayton now gestured to Martin to raise the shot up as he turned into the power position so he could once again find that higher arc. After the competition, Martin told us that he trusted Clayton so much he'd, "eat dog poop if Coach told me it would make me throw better." In this case, just raising the shot a bit sufficed, as Martin unleashed a high, arcing bomb that measured 20.35m and put him in first.

Next up was Lloyd, who fouled what looked like a big

throw and had to settle for fourth place. It all came down to Whiting's final attempt. Whiting showed at the indoor meet that he is quite capable of hammering a big throw under pressure, and he kept his wits about him here. But his final effort, 19.98m, though more than respectable, was not enough to overtake Martin who became the first man since 1922 to win the NCAA hammer and shot.

1, 651 Cory Martin, Auburn, 20.35m, (66-09.25). 2, 629 Ryan Whiting, Arizona State, 20.24m, (66-05). 3, 788 Russ Winger, Idaho, 19.73m, (64-08.75). 4, 615 Zack Lloyd, Arizona, 19.40m, (63-07.75). 5, 612 Shawn Best, Arizona, 18.52m, (60-09.25). 6, 1130 Justin Clickett, Virginia Tech, 18.52m, (60-09.25). 7, 618 Jarred Sola, Arizona, 18.47m, (60-07.25). 8, 821 Rashad Scott, Kentucky, 18.29m, (60-00.25). 9, 1088 Harrison Benjamin, Texas Tech, 17.92m, (58-09.50). 10, 895 Nate Englin, Missouri, 17.60m, (57-09). 11, 1112 John Caulfield, UCLA, 17.56m, (57-07.50). 12, 739 Wes Stockbarger, Florida, 17.11m, (56-01.75).

And thus ended a fantastic weekend of competition. Thanks to Glenn for commissioning us to cover the meet. Thanks to Tim for his navigational skill, moral support, and technical expertise in figuring out how to work the tape recorder. Thanks to all the athletes and coaches who patiently spoke into that recorder. Thanks especially to the people of Des Moines for hosting a great meet under very difficult circumstances. \*L&S\*

- ◆ Dan McQuaid is an English teacher and throws coach at Wheaton North High School
- ◆ Tim Batten is a 2008 graduate of Wheaton North

## Send Me Your News Clippings!!!

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

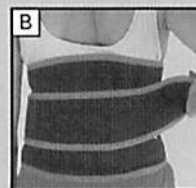
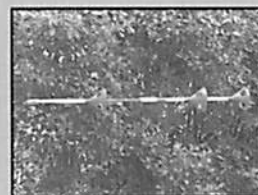
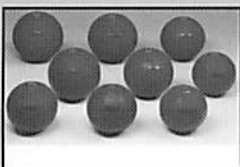
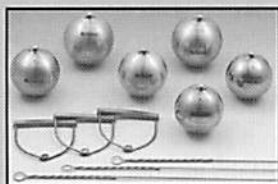
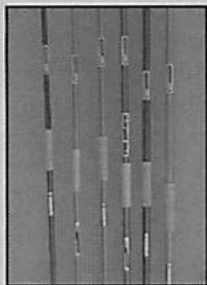


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# CALI COOL, BUT COMPETITION HOT

BY QUINT MELIUS, TARLETON STATE (TX) THROWS COACH

From the first breath of California air, one could tell the 2008 NCAA Division II National Track and Field Championships were going to be different from every other meet this year. The normally hot and dry Southern California climate, gave way to cold and damp air that permeated the atmosphere most of the weekend. For someone expecting to sweat from Thursday morning to Saturday night, the rain-soaked hours spent in a hurriedly purchased poncho were quite a surprise. For the first time in memory, the phrases "freezing" and "I am so cold" could be heard from huddled spectators as the meet progressed.

## Men's Hammer

A thunderstorm, that produced at least two tornados and many mudslides, delayed the hammer throw competition until Friday morning, instead of the scheduled 3pm Thursday start time. Despite drizzling rain, a wet ring and very muddy conditions, the hammer throw was one of the most exciting in recent memory. The men's hammer began with most of the competitors well short of their season bests in the prelims. Going into the finals, Dan Raithel of Central Missouri and Robert Klenk of Ashland University looked to be locked in a dead heat to decide the winner.

Both men began figuring out the sloshing ring and bombed huge warm-up throws between prelims and finals. The first round of the finals saw no real changes as everyone re-established their rhythm. In the second round Klenk unleashed a mammoth yell after his throw and everyone knew he was the new leader. The tape proved his throw to be over 64 meters, two meters better than Rathie's leading throw of 62.07m. In true champion fashion, the senior from Central Missouri was next in the ring and responded with a huge 66.95m that put the pressure back on Klenk, who had been thought to be the heir apparent to his former teammate Kibwe Johnson's crown. The third thrower in the final round was Aaron Falk from Hillsdale who unloaded a 60.68m and moved from 7<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> displacing Mike Jeffery of Ashland and gaining a new personal best.

Going into the last three throwers, Jeffery of Ashland had a great throw but came up a little short of top three. Klenk then stepped into the ring with absolute focus and resolve to get the title. Klenk's last throw was his best at 65.66m, but not enough to unseat Rathiel who threw a 64.35m on his last effort to cement his victory.

1, 101 Dan Raithel, Central Missouri, 66.95m, (219-08). 2, 60 Robert Klenk, Ashland, 65.66m, (215-05). 3, 156 Aaron Falk, Hillsdale, 60.68m, (199-01). 4, 59 Mike Jeffery, Ashland, 59.03m, (193-08). 5, 253 Scott Block, Southern Ill-Edw, 58.10m, (190-07). 6, 169 Willie Little, Indianapolis, 57.26m, (187-10). 7, 100 Jaban Moore, Central Missouri, 56.94m, (186-10). 8, 159 Jason Stomps, Hillsdale, 55.28m, (181-04).

## Women's Hammer

The women's hammer closely mirrored the men's: difficulty with the conditions and a two-person battle for the national championship. Throughout warm-ups and prelims many of the women were having issues with the wet and muddy ring. Like the men, the women experienced a drop in their distances in the first two rounds. Two top-three finishers from last year, Emily Fox of Grand Valley State and defending champion Adree Lakey of Angelo State, were well below their seasonal bests and looked to be out of top-three contention. Jessica Shelby-Tallman of Missouri Southern, Audrey Oswald of Humboldt State and Michelle Stark of Ashland were well ahead of the pack after the prelims and were separated by less than 20 centimeters going into the finals. Oswald, who appeared steady and unaffected by the wet ring, looked poised to hold onto the lead and grab the victory that eluded her last year in North Carolina.

The top three began the finals with Stark losing a throw into the net, followed by Tallman who did not improve her preliminary best. Oswald then calmly marched into the ring and launched a 56.33m to put her nearly one full meter in the lead. Fifth-round throws saw a foul and no real improvement in distances, but the atmosphere was getting more and more tense as all in attendance could anticipate the last round of throws. On her final throw Michelle Stark responded to her coach and teammates' chants and threw a 55.94m to put her in 2<sup>nd</sup> place narrowly missing the first position. Much like the men's competition Jessica Shelby-Tallman looked to be bursting with enthusiasm as she entered the ring. As she entered her third spin and caught a good foothold, anyone could tell this was going to be a big throw; it was 58.48m, a three-meter improvement. The 191'10" throw was a lifetime best and good enough to take the lead from Audrey Oswald. As she had done all day, Oswald looked very calm and composed after being knocked out of the lead, almost like a surgeon in the operating room. Four turns later Oswald had a throw way out in the sector and everyone fell silent as the tape was stretched. The official's call came 57.94m and the Southern Missouri crowd went wild. Oswald ended the competition just shy of a championship at 190'2", just like the year before she had to settle for the second spot on the podium.

1, 591 Jessica Selby-Tallman, MO Southern, 58.48m, (191-10). 2, 550 Audrey Oswald, Humboldt State, 57.96m, (190-02). 3, 458 Michelle Stark, Ashland, 55.94m, (183-06). 4, 541 Kathie Posa, Grand Valley St, 53.30m, (174-10). 5, 447 Adree Lakey, Angelo State, 52.51m, (172-03). 6, 459 Jennifer Tinney, Ashland, 52.27m, (171-06). 7, 454 Tara Cooper, Ashland, 51.78m, (169-10). 8, 535 Emily Fox, Grand Valley St, 51.78m, (169-10).

### Men's Shot

One hour after the women's hammer, the attention was focused on the men's shot put which had the potential to surpass the hammer as the most exciting final of the meet. After the leader and defending indoor and outdoor champion Brian Vickers was Joe Remitz of Bemidji State. Both men had battled the whole year for dominance in Division II. Many in the audience were hoping for the kind of shootout like the one Chris Figures and Clint Prange had in 2005 at Abilene that saw six of the farthest throws in Division II history. Remitz had a throw of 61'6" coming in, and Vickers' mark of 63'11" was within striking distance of the overall D-II record of 66'1". Like the hammer, a circle full of water from the earlier storms dominated the scene of the early warm-ups and first six throws. With the second throw of the competition, Ashland Freshman Kurt Roberts drilled a 17.81m for big personal best to take the early lead. Four throwers later Joe Remitz strode into the soaked and slippery ring and fell violently on the toe board during his attempt. After such a scary spill the officials decided to suspend the competition to dry out the ring to avoid injury. Thirty minutes and a few warm-ups later, the competition resumed. With the water out of the way, Remitz hit a 18.76m to lead the first round with two freshman well behind him: Kurt Thomas at 17.81m and Casey Keeter of Tarleton who came in 18<sup>th</sup> in the nation setting at 16.77m.

Flight two did not produce many surprises - Vickers leading with an 18.39m after three throws and two other seniors trailing him, Tyler Blatchly of West Virginia Wesleyan and John Ybarra of Adams, both in the mid 17-meter range. As the finals began, a light drizzle began to fall again, which had to be on the minds of the competitors as they took their final three throws. Either the rain or the effort of the first flight took something out of most of the competitors, except Vickers and Remitz, who began a throw-by-throw battle beginning with Vickers' 19.07m on his fourth attempt. Remitz responded with a 17. Each man fouled on the fifth round throw, leading up to the final attempts. The stage was set for Vickers in his final throw as a collegian to come up with something big. As soon as the put left his hand the entire stadium gasped and the 16lb ball fell past the 20 meter line. The celebration was short-lived as the red flag flew up on Vickers' final throw that well could have been a new national record. After the fanfare of Vickers' throw subsided, Remitz came into the ring with all the pressure on him - sitting in second place right after a huge foul, it was his last chance. He displayed the composure of a seasoned athlete and executed the best throw of his life, drilling a 19.25m to better Vickers by 18 centimeters and become the 2008 DII champion. The scene was dramatic as Remitz celebrated, and Vickers looked on in wonderment as to how he came up short.

1, 68 Joe Remitz, Bemidji State, 19.25m, (63-02). 2, 66 Bryan Vickers, Ashland, 19.07m, (62-06.75). 3, 62 Kurt Roberts, Ashland, 17.81m, (58-05.25). 4, 302 Tyler Blatchley, WV Wesleyan,

17.42m, (57-02). 5, 39 John Ybarra, Adams State, 17.38m, (57-00.25). 6, 809 Casey Keeter, Tarleton St, 16.77m, (55-00.25). 7, 277 Sam Washington, St Martin's, 16.71m, (54-10). 8, 97 Drew Frizzell, Central Missouri, 16.66m, (54-08).

### Women's Shot

Unlike the men's competition, the women's shot had no clear leader coming in as Jessica Shelby-Tallman of Southern Missouri and Adree Lakey of Angelo State had both thrown 15.35m, with Katie Wilson of Wayne State a few centimeters behind them. With a dry ring and very little precipitation, the women began the prelims quietly, until Shelby-Tallman jumped into the lead with a second round toss of 15.62m. The 51'3" foot throw was not only a personal best for the Missouri Southern senior, but the farthest throw for a woman in Division II this year. The third round brought about a huge 15.84m for Wilson to take the lead. At the conclusion of the round, Wilson led Shelby-Tallman by 8 inches and third was last year's 5<sup>th</sup> place finisher, Jennifer Tinney of Ashland.

With the stadium lights gleaming, the second flight of women's shot-put went by in a fairly routine manner with the 2007 runner-up Adree Lakey at 14.51m, ten centimeters ahead of last year's champion, Sheena Devine of Bemidji State. A pair of 2007 All-Americans sat tightly positioned in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, Kellie Clemments of Abilene Christian, with a 14.03m and Cloud State's Amanda Kunkel close by at 13.99m.

Cool winds chilled the night air in the finals of women's shot. As the rest of meet got going, very little changed in the order of finishers. As each attempt passed, the competitors seemed to have used all their energy in the prelims, as many throws were fouled and only Sheena Devine moved up in ranking. The Bemidji state senior showed her champion's spirit by throwing her best throw on her final attempt, but her toss of 14.79m was well short of Wilson's lead.

1, 693 Katie Wilson, Wayne State, 15.84m, (51-11.75). 2, 591 Jessica Selby-Tallman, MO Southern, 15.62m, (51-03). 3, 466 Sheena Devine, Bemidji State, 14.79m, (48-06.25). 4, 447 Adree Lakey, Angelo State, 14.51m, (47-07.25). 5, 459 Jennifer Tinney, Ashland, 14.49m, (47-06.50). 6, 453 Elise Bottarini, Ashland, 14.24m, (46-08.75). 7, 403 Kelli Clements, Abilene Chrstn, 14.03m, (46-00.50). 8, 666 Amanda Kunkel, St Cloud St, 13.99m, (45-10.75).

### Men's Javelin

Saturday morning, the last day of the meet, saw some of the best weather of the whole meet for the men's javelin competition. The first flight began with Mark Litzinger, a senior from North Dakota, with the second-best throw entering the meet, opened up the competition with a solid mark of 67.76m. Litzinger took the early lead, and only Kyle

Jilka of Fort Hayes State came within 2 meters of the lead, at 65.23m, to finish the round second. Nicolas Bowden, the Humboldt State senior, was sitting third after the first three throws at 64.02m. The fourth place effort of hammer throw runner-up Robert Klenk of Ashland looked to be a personal best at 62.92m.

The rest of the flight seemed to be well beneath their season bests and unable get their rhythm. The national leader, Matt Flick, began flight two with a solid toss of 67.01m that seemed to be well ahead of the field, until Felipe Ortiz took his second throw. The Puerto Rico-Mayaguez senior launched a huge seasonal best of 67.20m. With the exception of Adam Capps of Fort Hayes State at 63.73m, the rest of flight two was well behind the top three throwers. Much like the first flight, many of the competitors seemed out of sorts, and many of them were unable to get close to the marks they entered the meet with. Javelin throw finals closely resembled the rest of the competition as only two men improved their throws from the prelims, except for Matt Litzinger, who was already in the lead, and Nicolas Bowden, who moved from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> on his last attempt. The competitors tried mightily to move up in place, but Litzinger's final throw cemented his 2008 national championship at 67.84m.

1, 214 Matt Litzinger, North Dakota, 67.84m, (222-07). 2, 226 Felipe Ortiz, PR Mayaguez, 67.20m, (220-06). 3, 213 Matt Flick, North Dakota, 67.01m, (219-10). 4, 134 Kyle Jilka, Fort Hays St, 65.23m, (214-00). 5, 160 Nicholas Bawden, Humboldt State, 64.02m, (210-00). 6, 131 Adam Capps, Fort Hays St, 63.73m, (209-01). 7, 60 Robert Klenk, Ashland, 62.92m, (206-05). 8, 163 Robert Conrad, Indiana Univ/Pa, 62.45m, (204-11).

### **Women's Javelin**

From the beginning of the warm-ups and into the first flight, women's javelin looked to be a tight competition on paper. Adree Lakey, the junior standout from Angelo State who had the second best throw coming in, was not in the field. With Lakey on the side nursing a very sore elbow, there was a three-meter gap between the rest of the field and Linda Brivule, the sophomore from Abilene Christian. Flight one began with last year's champ jumping out to an early lead with a big season best of 46.42m that placed her two meters ahead of the field. Jenni Schantin, who came into the competition third in the nation, sat second with a 44.43m. The Emporia State junior tossed a 42.11m to sit third after round one.

Flight two did not begin as calmly as flight one, as the national leader Brivule tossed an impressive 48.26m to take the lead from the defending champion. Round two of the flight saw a big foul from Brivule, and the rest of the tightly-packed field grouped together. In round three Lauren Vermulm from Seattle Pacific grabbed third overall with a toss of 44.58m. Mary Bogner, a senior from Grand Valley State who finished out of the top 8 last year, sat in 5<sup>th</sup>

place overall after her third throw. After 8 throws in the finals, nothing had changed until Linda Brivule stepped on the runway. A huge yell later and her lead had been lengthened to 51.74m. Brivule's effort placed her nine inches ahead of the national meet record set in 2003. Aside from the best mark of the last few years in Division II, her throw was a five full meters ahead of the rest of the field. After the steel tape went back in the cart, round two saw Mary Bogner move up one place into 5<sup>th</sup> with a mark of 43.99m, bumping Jodi Symonds of Humboldt State to 6<sup>th</sup>. Three attempts later, Lauren Vermulm improved a meter to a season best at 45.82m that established her solidly in third. The final round of the competition brought the usual last-ditch efforts indicative of a national championship. Unfortunately for the competitors, no one improved their marks and Brivule's championship record held up to seal her victory.

1, 401 Linda Brivule, Abilene Chrstn, 51.74m, (169-09). 2, 705 Monika Gruszecki, Western Wash, 46.42m, (152-03). 3, 627 Lauren Vermulm, Seattle Pacific, 45.82m, (150-04). 4, 625 Jenni Schantin, Seattle Pacific, 44.43m, (145-09). 5, 532 Mary Bogner, Grand Valley St, 43.99m, (144-04). 6, 551 Jodi Symonds, Humboldt State, 43.50m, (142-08). 7, 644 Shaneka Parkes, South Dakota, 42.67m, (140-00). 8, 517 Connie Philips, Emporia State, 42.11m, (138-02).

### **Men's Discus**

After witnessing the shootout in men's shot on Friday, the men's discus competition looked to be capable of producing some of the most exciting moments of the meet. With no Kibwe Johnson around this year, the national lead had shifted throughout the year and the discus looked to be anyone's championship. In flight one, Tyler Fleet of Abilene Christian and Scott Block of Southern Illinois-Edwardsville had both been the national leader throughout the track season and looked ready to throw. In the first round Block jumped out to an early lead of 52.58m, and he was closely followed by Tyler Blatchly of West Virginia Wesleyan throwing 52.24m, near his season's best. Round two brought a new challenger to the lead in the person of shot-put runner up Brian Vickers, who tossed a 53.81m, which placed him a meter ahead of the field. In round three, Tyler Fischer of Central Washington threw 52.98m to move in front of Block and Blatchly. Two throwers later, Block responded with a solid 53.55m to slide between Fischer and Vickers to end round two. The only big surprise of flight one was Tyler Fleet. The freshman seemed to have trouble with the sunken discus ring on the Hilmer Lodge infield, failing to get within 10 meters of his season best.

Flight two had the other two men who had been on or near the top of the discus list all year: Brady Maska, a senior from Fort Hayes State, and last year's runner up, and Nick Jones, another talented freshman from Abilene Christian University. The unusual ring looked as though it would claim more victims as the first round of flight two got going. Mike Gray, a sophomore from Mansfield, threw his

way to an early lead with a toss of 52.81m. Second attempts saw Ashland sophomore Blaine Maag move into 8<sup>th</sup> overall with a 50.76m, moving him up from the bottom spot coming into the competition. Brady Maska, the Fort Hayes senior, had the best throw in the nation coming in, and did not disappoint on his second throw, tossing a 53.05m to take a 30 centimeter lead over Gray.

The kind of moment that only happens at championship meets took place in the middle of the third round, as Nick Jones stepped into the ring and drilled a 56.99m. The 187' throw was a two-meter personal best for Jones, the new leading distance, and the farthest throw in Division II this year. The remaining throwers were taken aback by Jones' huge effort and nothing else changed in round three. Final round throwers now had a daunting challenge on their hands – 'catch the freshman,' a phrase seldom heard in the throwing events at any level. After the warm-ups concluded, it seemed for a moment that the competitors had left their best efforts in the warm-ups. Not until the 7<sup>th</sup> throw in round two did anyone move up as Brady Maska's 53.99m passed up Scott Block to move into second, well behind Jones. On his fifth throw, Vickers, now in second, fouled. Jones still looked very dominant with another throw well beyond the 180' line at 56.01m. In the sixth final round, the men sitting 2-4 knew it would take a huge throw to win this day, and the intensity at the discus ring reflected their resolve. Fischer in 5<sup>th</sup> and Block in 4<sup>th</sup> did not manage to improve. Maska came into the ring in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and let out a huge yell and massive effort, but it was a foul. Vickers still looked extremely focused going into the ring for his last throw, perhaps looking to make up for his second place finish from the day before. His last attempt landed and the cheers from the intense Ashland throwing crew rose up above the crowd. Unfortunately for the guys in gold, his meter and half personal best of 55.53m was still well short of the champion Jones, but it was good enough for second moving him ahead of Maska. Nick Jones stepped into the ring as champion and blasted out another 55 meter throw in a dominant performance.

1, 10 Nick Jones, Abilene Chrstn, 56.99m, (187-00). 2, 66 Bryan Vickers, Ashland, 55.53m, (182-02). 3, 135 Brady Maska, Fort Hays St, 53.99m, (177-01). 4, 253 Scott Block, Southern Ill-Edw, 53.55m, (175-08). 5, 104 Tyler Fischer, Central Wash., 52.98m, (173-10). 6, 188 Mike Gray, Mansfield, 52.81m, (173-03). 7, 302 Tyler Blatchley, WV Wesleyan, 52.24m, (171-05). 8, 61 Blaine Maag, Ashland, 50.76m, (166-06).

### **Women's Discus**

Judging by the program, the 2008 women's discus throw seemed to be Michelle Nelson's to lose as the Adams State senior was leading the competition by more than 6 meters coming in. Flight one had several competitors capable of pulling off an upset, including last year's champ Ashley Stevens, a junior from Western State and Adree Lakey who was one of few female throwers in Division II history to

come into the meet with automatic marks in every throwing event. As round one drew to a close, Ashley Stevens popped out a 46.61m grabbing the lead and looking to be well above her competitors. In round two Adree Lakey tossed a throw of 45.08m to move into 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Emporia State freshman Kayla Muyskens at 45.10m. With their third attempts drawing to a close, Lakey hit a 46.36m to move past Muyskens in the standings. Flight two, with Nelson, looked to be less exciting than flight one, but looks can be deceiving. In the first round shot-put champion Katie Wilson of Wayne State threw 45.38m for the early lead. Wilson bettered her mark in the second round moving to 47.08m, but that lead was short-lived. UC San Diego junior Sarah Hendy hurled a 47.34m on her second attempt to take the lead from Wilson. On the last throw of the second round Michelle Nelson finally answered with a 44.83m to slide into 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the round. Wilson and Hendy fouled their third attempt, and Jennifer Tinney a multiple All-American senior from Ashland, did not improve her 44.52m. Nelson's third throw of 45.35m solidified her position of 3<sup>rd</sup> for the round.

As the finals began, the stadium lights switched on and the temperature dropped to set the stage for a tight competition. The first handful of throws in the finals saw no changes, so when Adree Lakey launched a 47.88m to take the lead on her fourth throw, everyone started paying attention. Wilson and Hendy came up short, then defending champion Stevens reared back and responded with a 47.46m for her best throw of the competition to end round one. In the fifth round, the throws looked as though the cold wind had spurned the enthusiasm of the women, until Adree Lakey's name was called. Her fifth throw brought the Angelo State junior a new personal best, and a huge lead, with a 49.25m. Much like the men's competition, a big throw shut the other competitors down and nothing else changed over the next 13 throws. Lakey held out to unseat the defending champ Stephens, with Sarah Hendy edging out Katie Wilson to get third.

1, 447 Adree Lakey, Angelo State, 49.25m, (161-07). 2, 702 Ashley Stephens, Western St, 47.49m, (155-10). 3, 677 Sarah Hendy, UC San Diego, 47.34m, (155-04). 4, 693 Katie Wilson, Wayne State, 47.08m, (154-05). 5, 426 Michelle Nelson, Adams State, 45.35m, (148-09). 6, 496 Kayla Muyskens, Central Missouri, 45.10m, (147-11). 7, 459 Jennifer Tinney, Ashland, 44.52m, (146-01). 8, 532 Mary Bogner, Grand Valley St, 44.24m, (145-02).

**\*L&S\***



*Quint Melius*

UW-Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI, May 22 - 24, 2008

# BIG THROWS IN OSH KOSH

By FRANK SQUIBB, WIDENER UNIVERSITY

The 2005 NCAA DIII outdoor Championship at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh saw great venues, great weather and huge crowds, and the athletes responded with some big time performances.

On Thursday afternoon the women's discus started things off nicely. With the memory of last year's challenging weather conditions, this year's near perfect weather led to a very spirited competition with the top 8 throwers all besting 151'.

Dawn Thompson from Wisconsin Whitewater overcame a poor 1<sup>st</sup> round throw of 43.03 meters to let go a throw of 48.70 on her 2<sup>nd</sup> round effort. On her 3<sup>rd</sup> throw of the trials she posted her best work of the day and a D III season best mark with the winning throw of 49.28 (161'8").

Fellow soph Claire Ray (U. of Chicago) posted a throw of 47.82m (156'11") on her 3<sup>rd</sup> throw to sit her 2<sup>nd</sup> overall. Marissa Banks Augustana (Ill) made it a sophomore sweep of the top three spots with her 2<sup>nd</sup> round throw of 47.21m (154'10").

In the men's discus, defending 2007 champion Dan Hytinen of Wisconsin-Whitewater wasted little time in locking up another national championship. Hytinen opened up with a toss of 56.49m which would have won the day, but he was not done. After a 2<sup>nd</sup> round foul, he bettered his mark to 59.42m. But it was his 6<sup>th</sup> round throw that brought the crowd to its feet when he sent flying a DIII season best, NCAA Championship record, and a U.S. Olympic Trials-qualifying throw of 59.87m (196'5"). Derek Marks U. of St. Thomas (9<sup>th</sup>, 2007) used his 4<sup>th</sup> row throw 52.48m (172'2") to take 2<sup>nd</sup>.

As the first day of throwing events at the 2008 NCAA DIII Championship belonged to Wisconsin -Whitewater, Friday would showcase in-state rival Wisconsin-Oshkosh (W-O). Oshkosh enjoyed a day set aside for the hammer throw with 3 ladies in the top seven and a 3<sup>rd</sup> in the men's.

Defending Champion Terrie Schwab (W-O) to wait as the first round of the women's hammer was being contested, but as soon as the 2<sup>nd</sup> round got started she wasted little time in wrapping up the 2008 championship title. Schwab opened her day with a 1<sup>st</sup> round throw of 56.68m, then bettered her lead on her next 4 throws 57.31m (2<sup>nd</sup> round), 58.15m (3<sup>rd</sup> round), and 58.25m (4<sup>th</sup> round). Any one of Schwab's six throws would have won the meet.

Liz Barley, the 2007 fourth-placer from Allegheny College,

battled Jessica Bates of Warthung College (8<sup>th</sup> 2007) all day before her 5<sup>th</sup> round throw of 55.63m (182' 6") garnered the silver.

The best drama, and biggest shocker of the weekend, would belong to the men's hammer. Top seed Trevor Matuszak (Defiance College) had the crowd a buzz watching his huge warm-up tosses, and even more so after he fouled his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> round throws (huge left sector fouls). Matuszak needed a safety throw of 55.29m to enter the finals in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Meanwhile Mark O'Connell turned his 2<sup>nd</sup> round throw out to 56.09m to enter the finals in first place, less then a meter ahead of Al Olson (Wisconsin Eau Claire) at 55.39m.

As the finals started, Matuszak used a 4<sup>th</sup> round throw to take the lead with his best toss of the day 57.68m. Phil Prussians (W-O) used his 5<sup>th</sup> round throw (55.49m) to move from 6<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>. Rich McNeil of Bates used his 5<sup>th</sup> round throw (55.09m) to move from 7<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. Ryan Jensen (Culvin College) used his 6<sup>th</sup> round throw to move form 9<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>. But is was O'Connell's 6<sup>th</sup> round throw that highlighted the finals position shifting.

With every one assuming Matuszak's throw would hold up for the win, O'Connell stepped into the circle for his last throw. As the hammer hit the ground, everyone's eyes were fixed on the distance board. Then it flashed on the electronic board - 58.22m (191'0"), giving O'Connell the win. Matuszak stood with his hands on his head in disbelief as O'Connell dropped to his knees.

Widener University Senior Lauren Lucci had entered the 2008 NCAA DIII Indoor Championship ranked first in Division III. She would have six of the top seven throws in the event, only to finish 2<sup>nd</sup> when freshman Monique Riddick of Montclair State, used her 6<sup>th</sup> round throw to grab the win. Entering the outdoor championship, Lucci was again ranked first, and the only woman over 15 meters. After a first-round safety throw and a huge second-round foul, a focused Lucci cranked it up on her 3<sup>rd</sup> round put to hit the winning throw of 14.43m, which would hold up for her first national championship victory. With either the memory of the indoor championship result or a desire to "GO BIG," Lucci fouled her first two throws in the finials before setting down with a 14.37 effort and a huge smile on her last throw. Nicole Murphy (U. of Chicago) stood second (14.22), followed by Wisconsin River Falls senior, Vicki Cooper (7<sup>th</sup> in 2007) would take 3<sup>rd</sup> (14.10m).

Perhaps Dan Gund from Mount Union College used his 4<sup>th</sup>

place finish at the Indoor Championships as motivation, or maybe the senior just wanted to go out with a bang. Whatever it was, the big lefty got the job done. Gund dominated the event from the start. Gund owned the day as he opened with a 17.19m effort, and never looked back. He would finish with a best of 17.44m and be the only shot putter to break 17 meters all day.

With seven of the top eight places in the men's javelin throw being set with opening efforts, the excitement would come early as did the surprises. In the first flight senior Drew Soltysiak, (Westfield State), ranked 16<sup>th</sup> entering the day would unload his first throw out to 63.06m. Soltysiak would finish the day with the best set of throws, being the only thrower over 60 meters twice. In the end his effort would win him 3<sup>rd</sup> place in as an exciting event as a fan could hope for. Drew's lead in the event though would hold up only until the first round of the 2<sup>nd</sup> flight when follow senior Steven Burns, (Rochester Inst. Tech.) and Brock Solveson (Concordia-WI) both hit 63.35m on their first throws. Both throwers fouled their second throws. Burns, who was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> at the start of the day, claimed the 2008 title with a second best throw of 58.53m on his 5<sup>th</sup> effort.

The top three spots in the women's javelin were claimed by the top three seeds entering the meet. However, the event would prove just as exciting as the men's spear just a few hours earlier. The only senior in the top eight was Amy Reed from Messiah College (PA). Less than 20 hours after her impressive win in the heptathlon, Reed used her fifth round throw to claim third place with a toss of 45.22m. But it was juniors Lisa Brown (Gustavus Adolphus) and Brandi McNeils (Wheaton College) that owned the spotlight. In the first flight Brown opened with a throw of 47.35m, then improved to 48.71m on her second throw, then 49.60m on her third. In the second flight McNeil opened with a sub par throw before finding her steps and the tip of the javelin and hitting 46.93m in the second round, and 47.19m in the third. In the finals both athletes needed their fourth throws to get back in the groove. The fifth round would see McNeil hit 47.42m and Brown 50.45m. Then in the final round the two really put on a show. In a reverse from the men's javelin, Brown and McNeil saved their best for last. McNeil (5<sup>th</sup> in 2007) whipped a huge season's best of 49.48m (162'4") As Brown, the 2007 runner-up, stepped onto the runway she knew she had won her first NCAA championship. Sprinting down the runway, Brown hit her block, planted strongly, and let fly a DIII season's best and U.S. Olympic Trials-qualifier of 53.17m (174'5").

## **RESULTS**

### **Shot Put**

1 Dan Gund, Sr, Mount Union College 57-2 3/4 (17.44m); 2 Nathan Turner, Jr, Bridgewater (Virginia 54-6 1/2 (16.62m); 3 Judd Lutz, So, Mount Union College 54-2 1/2 (16.52m); 4 Jeff Kintner, So, Whitworth University 53-11 (16.43m); 5 Eugene Asimou, Jr, Montclair State 53-9 (16.38m); 6 Josh Dupuis, Sr, Brockport S U N Y 53-3 1/2 (16.24m);

### **Discus Throw**

1 Dan Hytinen, Sr, Wisconsin Whitewater 196-5 (59.87m); 2 Derek Marks, Sr, Univ of St. Thomas 172-2 (52.48m); 3 Bobby Riley, Jr, Wisconsin La Crosse 167-9 (51.13m); 4 Judd Lutz, So, Mount Union College 167-9 (51.13m); 5 Chris Shaw, So, Earlham College 164-9 (50.22m); 6 Jamie Simpson, Sr, Mount Union College 163-4 (49.79m);

### **Hammer Throw**

1 Mark O'Connell, Sr, Univ of St. Thomas 191-0 (58.22m); 2 Trevor Matuszak, Sr, Defiance College 189-3 (57.68m); 3 Phil Prusinski, Jr, Wisconsin Oshkosh 182-0 (55.49m); 4 Al Oleson, Sr, Wisconsin Eau Claire 181-8 (55.39m); 5 Rich McNeil, So, Bates College 180-9 (55.09m); 6 Zach Wilson, Sr, Monmouth College (IL) 179-10 (54.81m)p;

### **Javelin Throw**

1 Stephen Burns, Sr, Rochester Inst Tech 207-10 (63.35m); 2 Brock Solveson, So, Concordia (Wisconsin) 207-10 (63.35m); 3 Drew Soltysiak, Sr, Westfield State 206-11 (63.06m); 4 Kory Kemp, Jr, Whitworth University 206-1 (62.82m); 5 Chris Baer, Jr, Trinity U (Texas) 205-2 (62.55m); 6 Jake Wheeler, Sr, Emory University 200-5 (61.08m);

### **Shot Put**

1 Lauren Lucci, Sr, Widener University 47-4 1/4 (14.43m); 2 Nicole Murphy, So, University of Chicago 46-8 (14.22m); 3 Vicki Cooper, Sr, Wisconsin River Falls 46-3 1/4 (14.10m); 4 Jess Jewell, Sr, Luther College 45-8 (13.92m); 5 Krista Hasselquist, Sr, Wisconsin River Falls 45-7 1/4 (13.90m); 6 Rachael Clark, Jr, Christopher Newport 45-3 1/2 (13.80m);

### **Discus Throw**

1 Dana Thompson, So, Wisconsin Whitewater 161-8 (49.28m); 2 Claire Ray, So, University of Chicago 156-11 (47.82m); 3 Marissa Banks, So, Augustana (Illinois) 154-10 (47.21m); 4 Vicki Cooper, Sr, Wisconsin River Falls 153-9 (46.87m); 5 Ellen Thys, Sr, Loras College 152-9 (46.57m); 6 Ellie Sitek, So, Wisconsin Oshkosh 152-7 (46.50m);

### **Hammer Throw**

1 Terri Schwamb, Sr, Wisconsin Oshkosh 191-1 (58.25m); 2 Liz Earley, Sr, Allegheny College 182-6 (55.63m); 3 Jessica Bates, Sr, Wartburg College 180-10 (55.13m); 4 Julia Hopson, Jr, Fredonia S U N Y 178-4 (54.36m); 5 Rebecca Masephol, Sr, Wisconsin Oshkosh 174-11 (53.33m); 6 Aline Thomas, Sr, Mass Inst Technology 170-5 (51.95m);

### **Javelin Throw**

1 Lisa Brown, Jr, Gustavus Adolphus 174-5 (53.17m); 2 Brandi McNeil, Jr, Wheaton College (Ill) 162-4 (49.48m); 3 Amy Reed, Sr, Messiah College 148-4 (45.22m); 4 Samantha Hirsh, Jr, Keene State College 147-0 (44.81m); 5 Annie Patton, Fr, Mount Union College 140-10 (42.92m); 6 Mackenzie Smith, Fr, Univ of Redlands 138-8 (42.27m);

**\*L&S\***

Hayward Field, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, June 27 - July 6

# PRESSURE-TREATED

By JIM AIKENS, KURT DUNKEL & GLENN THOMPSON

"There's always next year."

Except in track and field.

Come up on the short end of the Super Bowl or World Series, and fans and players alike peek ahead to spring training or two-a-days in July. The start of the following season is always only a few months away.

That happens in track and field as well, but the chance for the grandest prize of all, Olympic gold, comes only once a quadrennial. Missed opportunities in the present, can in four years time, give way to injury, age, and fiscal reality.

Most track and field athletes labor in relative obscurity. Only the very best can secure endorsements and performance income that sustain their quest for excellence, and even more importantly, to pay the rent. Olympic success can prolong a career and change a life.

In the public eye, track and field is a sport that exists only in years divisible by four. If the five inter-locked rings are not the destination in any calendar year, the sport known as 'athletics' elsewhere on the globe, is a publicity backwater only newsworthy in times of drug-fueled scandals. IAAF World Championships barely move the Nielsen ratings.

Greatness, in the public eye, is defined at *The Games*.

To call yourself an Olympian, you must survive the crucible. Athletic, and personal, reputations are forged at the U.S. Olympic Trials, the gateway to the Games.

Into venerable Hayward Field on the campus of the University of Oregon, came almost two hundred throwers over a 9-day window, seeking glory, fame, experience, or simply just to say they were there.

Win and you are a champion with your own small slice of athletic immortality.

Under-perform? "Choker," is murmured in some corners, shouted from others.

Anxiety. Vindication. Heartbreak. Redemption. Tears of joy; tears of pain.

Welcome to the human drama that is the Olympic Trials.

Where 2012 is not a given.

## Women's Discus Qualifying – Friday, June 27, 7:50pm

The warm-ups for the women's discus got under way approximately 25 minutes late due to apparent conflicts with the qualifying of the men's pole vault. One may surmise that the prelims would showcase 'the usual suspects', so-to-speak. That would be a correct guess – as Stephanie Brown, Suzy Powell-Roos, Aretha Thurmond, and Becky Breisch. Stunningly beautiful high pressure overtook the area and the temperature began to slowly rise throughout the day. Humidity was low as the midsummer sun slowly began to sink in the sky, giving way to a mix of overhead stadium light and soft sun.

Thurmond hit a solid 61.29m on her first throw. "My first throw was the automatic. It was good to get that out of the way and get off the field and get ready for Sunday. It takes a different mark every year to make the team so I just want to finish in the top three."

Not to be outdone, Powell-Roos put a comfortable effort out to 61.39m with her first throw. Both would pass their remaining throws. Cecilia Barnes, sporting an elbow sleeve on her throwing arm, was looking confident in the warm-ups and had a nice first round effort. However, she seemed to struggle on her second and third round efforts. Rachel Longfors proved to be long and a possible force.

In the second flight, Stephanie Brown-Trafton and Becky Breisch made strong cases to be significant factors in the final. Brown-Trafton looked very smooth and comfortable. Her first throw was released perfectly to capitalize on the slight headwind. It landed at 63.61m. Brown-Trafton passed in rounds two and three, and later stated, "I did well today. I am going to go into the final round with a good position. If I can do the same thing as today on Sunday, that would be great. I was thinking about taking some more throws today because you never know when you can hit a big one."

Breisch used all three of her throws and hit 60.41m on her third effort. She appeared to be working out some kinks, which were impacting the flight of the discus. Flight two proved to be the deeper flight – as Summer Pierson (5<sup>th</sup> – 59.12m), Kalechi Anyanwu (6<sup>th</sup> – 56.42m), and Taiyshawna Battle (7<sup>th</sup> – 56.33m) all claimed a spot in the final.

## Men's Shot Qualifying – Friday, June 27, 9:00pm

The two flights of the men's prelims were conducted in two side-by-side rings in front of the East Grandstand Friday evening at dusk. The simultaneous viewing of the two circles along with the second flight of the women's discus

prelims were further complicated by some exciting qualifying rounds on the track. It was track and field's three-ring circus at its best and worst. Throws fans were attempting to catch everything, while missing nothing.

The Big Three predictably handled their business on their first attempts, all efficiently surpassing the automatic qualifier of 20.60m, without unleashing monster attempts. Christian Cantwell was first in Circle B, dropping a 20.82m effort, followed by Nelson in Circle A at 20.99m, and Hoffa back in Circle B at leading the way into Saturday's final at 21.03m.

The rest of the field would take all three throws, some seeking an auto-qualifier that would not happen, and others jockeying just to advance.

2008 indoor NCAA champion Ryan Whiting opened at 20.29m, his best of the evening, a mark that placed him fourth. 2008 NCAA outdoor champion Cory Martin posted a 20.24m, while Dan Taylor, who was viewed as a strong fourth to the Big Three coming into the season, posted a second-round 20.13m.

The other advancers were Russ Winger (20.04), Chris Figures (19.97m), 2007 NCAA champ Noah Bryant (19.78), 2006 NCAA champ Garrett Johnson (19.55m), Jamie Beyer (19.53m) and Rhuben Williams (19.48m). (GT)

#### **Women's Javelin Qualifying – Saturday, June 29, 2008, 12:45pm**

As the heat began to rise in Eugene, the women's javelin throwers took the first step in determining who would represent the United States in Beijing. The slight headwind, which in theory can help a javelin thrower, instead (as usually occurs) seemed to hinder performances. Softball All-American Alicia DeShasier is a newcomer to the javelin. Competing in just her 9<sup>th</sup> track meet, she is demonstrating tremendous potential. She certainly added some excitement to the first flight on her third throw when she improved from 49.19m to 53.80m. This was good enough to earn her the third seed in the final.

Purdue's Kara Patterson looked comfortable and consistent. She has already met the Olympic 'A' standard of 60.50m and was looking to move into the top three in the final. Dana Pounds met the automatic qualifier for the finals, which meant she would be forced to pass on her next two throws.

Pounds stated, "It is the first time I have ever walked out there and automatically qualified. Honestly I am a little disgruntled because I was feeling good today and I only got one shot at the 'A' standard. It was almost like taking a meet away from me. Every attempt counts when you don't have the 'A' standard. I wanted to [take more throws]. I had my coach look it up in the rule book and, sure enough,

when you hit the standard on a qualifying round, you have to call it. I was really disappointed. That's alright. There are big things in store."

The decorated veteran, Kim Kreiner, looked to conserve energy by taking two of three throws. She easily qualified for the final with the 2<sup>nd</sup> seed. Kreiner appeared to be making a steady return from last year's Tommy John (UCL tear) surgery.

Kreiner afterward stated, "Overall, we accomplished the goal and qualified for Monday. I wasn't going to push it too soon because I thought I would play it safe on the first day. The gloves come off on Monday though, and all bets are off." (KD)

#### **Men's Shot Finals – Saturday, June 27, 4:45pm**

Late Saturday afternoon had a bright sun overhead and temperatures hovering in the low 90's. The big boys rolled onto the infield of Hayward Field and into the quadrennial crucible of athletic pressure by which careers are often defined. Olympic Trials are more often won above the neckline than below.

The first round started with a Chris Figures toss of approximately 20.50m. The exact distance will never be known as he was charged with the first of three foot fouls. Russ Winger delivered a 20.25m opener to take the early lead, followed by a Reese Hoffa foul, and then Ryan Whiting briefly took the pole position (20.36m). Adam Nelson grabbed the lead at 20.78m, only to be surpassed by Dan Taylor with a 20.80m toss. Christian Cantwell concluded the round with a 20.36m effort that flirted dangerously close to the right sector line.

In the second round Cory Martin launched one of what would be a series of high-arching throws that fell to the ground well short of where they might have with a flatter trajectory. Hoffa got on the board with a 20.91m toss that also took the lead. Nelson followed with a tantalizing 22m foot foul. Cantwell concluded the round with a foul.



Hoffa



Cantwell



Nelson

In the third stanza Winger (20.37m) pulled ahead of Whiting by a single centimeter. Hoffa stretched his advantage with a 21.13m mark. Nelson and Taylor fouled, and Cantwell did not improve. As the prelims concluded, the board read Hoffa, Taylor, Cantwell and Nelson. The Big Three (Plus One) were all in the hunt as expected.

As the finals began, Nelson moved into second with a 20.89m toss. Cantwell and Hoffa followed with fouls, and there was no other significant action.

Entering round five, a sense of urgency was in the air. Hoffa, Nelson, Cantwell and Taylor had two more attempts to land a bomb and secure an Olympic birth. Cantwell stepped up and launched himself into the lead with a 21.24m effort, dropping Taylor back to fourth. Hoffa responded by unleashing a bomb that nicked the 22m line. The result was 21.94m, virtually assuring him of a place on the team.

The competition stopped briefly for reordering prior to the sixth and final round. The order of the last four throwers

would be Taylor, Nelson, Cantwell and Hoffa. All suspense about who was going to Beijing was removed when Taylor could not find a better throw on his last attempt. Now it was about winning.

Nelson, per his custom, stormed into the circle, but would create no magic this day, as he lost his groove and the ball fell harmlessly to earth, a throw Nelson fouled with a look of lost opportunity. Cantwell had already buried the ghosts of 2004, when he led the world coming into the Trials, yet missed the team. As he entered the ring for his final attempt, he was looking at snatching gold from Hoffa. It was not meant to be, as he launched a solid, if not spectacular, 21.71m.

Hoffa closed the competition and delighted the crowd with a 22.10m finisher, his best effort of the season.

The Big Three had passed their first test, punching their tickets for Beijing. Much to the chagrin of their international brethren, no doubt.

## DREAM TEAM

### BY GLENN THOMPSON

After the competition, there was a common sense of relief amongst all three medallists in the men's shot. None of the three were particularly happy with their complete series, and Nelson and Cantwell had the tone of survivors in their post-competition comments.

"The pressure is only what you do to yourself," said a reflective Cantwell after the meet. "I really don't care what everyone else says, because everything is internalized within yourself. Today felt pretty good though."

Cantwell had been battling a case of elbow tendonitis, the source of which is strangely enough not athletic. The birth of his son Jackson Daniel in May meant some quality family time at home and holding the newborn in the crook of his throwing arm. Upon returning to training he noticed the elbow pain in that same arm. Medical treatments included periodic shots of cortisone and lidocaine, including at the Trials.

Adam Nelson had spent some time toying with the notion of altering his left leg action at the front of the circle. The technical alteration was at the heart of a National Public Radio video this spring. When *Long & Strong* inquired as to whether his technical experimentation impacted his performance, Nelson did not see an effect.

"Today was just a total derail," he replied. "I had some pretty good warm-ups, but warm-ups don't count. It

wasn't pretty, but I'll take not pretty and on the team over pretty and not on the team."

"I try to focus on myself," Nelson said. "You know someone's going to throw big; you want to be the one to do it. Today it wasn't me. I was very fortunate."



Hoffa, although the victor, had to grind through his own early struggles including an opening foul. "It took me a while to get into a groove," he said afterward. "Twenty-two (meters) is a gold standard, and to do that under the absolutely incredible pressure that we have here makes me very happy."

Hoffa had found himself in quite a quandary in May. He was not as sharp as he had been late in the 2007 European season. In the weight room he was knocking out personal bests in all the major lifts, but technically he didn't feel right and conveyed to his coach Don Babbitt, that he 'couldn't feel the ball' and might be too strong. The remedy? After the Nike Prefontaine Classic on June 8 in Eugene, Hoffa took a week-long vacation from the weight room.

The results speak for themselves in a series of throws that gradually gained momentum and culminated in a *season's best*. \*L&S\*

When asked about the Beijing trio, Hoffa responded, "The sky's the limit for this group. We have three 22-meter throwers who've all been ranked number one in the world at some point. This is the Dream Team." (GT)

1. Reese Hoffa, New York A C, 22.10m, 72-06.25; 2. Christian Cantwell, Nike, 21.71m, 71-02.75; 3. Adam Nelson, Nike, 20.89m, 68-06.50; 4. Dan Taylor, Nike, 20.80m, 68-03.00; 5. Russ Winger, unattached, 20.37m, 66-10.00; 6. Ryan Whiting, Arizona State, 20.36m, 66-09.75; 7. Noah Bryant, unattached, 20.08m, 65-10.50; 8. Cory Martin, Auburn, 19.62m, 64-04.50; 9. Jamie Beyer, unattached, 19.20m, 63-00.00; 10. Rhuben Williams, Shore A C, 18.78m, 61-07.50; - Garrett Johnson, unattached, FOUL; - Chris Figures, unattached, FOUL;

### Women's Discus Final – Sunday, June 29, 3:15pm

The humidity rolled into Eugene over night, which left muggy, hot conditions. The wind had also arrived. A swirling left to right wind undoubtedly impacted performances. Stephanie Brown-Trafton looked good with a long, easy warm-up at 63m. Tai Battle, Aretha Thurmond, Suzie Powell-Roos, Summer Pierson, and Becky Breisch looked to be the class of the field in warm-up.

As is typical, the event got underway as part of a wonderful track and field 'four ring circus.' At one point, the men's pole vault final, women's discus final, women's triple jump final, and men's long jump final were running simultaneously. It seemed that the rhythmic clapping for the other three events helped some of the discus throwers when the clapping seemed to coincide with the discus throws. With



Thurmond



Powell-Roos



Brown-Trafton

the crowd of 20,000 in a rhythmic clapping frenzy, Aretha Thurmond unleashed a huge 65.20m, which seemed to send a strong message to the competitors. Given the average distance of the warm-up and competition throws to that point, some may have guessed that this throw would hold up for the win.

It would. Powell-Roos and Brown-Trafton looked good, but not exceptional. Brown-Trafton shook off some initial shakiness to hit a 62.65m with her first throw of the final. Powell-Roos sat in third place upon entering the circle for her final throw. With a great deal of

apparent pressure off her shoulders, she hit 62.92m to bump Brown-Trafton to third. This delighted the large group of friends and family who came to support her. They were sporting custom-made, red, t-shirts with 222 on the back. Brown-Trafton was unable to respond, but had a spot on the Olympic Team guaranteed.

The Trials are clearly a mix of excitement and disappointment; the latter of which is often the overlooked commodity. Becky Breisch was undoubtedly disappointed by her fourth place finish. Technically, Breisch appeared solid and her distances were relatively consistent. However, she appeared to lack the dynamic movement to exceed the 62-63m range. (KD)

1. Aretha Thurmond, Nike, 65.20m, 213-11; 2. Suzy Powell-Roos, Tri-Valley Asics, 62.92m, 206-05; 3. Stephanie Brown Trafton, Nike, 62.65m, 205-06; 4. Becky Breisch, Nike, 61.04m, 200-03; 5. Cecilia Barnes, unattached, 56.91m, 186-08; 6. Summer Pierson, unattached, 56.69m, 186-00; 7. Kelechi Anyanwu, unattached, 54.51m, 178-10; 8. Taiyshawna Battle, Arizona State, 54.22m, 177-11; 9. Katie Corner, Throw 1 Deep, 53.49m, 175-06; 10. Khadija Talley, Miami, 53.49m, 175-06; 11. Rachel Longfors, Tri-Valley Asics, 53.44m, 175-04; 12. Rachel Varner, unattached, 53.23m, 174-08;

### Men's Hammer Qualifying – Monday, June 30, 7:00pm

The first of two flights started at 7:00pm. 2004 Olympian James Parker posted the first significant mark, a 71.33m opener. Kibwe Johnson fouled the first of his three efforts, while NCAA champion Cory Martin grabbed the lead with a 69.94m effort. Thomas Freeman stepped in to take the poll with a 69.98m. The second round saw two auto-qualifiers, with Martin unleashing a 73.22m effort and Freeman responding by just nudging past the qualifying distance of 72 meters with a 72.08m. Johnson got on the board with a 68.38m effort.

The third round saw Johnson step on the gas, only to nail the left sector cage door. A pre-meet favorite for a Beijing ticket, Johnson needed to be in the top twelve to advance and would have to uneasily watch the second flight after sitting in sixth place.

The second flight was highlighted by A.G Kruger and Travis Nutter knocking out first attempt auto-qualifiers of 73.30m and 72.87m, respectively. The previously retired former Olympian Kevin McMahon (Stanford throws coach) re-emerged looking impressive in warm-ups, but didn't secure a finals berth until his last attempt 68.46m. David Paul, training out of Northern Arizona University, gave the 70m line a scare (69.65m).

As dusk approached, Johnson had survived his scare, falling only to the tenth position. Other qualifiers included Auburn's Jake Dunkleberger (69.51m), Army's Mike Mai

(68.70m), Lucais Mackay (68.34m) and Garland Porter (68.13m). (GT)

### Women's Javelin Final – Monday, June 30 2008, 8:20pm

The conditions for the final were perfect. The air was dry and there was almost no breeze.

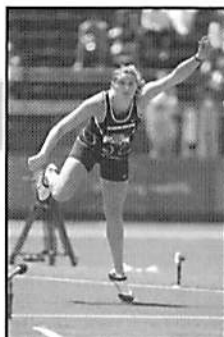
Temperatures were very comfortable. Considering this, it is slightly surprising that there were not more big throws. Even in the absence of really big throws, the competition proved incredibly thrilling. This would be a match-up of the American record holder Kim Kreiner, a thrower who may well eventually claim the American Record, Dana Pounds, and two incredibly talented collegiate throwers (Kara Patterson and Rachel Yurkovich). There were no exceptionally far warm-ups, which may have indicated that it is difficult to throw at the highest level, then return two days later and repeat. Even perfect conditions could not make up for fatigue.

Patterson was the winner, Pounds was a very disappointed runner-up, and Yurkovich was third. Kreiner will join Patterson on the Olympic team – as they are the only two in possession of the 'A' standard.

There was little doubt throughout the competition. Patterson was consistent and clearly deserved the victory, which was carried out in workman-like fashion. Patterson also broke Lynda Blutreich's Olympic Trials record of 58.28m set in 2000. Patterson is demonstrating the poise, presence, and talent for a long, successful career. Patterson was unflappable. She already possessed the 'A' standard, which at the time was a five-meter personal best. Patterson stated that this big PR initially caused some concern about whether or not she would be able to reproduce the throw at the Trials. After refocusing, going back to basics (i.e. - "...working from the ground up..."), and going back to her "center", Patterson regained her confidence.

"I was excited to have three 58-meter throws; I'd like to get back out there to that 60-meter mark. I like that I have a 61-meter throw under my belt."

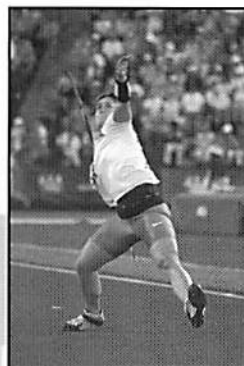
Yurkovich, sporting some significant treatment wrap on her throwing shoulder/back, was very consistent. Donning the Oregon uniform, she was clearly the crowd favorite. Yurkovich had, between prelims and finals, taken a different outlook and approach. She let go of her concern about



*Patterson*



*Yurkovich*



*Kreiner*



*Pounds*

letting down the hometown crowd. She had also acknowledged to herself that it would be extremely unlikely for her to reach the 'A' standard. Thus, she relaxed on her final throw, landed light on the right foot, waited for the delivery, and hit a big throw to earn the third place spot. This ended up being the most exciting moment of the competition.

Although Kreiner stated that her elbow is "fine", she recently sustained an injury to her left plantar fascia. This made planting and blocking very painful. This was evident in the flight of the javelin as well as in Kreiner's noticeable limp. Kreiner struggled to plant and drive the right hip into the throw and looked progressively worse throughout the competition. It would have been surprising to see Kreiner respond to

Yurkovich's throw given the quality of her competition throws, but one should never underestimate the heart of a champion. Kreiner would have a go at it on her last throw, but just didn't have enough to move back into the top three.

There seemed to be a strong and growing anticipation for Pounds to catch the big throw that she is capable of; however, it did not come. She would finish fourth and not reach the 'A' standard needed for Beijing. She was clearly devastated after the meet and her moist eyes held back some very big tears.

USATF has ruled that athletes must reach the 'A' standard no later than the Olympic Trials. In reflection, Pounds felt that, had she considered it at the time, she may have intentionally fouled her first preliminary throw in order to take a second chance at reaching the 'A'.

There was some sentiment in the throws community that the rule which requires anyone reaching the automatic qualifier in prelims to pass their remaining throws to be detrimental. When combined with the timeframe to reach the 'A', field athletes seem to be at a significant disadvantage. Pounds stated that she was "...trying too hard..." which prevented her from getting the big throw at this meet. "I didn't accelerate at the line like I should have, if we are talking technically. I loaded up on every throw. I spent way too much time on my right foot and didn't get to my left." When asked if she would continue throwing, Pounds responded, "Heck yeah, it's in my blood now." (KD)

# EUGENE: TRACK (& FIELD) TOWN USA

BY GLENN THOMPSON

It had been nine years since I made my last visit to Eugene, Oregon, then in the dual role of fringe national competitor and novice publisher. That visit came during what many in the Oregon track and field community felt was an athletic recession, through which the University of Oregon's track team held its own, but did not thrive as it had under the leadership of the legendary Bill Bowerman and his successor, Bill Dellinger. The connection between the coaching staff and the community and alumni had become somewhat distant.

As a first-time visitor, that lull in the Oregon tradition was transparent to me. Eugene was a town that loved its track and field. Distance running was their first-born to be sure, but all runners, throwers and jumpers had a home at Hayward Field. This was clearly evident to me hearing locals talk track like most sports fans talk football. You have to love a place that loves you. Where a youngster might ask you for an autograph because you're dressed like an athlete. Where they politely applaud every performance, no matter how pedestrian it might be.

I returned for the 2008 Olympic Trials understanding, and expecting, the community's passion for the sport. But from the moment I stepped off the plane to find Eugene 08 green tee shirt clad volunteers (of which there were 2,300 from 47 states, many of which saw little or nothing of the competitions from their perches) welcoming one and all, there was a sense of being involved in something special. Olympic Trials billboards and light pole placards everywhere you looked on the free shuttle to campus set the stage.

I realized this special place had a new energy about it. Under new head track and field coach Vin Lananna, Hayward Field, a living, breathing monument to our sport, had been re-invigorated physically, and perhaps, spiritually. Newly hired in 2005, Lananna was able to successfully propose and lead an Olympic Trials proposal to USATF with less than 20 days until the deadline.

Hayward had hosted three consecutive Olympic Trials, from 1972 to 1980, but none since.

An estimated \$8 million infusion included a new track and infield layout, and on the turns, new state-of-the-art video screens which provided live action and replays of the three ring circus.



*A carnival-like experience on three sides of Hayward Field further enhanced the spectator's Olympic Trials experience.*

A track and field festival bordered Hayward on three sides, teeming with vendors, activities, and live entertainment. Tens of thousands of people bustled about each day outside the stadium, and attendance hovered around the 20,000 mark inside.

USATF has recognized Eugene's renaissance with a five-year run of USATF championships, beginning with the 2008 Olympic Trials, running through the next three USATF championships, and concluding with the 2012 Trials which will determine our team for London.

If you ever get the chance to make the trip to Eugene for a NCAA or USATF championship, don't hesitate for a moment. Hayward, and its surrounding environs, has a way of reinvigorating all who pass through its gates. As the faithful attend church every Sunday morning to recharge their batteries, so it is with Eugene. The congregation is your fellow fans, and the stellar athletes take turns in the pulpit encouraging all to reexamine the bounds of human potential.

While track and field has various hotbeds across the country, there are precious few locales where the sport is so intertwined with the local culture. In many ways, Eugene is track and track is Eugene. It is a Mecca for U.S. track and field, and all who love track owe it to themselves to make the pilgrimage at least once. \*L&S\*

1. Kara Patterson, Purdue, 58.44m, 191-09; 2. Dana Pounds, U.S. Air Force, 57.83m, 189-09; 3. Rachel Yurkovich, Oregon, 56.41m, 185-01; 4. Kim Kreiner, Nike, 55.90m, 183-05; 5. Alicia DeShasier, unattached, 53.48m, 175-05; 6. Katie Coronado, New Mexico, 53.06m, 174-01; 7. Kayla Wilkinson, Nebraska, 52.73m, 173-00; 8. Lindsey Blaine, Nike, 51.38m, 168-07; 9. Ruby Radocaj, unattached, 51.04m, 167-05; 10. Amy Backel, Oklahoma, 50.08m, 164-04; 11. Samantha Ford, unattached, 48.46m, 159-00; 12. Mallory Webb, unattached, 47.36m, 155-04;

### **Women's Hammer Qualifying – Thursday, July 3, 7:00pm**

It was a cool evening with a slight wind out of the west. The flights were evenly distributed, with six qualifiers for the finals coming out of each flight.

The first flight opened up with 2006 USATF champion Jessica Cosby looking like she was returning to championship form, blasting the first throw of the competition to 69.70m meters, well past the 68.50m auto-qualifier mark. Cosby was the only thrower to surpass that distance.

Loree Smith threw well, improving on every throw and establishing herself as the second-best qualifier with her third round best of 68.06m.

"I felt good out there," Smith said afterward. "The first couple throws I was just easing into it and knocking off the cobwebs. I'm feeling warm now and excited for the finals."

2007 USATF runner-up Kristin Yush also improved on every throw, finishing at 67.14m on her final toss to finish behind Smith.

2007 USATF champion Brittney Riley had a strong opener to lead win the second flight with a toss of 66.90m, and fourth overall. Finishing off the top five was Amber Campbell, who only one needed throw of 66.77m.

"I did really well," said Campbell. "I got a throw in and made it to Saturday. It felt good to get some good throws in and I am looking forward to the finals."

Sarah Versess (66.77m), Kelly Godsey (66.22m), Erin Gilreath (66.08m), Brittany Hincheliff (65.43m), Cari Soong (64.73m), Keturah Lofton (64.71m) and Melissa Myerscough (64.69m) rounded out the qualifiers for Saturday's final. (JA)

### **Men's Discus Qualifying – Thursday, July 3, 8:30pm**

Men's discus qualifying rounds got underway at around 8:30 on Thursday night. A slight right quartering headwind appeared to be gusting between 0 and 10 mph, but would not be a factor.

The first round of qualifiers which included the likes of

2004 Trials winner Jarred Rome, 2007 USATF national champion Michael Robertson, and 2008 NCAA champion Rashaud Scott, was fairly tame. None of the throwers had big warm-up throws, and none of the throwers made the automatic qualifying mark of 64.50 meters.

Rome had a nailed a 63.05m on his first throw to lead all qualifiers. He then followed that up with a couple of 62 meter plus throws.

"I was just trying to go like 75 percent on the first one, because I knew anything over 60 or 61 meters was pretty much going to make the finals," said Rome. "I just wanted to get a nice, easy throw in and it turned out to be my best. The next two were practice throws. The goal today is not to win; it is to make the top 12. All these marks get erased and Sunday is a brand new day and I am looking forward to that."

Besides Robertson and Scott, Doug Reynolds and James Dennis also qualified for the finals, but other than Rome, no one threw over 200'.

Flight two had the bulk of the qualifiers in it, with seven of the 12 qualifiers coming from this group.

Former USATF champ Ian Waltz launched a 62.25m on his first throw and proceeded to pass on the remainder.

"I just wanted to take one easy throw today because I am going through a groin issue," confided Waltz. "Thankfully, it stayed intact and I was able to get through the round. Today was just a chill day to get through the round. Hopefully, I can come out gunning on Sunday."

Matt Lamb fired a 62.36m (204-7) in the second round which won the flight. John Godina and Adam Kuehl were the only other qualifiers to land the discus beyond the 200-foot mark. Also qualifying was 2004 Olympic finalist Casey Malone, along with William Conwell and Jason Young. Young and Dennis from the first flight tied with the final qualifying mark of 60.06 meters (197-0). (JA)

### **Women's Shot Qualifying – Thursday, July 3, 9:20pm**

The two flights of the women's qualifying rounds were conducted in two side-by-side rings in front of the East Grandstand on Thursday July 3rd at dusk. The simultaneous viewing of the two circles, along with the second flight of the men's discus prelims, were further complicated by some thrilling finals on the track. It was an exciting night to say the least.

With a field of only 20 competitors, the warm-up lasted longer than the actual competition. Some of the women looked particularly strong in warm-ups, with shot put legend Michael Carter's daughter Michelle and 2008 USATF Indoor Champion Jill Camarena hitting over the 60 foot barrier repeatedly.

The first round opened up with some messages being sent early as three ladies threw the automatic qualifier of 17.50 meters right out of the blocks. Michelle Carter was the only thrower to get the steel ball over 60 feet with a toss of 18.33m (60-1.75) on her first throw. Elizabeth Wanless followed with an automatic qualifier of 17.55m (57-7) on her first throw. In the other ring Jill Camarena was the only other first round qualifier with a toss of 17.87m (58-7.5).

There was not a great deal of movement in the second round with the exception of 2007 Outdoor national champion Kristin Heaston being the only thrower to crack 17 meters barrier with a throw of 17.37m.

The third round generated some excitement as the remaining contestants stepped it up with their last chance to qualify for the finals. Kristen Heaston 17.64m (57' 10.5), Gail Lee 17.33m (56-10.25), Chandra Brewer 17.32m (56-10), and Jessica Pressley 17.26m (56-7.5) all had 17m-plus throws to qualify for the finals.

Abigail Ruston, Susan King, Adrian Blewitt and Sarah Stevens all had 17 meter throws on their first toss, which was good enough to get them into the finals on Saturday. The final qualifier for Saturday's final was collegian Patience Knight (Texas Tech), who tossed 16.38m (53-9) on her first throw, but fouled her last two. (JA)

#### **Men's Javelin Qualifying – Friday, July 4, 5:30pm**

The only Fourth of July javelin fireworks that Breaux Greer, a.k.a. American Gladiator "Hurricane," produced were in his multi-colored hair style. The perennial USATF spear champ and 2007 Osaka bronze medalist Greer, did provide the shock of the day by throwing only 67.20m and not qualifying for Sunday's finals.

Greer did not take any warm-up throws, choosing only to take run-throughs. The three competition throws were Greer's first of the year; he had not even taken practice throws since yet another surgery (shoulder) after last season. What everyone else took for granted - another routine Greer victory - was not a given at all, and now one knew it better than he.

When asked about his performance, Greer said, "I'm not one of those guys to give up. It felt like I was skiing on ice out there. It is what it is. My team of 3,000 who are duct taping me together, suggested I not be here. I just need more healing time. If you know me, you know I'm not giving up."

It was an exciting day for the remainder of the performers. The throwers worked hard with only two athletes making the automatic qualifier distance of 77 meters. There were four qualifiers out of flight one. Barry Krammes, the first automatic qualifier, was almost as big of a surprise as Greer. He threw 78.97m on his first and only throw.

"I just threw a personal best and did my best ever by about five meters," said Krammes. "I don't even know what is going through my head right now. The emotions are so high. I am a teacher and I took a semester off so that I could teach my students one thing, and that is, dreams are possible. I am so close right now."

Brian Chaput at 75.98m, Aris Borjas at 73.05m and Jon Jeffery's 70.34m also qualified for Sunday's finals.

The second flight had the majority of qualifiers for Sunday's finals. Recently crowned NCAA champion Chris Hill took care of business on his first throw with an automatic qualifier of 77.72m on his first throw.

"The goal was to come out and get auto on the first throw," said Hill afterward. "I feel good, and I now I need to hit the 'A' standard in the finals. It's 81.80m and my PR is 81.72m, so eight centimeters is all that's holding me back from the Olympics."

Pan Am Games Silver medalist Mike Hazle threw 75.57m on his second throw, then passed on his final throw. This year's national leader in the spear, Leigh Smith, threw 74.23m on his first throw to make the finals. Rounding out the other five qualifiers out of the second flight were John Hetzendorf (74.19m), Sean Fury (74.17m), Bobby Smith (73.58m), Corey White (72.16m) and Daniel Brown at 70.28m. (JA)

#### **Men's Hammer Finals – Friday, July 4, 7:00pm**

Viewing the hammer warm-ups on Friday evening at the ring just outside of Hayward Field, the event promised to be as exciting as the fireworks that were poised to go off near the venue later that evening. Almost all the finalists seemed to be throwing well much to the crowd's delight.

But then the competition started up and things got a little more intense. During the first round, most of the throwers seemed cautious. A.G. Krueger later remarked, "The atmosphere was a little tense."

Travis Nutter led off the first round with a solid 69.70m effort. 2008 NCAA champion Cory Martin was the first to reach beyond 70 meters, at 71.09m. Thomas Freeman grabbed the early lead with a 72.92 whirl. Freeman's lead lasted until pre-meet favorite A.G. Krueger came up and blasted a 74.04m.



Krueger



Freeman

"My first throw was perfect," said Kruger afterward. "I knew I had to win to get in, regardless of the 'A' standard. In the back of my mind I knew all it would take was for one of these guys to get one big throw to surpass me, so the pressure was always there."

Two-time Olympian and Stanford throws coach Kevin McMahon did just that by unleashing a 72.55m effort on his first throw to grab the third spot at the end of the first round. One of the pre-meet favorites, Kibwe Johnson, who had trouble with fouling in the qualifying rounds, continued those woes in the finals by fouling on all three of his throws. His footwork seemed to be off and he couldn't get his groove.

The second round began with Nutter blasting a 73.25m throw to propel him into second place. Martin had a slight improvement with a 71.29m effort, and there was no improvement by Freeman, who kept having trouble keeping his glasses on in the ring which appeared to be a distraction for him. Krueger improved his mark to 74.94m to take a commanding lead. That was until McMahon answered with a 73.95m effort to press Krueger, and grab the second spot from Nutter.

The third round saw no change in the order, with the exception of Auburn's Jake Dunkleberger throwing a 68.62m to grab the coveted 8<sup>th</sup> spot going into the finals. Krueger continued to show why he was the man to beat with a third round throw of 75.3m.

After the first three rounds, the final order was set with Auburn's Dunkleberger in 8<sup>th</sup> place (68.62m), James Parker in 7<sup>th</sup> (69.97m), Martin in 6<sup>th</sup> (71.29m), Army's Michael Mai in 5<sup>th</sup> (71.75m), Freeman in 4<sup>th</sup> (72.92m), Nutter 3<sup>rd</sup> (73.25m), McMahon 2<sup>nd</sup> (73.95m) and Krueger at 75.39m.

There wasn't much change in the order during the first round until Freeman hit a 73.59m throw that propelled him into second place over Nutter and McMahon. Nutter, who looked solid all day, tried to answer the call, but could only get to 71.03m. McMahon came into the ring and showed some great speed and footwork to blast the hammer out to 74.49m and regain the silver slot.

Krueger was feeling some pressure from McMahon and responded with a 75.56m to send a nice message to the rest of the group.

During the second round of the finals there was no order change with four of the eight finalists intentionally fouling. Nutter belted out a 73 meters even on his 5<sup>th</sup> throw, but it still was not enough to overtake Freeman. Krueger who had been improving on every throw all but sealed the victory with a 75.81 effort on his 5<sup>th</sup> throw.

The final round was somewhat anticlimactic, with no change in position or improvement in distance, for any of the competitors. Even Mr. Consistency, Krueger, only produced a 73.68m on his final throw.

The final rankings stayed the same as the beginning of the finals, with the exception of Freeman displacing Nutter for third place.

When asked about his performance Freeman replied, "I'm happy. How can you not be happy with third place?"

When asked about his performance, McMahon answered, "For me it's wonderful, because six months ago I was at Stanford teaching and coaching. I only picked up the hammer again because I was coaching. I have made two teams and that's great, but if you look on the IAAF site, I don't think there's another event where there are so few 'A' qualifiers. I don't know how it helps the sport to make it so far." (JA)

1. A.G. Krueger, Nike, 75.81m, 248-09; 2. Kevin McMahon, unattached, 74.49m, 244-05; 3. Thomas Freeman, unattached, 73.59m, 241-05; 4. Travis Nutter, unattached, 73.25m, 240-04; 5. Michael Mai, U.S. Army, 71.75m, 235-05; 6. Cory Martin, Auburn, 71.64m, 235-00; 7. James Parker, unattached, 69.97m, 229-07; 8. Jake Dunkleberger, Auburn, 68.90m, 226-00; 9. Garland Porter, unattached, 68.53m, 224-10; 10. Lucias MacKay, unattached, 67.71m, 222-02; 11. David Paul, unattached, 66.65m, 218-08; - Kibwe Johnson, New York A C, FOUL;

### **Women's Hammer Final – Saturday, July 5, 1:10pm**

The women hammer throwers took the stage outside the first turn at Hayward Field. The women seemed a little tentative, much like how the men started the day before. Cari Soong, any Brittany Hinchcliffe and Kristal Yush, all threw in the 63m - 64m range. Then Loree Smith boomed a 66.74m to take the lead. American Record holder Erin Gilreath was next, and fouled into the net.

Sarah Veress started off with a 67.46 meter throw that took the lead from Smith. Brittany Riley, the 2007 USATF champ and 2007 and 2008 NCAA runner-up, was next, throwing 62.31m. She never could quite seem to get in a groove, and did not look comfortable in the ring. Melissa Myerscough fouled her first attempt.

Amber Campbell stepped into the ring and fired off a booming 69.07m throw that put everyone else on notice that she meant business. "I was anxious but it was because of a whole different reason," said Campbell. "With so many girls in there being so talented and ready for huge throws, I knew it was going to be anybody's game and I needed to be on top of mine. It was a big relief to start off nice and just keep building from there."



Veress



Campbell



Smith

UCLA grad and 2006 USATF champion Jessica Cosby was not the least bit intimidated. She walked into the ring, and with excellent form and the speed of a cat, fired off the farthest throw by an American this year - 70.72m.

The second and third rounds saw some improvements in distance, but no change in order. It appeared that Erin Gilreath was having a trouble with high arching tosses and never really seemed to get going. Her best for the day was 63.50m. Riley's best was a modest 64.44m. The cutoff for the finals was 65.35m, with Meyerscough grabbing that eighth and final spot on her only fair throw of the prelims. The other qualifiers for the finals were Godsey, Lofton, Yush, Smith, Veress, Campbell and the leader, Cosby.

There was no change in positions during the final round with the competitors finishing in the order they came in at. Veress had a personal record throw of 68.60m, on her second throw of the finals to solidify third place, but unfortunately it wasn't far enough to meet the Olympic 'A' standard, so fourth-place finisher Loree Smith will be going to Beijing in her stead.

When asked about missing the U.S. team, Veress responded, "It is not really that mixed (feelings). I have wanted to make the Olympic team ever since I can remember. I had my best throw ever today and it's close enough. Maybe I will get another chance in four years."

The United States will be well-represented by Smith, who has solid form and good speed. Her final throw of the competition was a long sector foul. When asked about her final effort, Smith replied, "The last throw was probably the longest throw of my life. Sarah (Veress) was gaining a lot of momentum and she just hit the big throw on the fifth one. I knew I had the 'A' going in, but if she would have got it on the last one, I knew I would not be up here. There was a lot going through my mind."

Campbell went for it on her last throw with an outstanding effort of 69.24m, which was still short of Cosby, who had an excellent day with four of her six throws surpassing the 69 meter mark.

When asked about her performance, the 2008 Trials champion replied, "This is what my coach and I have been training for. I felt like if I came here and just kind of focused on myself, anything would be possible. The field was loaded with talent, with so many girls having the 'A' standard. My approach was totally, 'Just focus on yourself and believe in the workouts we have done this year.' Everything came together." (JA)

1. Jessica Cosby, Nike, 70.72mT, 232-00; 2. Amber Campbell, Mjolnir Throws, 69.24m, 227-02; 3. Sarah Veress, unattached, 68.60m, 225-01; 4. Loree Smith, New York A C, 67.11m, 220-02; 5. Kristal Yush, unattached, 65.69m, 215-06; 6. Keturah Lofton, unattached, 65.58m, 215-02; 7. Kelly Godsey, unattached, 65.57m, 215-01; 8. Melissa Meyerscough, unattached, 65.35m, 214-05; 9. Cari Soong, Team XO, 65.04m, 213-05; 10. Brittany Hinchcliffe, Team XO, 64.92m, 213-00; 11. Brittany Riley, unattached, 64.44m, 211-05; 12. Erin Gilreath, New York A C, 63.50m, 208-04;

### Women's Shot Final - Saturday, July 5, 1:50pm

The women's shot final was one of the best shot competitions I have ever witnessed. Seven of the twelve women in the finals went over 58-9.5, and Kristin Heaston coming up from seventh place in the final three rounds to take the silver was thrilling.

Jill Camarena stepped up with an opening throw of 18.12m, which gave her the lead. Chandra Brewer also had an opener over 18 meters at 18.03, which placed her in second. That was until Michelle Carter stepped in and threw a booming 18.37m.

"Most of the time I start out bad," said Carter later. "Today I started good. Mentally it usually takes me a minute to get going. I need to get moving from the start."

Throughout the second and third round Gail Lee, Adriane Blewitt, Patience Knight and Sarah Stevens couldn't seem to find their rhythm. As in the men's competition, the effects of a long collegiate season seemed to be taking a toll on the likes of Knight and Stevens. Stevens had been dealing with some pain in her hand, which likely hindered her performance

The second round was better for Elizabeth Wanless (17.97m), Susan King (17.93m) and Jessica Pressley (17.92m), but the biggest throw of the second round came again from Carter. She stepped in the ring, took a deep breath and belted out an American leading toss of 18.85m (61-10.25), to all but cement her place on the Olympic team.

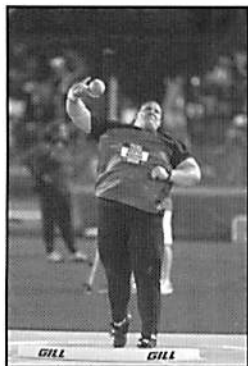
The third round didn't produce much movement, and saw 2007 Olympian Heaston four slots away from another Olympic berth.



Carter

After Abby Ruston fouled on her first attempt of the finals, Heaston stepped in the ring and fired a thunderous 18.34m throw to propel herself into second place, and punch her ticket to Beijing. The remainder of the round saw some good throws, but no change in order.

Awaiting the last three rounds, Heaston appeared to find her groove warming-up, lobbing a couple tosses well over the 18-meter line.



Heaston

After reordering prior to the final round, the reverse order stood as Abigail Ruston, Jessica Pressley, Susan King, Elizabeth Wanless, Chandra Brewer, Jill Camarena, Kristin Heaston in second but threatening, and Carter.

The final round saw no change in order with many of the women pressing to make that spot on the Olympic team.



Camarena

For Camarena it has been a long journey back from her surgery and other health issues.

"I always try to stay relaxed, and I had a decent first throw," said Camarena afterward. "I thought to myself, 'This is going to go well,' but I kept not throwing farther and I started to get nervous. Luckily my first throw held up and I made the team. Today didn't feel as good as qualifying, but making the team is so amazing after all I've been through with my surgeries and the setbacks. Almost every day I didn't think I could do this, but my family and support system really pulled me through. The next three weeks are all about training and getting repetitions."

When Heaston was asked about her warm-up throws before finals, she replied, "I am just happy that my last three throws were better than my first three throws. Warm-ups were great, but then I have been kind of playing that game all year long, which is not what I like to do. I am just glad that I got it together. I have been waiting sort of all season for this adrenaline to get ready for the Olympics Trials and perform well at the Olympic Trials and it has not been there. I had a couple warm up throws in between (preliminaries) and finals and something just turned on."

(JA)

1. Michelle Carter, unattached, 18.85m, 61-10.25; 2. Kristin Heaston, Nike, 18.34m, 60-02.00; 3. Jillian Camarena, New York A C, 18.12m, 59-05.50; 4. Chandra Brewer, unattached, 18.03m, 59-02.00; 5. Elizabeth Wanless, New York A C, 17.97m, 58-11.50; 6. Susan King, unattached, 17.93m, 58-10.00; 7. Jessica Pressley, Arizona State, 17.92m, 58-09.50; 8. Abigail Ruston, unattached, 17.41m, 57-01.50; 9. Gail Lee, unattached, 16.60m, 54-05.50; 10. Adriane Blewitt, unattached, 16.50m, 54-01.75; 11. Sarah Stevens, Arizona State, 16.16m, 53-00.25; 12. Patience Knight, Texas Tech, 16.09m, 52-09.50;

### Men's Discus Final – Sunday, July 6, 2:20pm

The men's discus was the first event of the final day of the Trials, and it was great to see the stands filling up to watch these incredible athletes. There was a peculiar wind out in the field oscillating between a headwind and a slight right quartering wind. Many of the athletes looked pretty good in warm-ups, with Jarred Rome and Casey Malone throwing the platter well over 210 feet.

As the first round commenced, William Conwell opened up with a 60.26 meter throw. On the second throw of the competition Doug Reynolds fired out a 62.64m to take the lead. Matt Lamb, who had thrown 62.36m in qualifying, could never quite find his groove, and didn't crack the 60-meter barrier in any of his throws. The next four throwers, Kuehl, Rome, Young and Godina, all had difficulty on their first throws. It appeared the wind was playing a factor, and they just didn't hit it quite right and either fouled or threw less than 60 meters. James Dennis was able to get his only fair throw of the day out to 60.54m, then had foul trouble on his remaining two efforts.

Defending national champion Mike Robertson didn't have any such troubles with the wind or fouling, as he whipped his opener 62.15m to slip into second behind Reynolds. Next up was 2004 Olympic veteran Casey Malone, who started out with his best throw of the day at 62.67m, which moved him ahead of Reynolds for first place. That lasted only until the final thrower came into the ring. Ian Waltz took a deep breath, and launched a 63.32m throw which propelled him to the top of the podium, a position he would not relinquish.

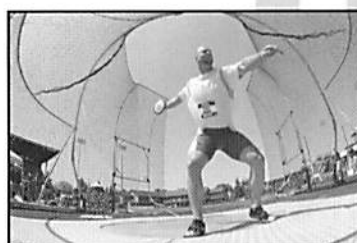
As the second round began, Conwell improved, throwing a low trajectory disc that just seemed to keep going. It landed at 61.32m. As in the first round, the middle of the order appeared to be having some difficulty finding their groove. Defending Trials champion Rome seemed to be having some difficulty with the disc coming off his hand. His second round throw of 58.95m appeared to fly out with the leading edge up and got caught by the wind, which caused it to slice down to the earth. Having similar difficulties was three-time Olympian Godina, who this spring had turned his focus to the discus. On his second



Waltz



Robertson



Malone

round throw (57.27m), the discus seemed to fly the same as Rome's. Waltz, showing no signs that his groin injury was a hindrance, fired his second round toss out to 64.54 meters.

Going into the final round of prelims, the top four spots belonged to Waltz, Malone, Reynolds and Robertson respectively.

There wasn't much change in the third round. Jarred Rome had his final attempt coming up, and everyone was pulling for him, but the discus again came off his hand funny.

"I had three throws that slipped off my hand and went straight-up into the air," said Rome afterward. "I've never in my career had that happen to me, not even in high school or college. I don't know why it was slipping off my hand. I led the qualifying and am in the best shape of my life, but I'm not on the Olympic team."

Another major disappointment came in the last round as Godina's final throw also failed to fly correctly; he would not be making his fourth Olympic team. The only order change in the third round would come from Michael Robertson, who was able to toss the platter 63.37m on his last toss of the prelims and push past both Reynolds and Malone, up to the runner-up position. The final eight qualifiers for the finals were Dennis, Kuehl, Conwell, 2008 NCAA champion Rashaud Scott, Reynolds, Malone, Robertson, and the leader, Waltz.

The final rounds began and Dennis did not take his first throw, and in fact, passed on all three throws, presumably due to injury.

During the first round no one improved on the preliminaries. Malone equaled his first round 62.67m and Ian Waltz sent a booming 65.87m toss that effectively sealed the competition for him.

When asked about his performance, Waltz replied, "I think my timing was still a little bit off because I haven't thrown

hard the last week-and-a-half. I thought I threw well, and it feels good to be going to Beijing. It was a great day overall having my friends and family here."

During the second round, the Adam Kuehl improved his distance to 61.50m to propel him into sixth place, but that only lasted until Conwell threw 61.74m to move him ahead of Kuehl.

There was no change in the rest of the order in the round.

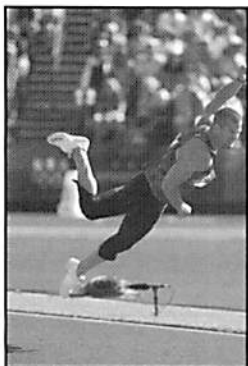
Going into the last round there was no reordering of competitors since all were still in the same order they had been placed for the first round of the finals. No throwers in their last throw improved on their distance so that is how the competition ended with Waltz, Robertson and Malone Beijing-bound. (JA)

1. Ian Waltz, Nike, 65.87m, 216-01; 2. Michael Robertson, Nike, 63.73m, 209-01; 3. Casey Malone, Nike, 62.67m, 205-07; 4. Doug Reynolds, unattached, 62.64m, 205-06; 5. Rashaud Scott, Kentucky, 61.98m, 203-04; 6. William Conwell, Club Northwest, 61.74m, 202-07; 7. Adam Kuehl, Nike, 61.50m, 201-09; 8. James Dennis, unattached, 60.54m, 198-07; 9. Jason Young, unattached, 60.31m, 197-10; 10. Matt Lamb, Washington State, 59.38m, 194-10; 11. Jarred Rome, Nike, 58.95m, 193-05; 12. John Godina, adidas, 57.27m, 187-11;

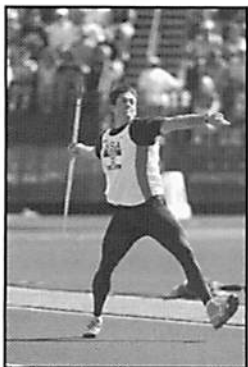
#### **Men's Javelin Final – Sunday, July 6, 4:15pm**

It was July 6<sup>th</sup> and the javelin was the final throwing event on the last day of competition. It was different not seeing Greer out there warming up with the rest of the field. The other competitors were excited and warming up well, considering the sizeable headwind gust that the throwers were presented with. When asked about the wind, Mike Hazle said, "The conditions were pretty tough. Anytime you have that much wind, whether it's a tail or head wind, it's going to knock it down. It was not ideal at all. I was about 10 meters under what I wanted."

The first round began with qualifying leader Barry Krammes tossing the javelin over the 70 meter line at 72.78m. He was then followed by Jon Jefferys, Aris Borjas, Sean Furey and Dan Brown, who all fouled. John Hetzendorf appeared to be hurt. He was holding his side after his first throw of 70.33m, which was his farthest throw of the day. Next up was Brian Chaput, who had been having some finger pain in his throwing hand. He showed no signs of injury on his first round leading toss of 75.63m. Bobby Smith, Leigh Smith and Chris Hill all started well with great first round throws of over 74 meters to grab the top three spots. 2007 USATF runner-up Hazle tossed a 72.80m, and Chris White tossed 62.66m, to finish out the first round. At the end of the round it was Chaput in first, followed by Chris Hill, Bobby Smith, and Leigh Smith in fourth.



*Hazle*



*Leigh Smith*



*Bobby Smith*

The beginning of the second round looked promising with Barry Krammes improving to 73.49m, and Jefferys, Borjas, Furey and Brown all getting in legal tosses. Hetzendorf and Chaput could not muster any more than 69 meters on their second toss. The rest of the field followed with no improvement from their first-round throws, leaving no change in the order from the previous round.

The third round saw most of the competitors taking voluntary fouls as their throws were not farther than the throws from the previous two rounds. Two competitors did improve with great efforts. Facing elimination from the finals, Sean Furey had a four-meter improvement (73.50m) to place him 7<sup>th</sup> going into the finals. Hazle, who appeared to be having some back issues during the competition, pulled out a high arching throw of 75.76 meters to grab the lead going into the final three rounds. The eight finalists were set at in reverse order as Hetzendorf, Furey, Krammes, L. Smith, B. Smith, Hill, Chaput and Hazle sitting in first place.

The finals first round was uneventful with none of the competitors besting any of their preliminary

efforts. The second round looked to be much of the same, many competitors intentionally fouling after seeing their efforts were not improvements. Bob Smith's second toss of the finals was nothing like that. He had a great toss of 76.06m to snatch first place, and all but assure himself the gold medal. Hill and Chaput both tried to answer Smith's throw but fell short of the 70 meter line and they both intentionally fouled. Only Mike Hazle came back on Smith with a tantalizingly close toss of 75.44 meters but it would only be good enough for second place.

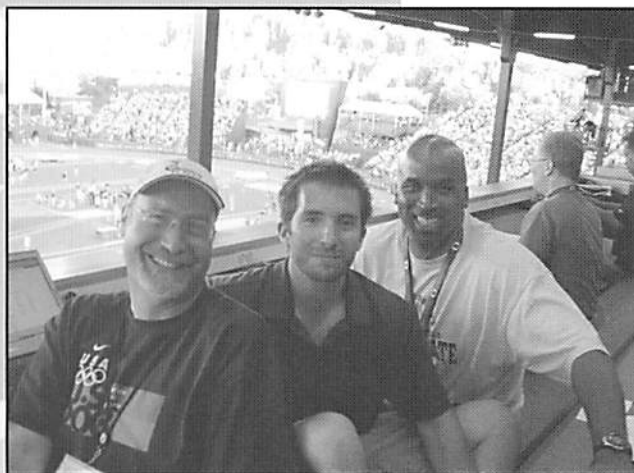
The final round would see no change in order with many of the competitors again intentionally fouling. Of the top three finishers, only Hazle has the Olympic "A" standard, leaving Bobby Smith and Brian Chaput at home. Accompanying Hazle to Beijing will be Leigh Smith (has a U.S. leading throw of 83.74m) since he also has the Olympic "A" qualifying standard.

For Bobby Smith it was a great day; he had a phenomenal series in less than ideal conditions. When asked about his efforts at the trials Bobby responded; "This has been a great year. Last year I didn't even qualify. I knew I had the winning throw in me. I just wish I had a tailwind to get the "A" standard. Overall, I had a great year and it's been one hell of a journey. It's just unreal. Today I had the series of my life. Even though I'm not going, I'm still young. It's great being a winner. I wasn't sure how far I was going to throw today, because we had some bad headwinds out there." (JA)

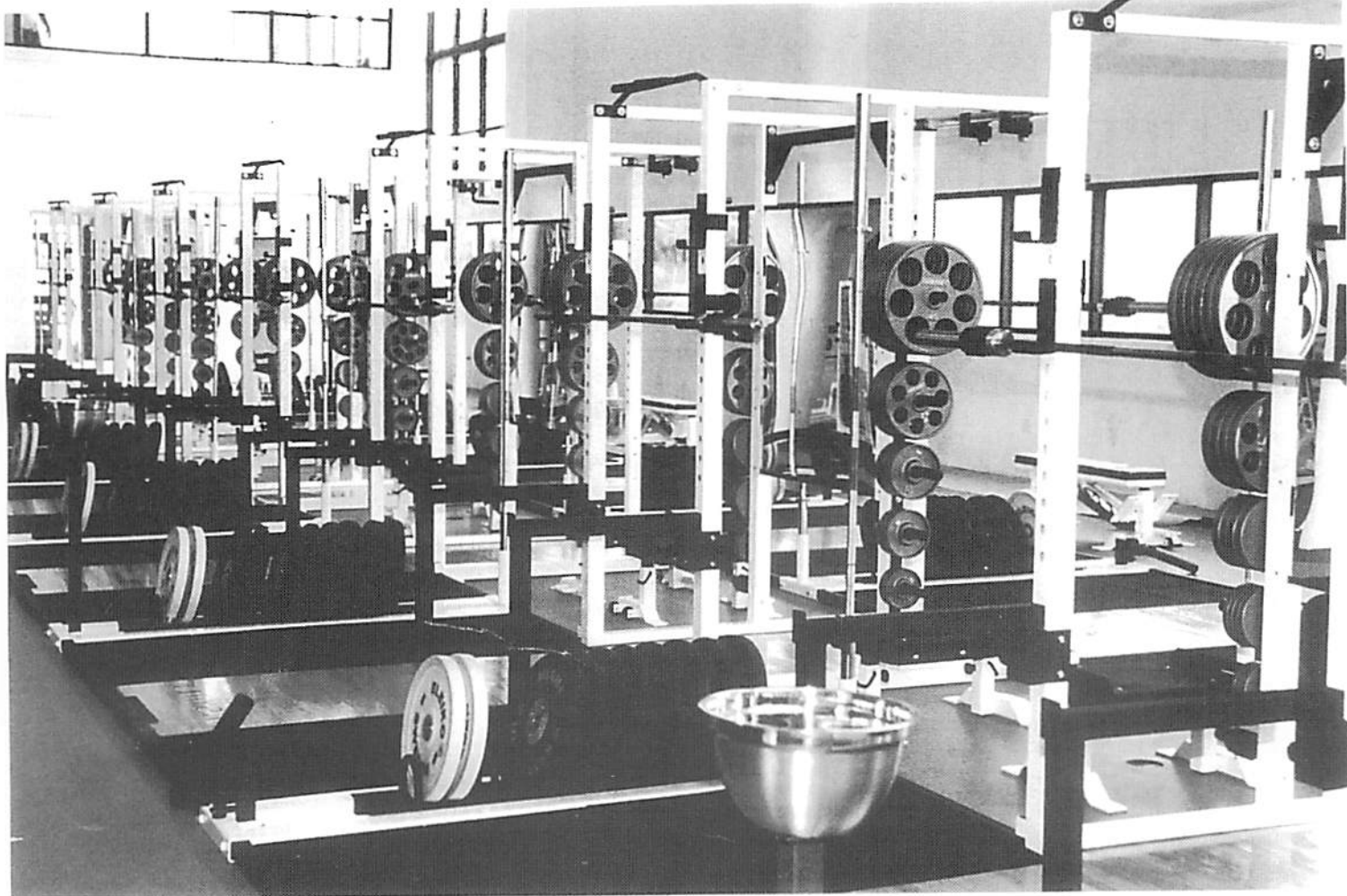
1. Bobby Smith, Monmouth Track Club, 76.06m, 249-06;
2. Mike Hazle, Nike, 75.76m, 248-07;
3. Brian Chaput, Javelin USA, 75.63m, 248-01;
4. Christopher Hill, unattached, 74.51m, 244-05;
5. Leigh Smith, unattached, 74.24m, 243-07;
6. Barry Krammes, Shore A C, 73.82m, 242-02;
7. Sean Furey, unattached, 73.50m, 241-02;
8. John Hetzendorf, unattached, 70.33m, 230-09;
9. Corey White, unattached, 68.92m, 226-01;
10. Aris Borjas, VS Athletics, 68.78m, 225-08;
11. Daniel Brown, unattached, 66.75m, 219-00;
12. Jon Jeffreys, unattached, 64.01m, 210-00;

\*\*\*\*\*

Breaux Greer was added to the U.S. track and field team for the Beijing Games even though he failed to reach the final round at the Olympic trials. Greer, an eight-time national champion, finished 17th at the Trials. He was placed on the team, the USATF said, based on a rule that allows for "the selection of an injured athlete who competed in the Olympic trials but did not final ... as long as another athlete is not displaced from the team." Greer's agent submitted an injury appeal. Only two other male javelin throwers from the United States, Leigh Smith and Mike Hazle, had met the Olympic "A" qualifying standard. If Greer had not been added to the roster, the U.S. would have been using only two of its allotted three places. Only Greer could have taken the third spot. \*L&S\*



*Your ace reporters, in the media area high above Hayward Field. From left to right: Jim Aikens, Kurt Dunkel and Glenn Thompson*



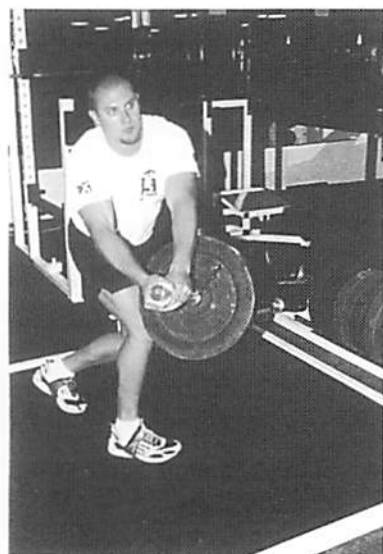
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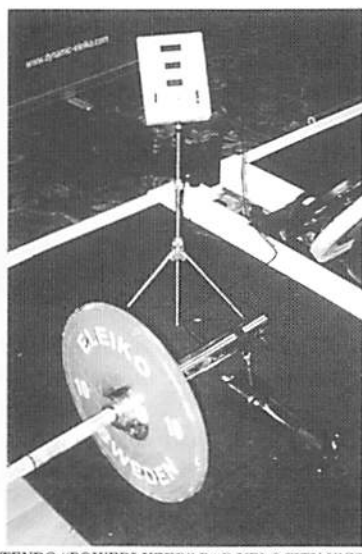
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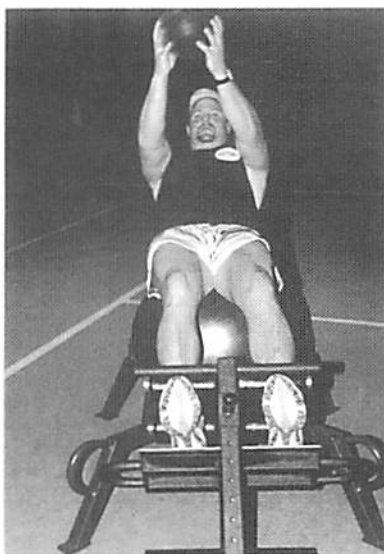
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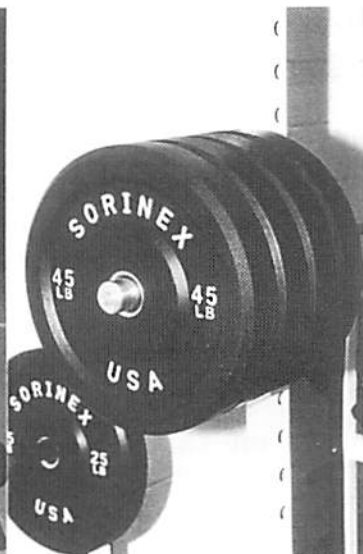
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Chatting with...

# BETTY HEIDLER

BY GLENN THOMPSON

*2007 IAAF hammer throw world champion Betty Heidler is adjusting to life in the spotlight. Heidler came to last year's World Championships in Osaka with minimal hype, yet realized her athletic promise with a victory by the narrowest of margins over Cuban Yipsi Moreno.*

*A year later the 25-year-old German fully embraces the challenge of confirming her Osaka gold with more of the same in the pressure cooker that will be the Beijing Olympics come August.*

*Heidler took some time to talk to Long & Strong about her training, technique and career.*

**Long & Strong:** *You are a Berlin native, correct? For those of us that have never been there, tell us about your home town.*

**Betty Heidler:** Yes, I was born in Berlin! It's the capital of Germany and one of my favorite cities! After my sports career, I would like to move back to Berlin!

**L&S:** *Talk about your athletic background as a youth. When were you introduced to track and field and the hammer?*

**BH:** In 1997 I began with athletics! I did everything: running, jumping, and throwing including the hammer throw. In 1998 I made a competition in Berlin and a Hammer coach asked me if I would like to train hammer throw and I said- yes! I will try it! And since 1998 I'm training hammer throw!

**L&S:** *At what point did you begin to understand that you had the potential to be a national-class, then world-class, thrower?*

**BH:** I thought this in my youth, in my first years as a hammer thrower! Every year I improved myself and my best marks, and this not just in centimeters! In 2001, I changed coaches and moved to Frankfurt to train with Michael Deyhle. I thought I could be a national and world-class thrower- he told that to me. Every year I was the German champion- as a junior, and now as senior. And now, I'm the World Champion!

**L&S:** *Were there certain hammer throwers you admired as a youth? Who, and why so?*

**BH:** I have an idol- it's Marianne Buggenhagen! Have a look in the internet and you will know why!!

**L&S:** *Share with our readers some of your physical attributes, such as your height, weight, running speed, jumping ability, personal bests in the major lifts, etc.*

**BH:** I'm 175cm, my weight is 81kg and my personal bests in training...that's my secret (laughs).

**L&S:** *Describe your technical style. What are your points of emphasis? What does a perfect throw feel like?*

**BH:** Oh, it's impossible to describe the perfect throw! It feels very easy- like nothing! You make four turns and see how the hammer flies and you know that this must be a good one, but the feeling of a good throw?! Everybody who has felt this knows what I mean!

I would describe my technique in a few words: powerful, fast, and good! Not every time, but very often!

**L&S:** *From a technique standpoint, are there certain things that you struggle with?*

**BH:** No, there aren't special things I struggle with. We always try to do the right rhythm and start. That's our most important concentration point! But I do not have any special problems with this!

**L&S:** *Are you in a training group with other throwers?*

**BH:** Yes, I'm training with other throwers: we are five girls- all hammer throwers! Kathrin Klaas (2nd in Germany) and Andrea Bunjes (3rd in Germany) train with me, and two younger girls- Kristin Steinert (21) and Gabi Wohlfahrt (19). Somebody could think, "Oh my God, only girls," but that's perfect because we push ourselves to new personal bests and help each other in training! I think my coach can tell you also something about that!

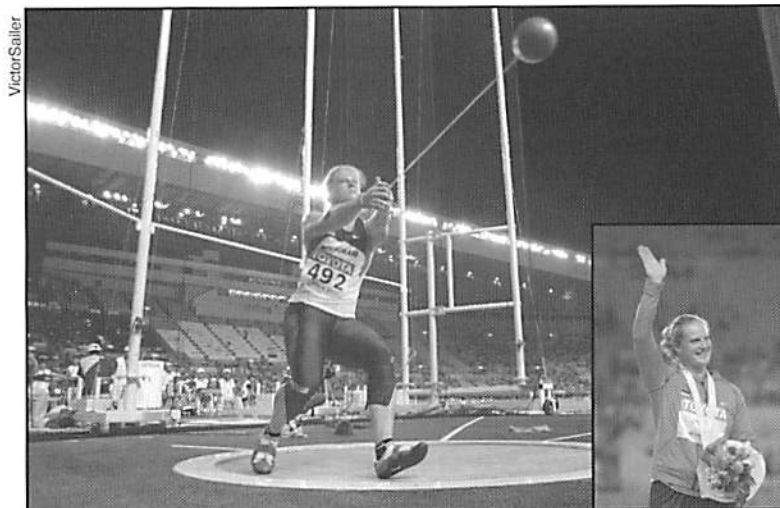
**L&S:** *Can you tell us about your training program, both in the weight room and otherwise?*

**BH:** Our training changes every year! My coach tries new things every year! Most of the things are the same: throwing with 3 till 9 kg, weightlifting and athletics! We have special exercises for throwing - that's our secret! In general, I train 8-10 times a week for about 2.5 hours!

**L&S:** *You had a great season last year with multiple personal bests. What were the keys to your success?*

**BH:** I think I had success because of our good training and because of my mind! Also, when you're not the

champion- you have to think like one! Every time I think, 'I want to be the best!' And in training, every time I want to improve myself! And I organize my whole life around sports. I'm working in a special program with the German Federal Police and they allow me to train 11 months without working! That means my training is my work! And that's one of the



Heidler won a tight battle with Cuba's Yipsi Moreno in Osaka.

best things! So my mind is able to concentrate on just sports!

A few years ago I couldn't imagine working for the police- it was never in my mind! When I heard about this possibility - learning with the border police and training without any problems and (also important) earning money - I tried to do

## HIS OWN SPIN ON THE HAMMER

BY GLENN THOMPSON

The man who directs Betty Heidler and quite possibly the best stable of women's hammer throwers in the world remarkably has no throwing background as an athlete.

"My active career as an athlete had nothing to do with track and field," says Michael Deyhle. "I was a rower. I started as a lightweight rower and won regional and national titles, but more importantly, I learned how much hard work and sweat you need to be a winner."

Deyhle did not turn to track and field until after his competitive career concluded. "My interest in track and field started late, after retiring as an athlete, recalled Deyhle. "While working on my Masters in economics, I started coaching as a hobby, but over the following years, it became clear to me my passion for coaching and I focused on becoming a professional throwing coach."

That passion for coaching has led to a 15-year career as a full-time, high performance trainer for the German track and field federation, where he's currently the head coach for hammer throwing for men and women in Germany.

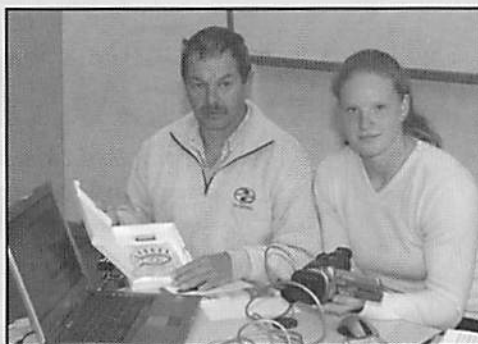
Deyhle's training group includes 5 female and 2 male athletes, all of whom are top national athletes in their age groups. "Three of the women, as well as one of the men, are on their way to qualify for the Olympic Games," says Deyhle. "One of the

younger athletes will compete at the Junior World Championships. I'm also working nationwide with about 25 more athletes."

Deyhle has formed his own school of thought regarding training for the complex event.

"My general philosophy regarding hammer throwing technique is to show the most difficult technical discipline as a piece of art, a composition of power and speed in motion, a picture of perfection, and aesthetic to the observer," says Deyhle.

"I emphasize most to my athletes, their absolute will to win, their ability to work harder than anyone else, respecting the Olympic rules and regulations, and competing with fairness and respect."



Deyhle with prize pupil Heidler.

"My training philosophy is about building a structure of athletic, power, strength, speed and technique from basic to high performance, with considerations for the health, age, ability and talent of each athlete."

Of his number one charge, Deyhle says, "Betty (Heidler) has the physical and mental abilities, as well as the talent of a world-class athlete. She has the absolute will to win and be the best, and works hard for that goal. She's willing to [sacrifice some of] her personal life for this goal." \*L&S\*

this and it was the best I could do!

I love this job and while I learned there, I recognized this would be my dream work! When I finished the education I thought about all the time which I had then for training. I didn't only want to train for the police; I need the education. So I was looking for a possibility to study something like that, but I also wanted to have enough time for training and regeneration! I found a good system at the Fernuniversität in Hagen and since last year I've studied there! After my sports career, I would like to work for the German Border police!

**L&S:** Can you describe the competition in Osaka for us? I'm sure the victory must have been very satisfying, but winning by such a narrow margin over Moreno must have been very stressful, especially as her last throw landed just 2cm short of yours. Did you watch her throw and the measurement?

**BH:** I didn't see Moreno's last throw. I wasn't able to watch. I heard her screaming and I thought: 'Now you are second!' On the big screen you couldn't see how far it was, it was directly over the red line. It was very close. I

watched the result and was just happy when I saw second place. A few moments later, I recognized that it was just 2cm behind me!

I was happy and couldn't believe this, I was totally surprised! Sure I wanted to be the winner, but I never thought that this could happen in Osaka! I was in good shape, but 74.76m would be enough for gold?! At the victory ceremony I was very excited and I couldn't believe it. That's the reason I shook my head when I was standing outside. Yes, it was totally satisfying.

**L&S:** I have to admit, I didn't know much about you prior to your victory in Osaka. Has becoming the world champion changed your life in and out of the circle?

**BH:** Yes, it changed my life! More people know me and I get invitations for events. I have to do a lot more work for newspapers such as photo shoots.

But it also changed my mind a little bit. I now know more than ever before that I have to train hard and well to be the champion for longer than two years, and everybody will be looking at me this summer! It's easier to be second or third in the world, but it will be a good experience to be the best in the world! \*L&S\*

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# 2008 World Heavy Events Championships AMERICANS MAKE CLEAN SWEEP

BY MARK VALENTI

The World Heavy Events Championships made their return to the United States on Saturday May 3 in Bridgeport, West Virginia. The contest and accompanying festival was held on the grounds of Bridgeport High School, and the promoters and organizers left no stone unturned in putting on a truly world class competition.

Competitors were gathered from all over the world including the United States of America, Scotland, New Zealand, Canada, England and the Ukraine. Representing the USA was five-time world Champion Ryan Vierra. Vierra was dealing with a calf tear but would not sit out of this important event. Current U.S. champion Larry Brock, Sean Betz, North American Champion Mike Zolkewicz and Harrison Bailey (replacing the injured Craig Smith and Kerry Overfelt). Canada was represented by Greg Hadley and Joel Thiessen. England was represented by Scott Rider, the Ukraine by the giant Kyrlo Chuprynin and New Zealand by Pat Helier. Both of Scotland's representatives fell on hard times: 2007 World Champion Gregor Edmunds injured his back squatting with 60 kilos and Bruce Robb returned home due to a family emergency.

The competition began at 8:30 am on Saturday morning. With the threat of rain looming, the competitors started with the 22lb. Braemar stone (or standing put). The big Ukrainian Chuprynin made his presence known with a monster 45'+ throw. Vierra and Betz finished behind him with 41' throws.

The open stone was next and a perfect 16# stone was used. The throws in this event were huge with almost every thrower over the 50' mark. Scott Rider of England decided to make some noise in his best event. He wound up and buried a 59' 11 1/2" throw on his second attempt to pretty much end the competition. Rider then took extra throws (allowed by the rule to break a record). Rider wound up with his full spin technique and hit a monster throw over 61', but a slight foot foul nullified it. Again Vierra and Betz brought up second and third with 54' tosses.

Next were the weight throws. In the 56lbs. weight for distance, current U.S. Champ Larry Brock woke up and launched his way into first with a monster 45' throw. The crazy thing was that the throw was a bad miss for Brock. The weight shot out of his hand way early and landed way off to the right-hand side. Had he been able to hold on, he would have been looking at a world record throw.

In the 28lb. weight for distance, Brock again took the lead with a monster 86' throw in round two. Vierra, the very next thrower, answered with an 87' throw to steal the lead. Betz came up big with another 87' throw to take second. Vierra

was blocking out the pain of his injury and slowly trying to wrestle his sixth world championships away from the rest of the field.

In the 22lbs. hammer throw Larry Brock again came on strong and hit a giant 120' 11 1/2" to take the lead from Betz at 117'. Scott Rider hit a 10' pr to take third at 110' just inches over Greg Hadley also at 110' and Vierra took a hit here with a 109' throw.

The 16# hammer showed why Sean Betz is feared by many on the pro circuit. Betz hurled the light hammer over 148' to take the lead from Brock at 143'. Hadley jumped into third with 135' and Vierra again was pushed back into third place.

The caber was next and wouldn't you know it, the rain started falling. The caber was absolutely huge and after round one had to be cut, due to the fact that the best caber tossers in the world could not get it to turn. Six inches were cut off the stick and after round 2 still no one could turn the stick. Then in round three Scott Rider finally got the stick to go and recorded a turn, followed by turns by Brock, Vierra and Betz. The caber is known as Betz's "weak" event, but he stayed in the top three and put a virtual head lock on the competition.

The weight for height was the last event of the day. The bar started out at 14' and only standing throws were permitted in this World Championship event. Most of the field was out after 15' with only Betz, Zolkewicz, Brock and Chuprynin moving on to 16'. Zolkewicz won with a 16'6 effort and took a shot at 17'3" but did not make it.

After this event the scores were tallied and the drug tests were taken (all athletes were summoned to the testing tent right after competition) the results of the competition were as follows...

1. Sean Betz (USA), 2. Larry Brock (USA), 3. Ryan Vierra (USA), 4. Scott Rider (England), 5. Mike Zolkewicz (USA) 6. Kyrlo Chuprynin (Ukraine), 7. TIE Greg Hadley (Canada), Pat Helier (New Zealand), Harrison Bailey (USA) 8. Joel Thiessen (Canada)

USA made a clean sweep of all the medals and had a great showing over all. It was sad that because of injury and family issues Scotland was not represented, hopefully all is well with the Scottish athletes.

Congrats to Sean Betz on a fantastic event and his first World Championships! See you next year in Edinburgh, Scotland! \*L&S\*

# Utilizing The Stretch-Shortening Cycle In Discus Technique (Part 1)

## THE STRETCH-SHORTENING CYCLE CONCEPT

By Bryan Neighbour, Senior throws coach (ATFCA: level 5), Mentone Athletic Club

An individually specific, optimal performance must successfully combine a large number of elements; one element of paramount importance is the ability to use the *stretch-shortening cycle (SSC)* to optimize power output, but first some explanation of the principle.

A *stretch-shortening cycle* starts with a rapid eccentric movement that stretches the muscle stimulating the *myotatic stretch reflex*; this is immediately followed by a rapid concentric contraction in the lengthen muscle. In practical terms, it occurs whenever a movement sequence involves a rapid muscle stretch (e.g. quadriceps in a sprinter's mid-support phase) followed by reversing the movement with a rapid concentric contraction (e.g. drive phase/take-off), effectively shortening the muscle.

This is a natural mechanism that can be conditioned to achieve optimal performance for the greatest force and power, in a concentric phase. It is also variously described by coaches as the *reversibility of muscle action*, *elastic energy* and as a result of *pre-tensioning muscles*.

A familiar example occurs when a jumper invokes this principle in resistance conditioning by jumping down from a box and then immediately rebounding up onto another box. When landing, several extensors (including the calf muscles, quadriceps, erector-spinea, etc.) slow descent before reversing the motion (i.e., take-off). In this instance, power is augmented in these extensors by harnessing the stretch-shortening cycle. For the triple jumper, this natural stretch-shortening cycle occurs in every landing and take-off, starting with every landing phase, including each run-up stride, and finally the hop, step and jump phases. With every ground contact, muscles eccentrically work to absorb the flight-landing impact and then respond utilizing an augmented concentric contraction to drive each take-off.

In the discus we also see stretch-shortening cycles repeating through the phases:

- During left leg-loading, the right leg's adductors and hip flexors are stretched and primed for the swing kick, then again
- as the left-foot loads and unloads to direct and launch into the brief airborne phase, then again
- during the right-leg landing to begin transition,
- and again as the left-foot grounds and weight shifts forwards while the hips and knees continue rotating against the inertia of the upper body, increasing

torso-torque recognized by an increasing hip-shoulder-lines of separation.

- As the delivery phase progresses, the right pectorals are also stretched by the advance of the right-hip and inertia of the right shoulder and even further by the maximum separation of the advancing right-shoulder ahead of the trailing discus arm.

These cycles occur in all the throwing events, e.g., in **figure 1** we see how a shot-putter successfully utilizes the *stretch-shortening cycle* for the chest and then in another attempt fails to establish pre-tension. In this example, the athlete's better throw shows that the pectoral muscles were initially stretched, with the shoulders appearing retracted (i.e.  $>180^\circ$ ) before the concentric contraction /shortening used to accelerate the distal end of the humerus.

In the first instant, the result is greater force in a given time (i.e., power) compared to the second release. If all other release parameters are the same greater power means a faster release velocity  $V$  and greater range  $R$  (range  $R$ , is directly proportional to the square of the release velocity  $R$ , i.e.  $R \propto V^2$ ).

This example shows a significant difference of 2.09m (approximately 11%) and implies that the correct technical application of the SSC principle increases power, release speed and range.

The following three sections discuss how the SSC principle is invoked for discus technique and specifically, in the release phase.

In discus throwing, the most obvious SSC moment occurs during the delivery where the athlete is *torque-up* in the positions (**figure 2**) #7-9 with stretch in the torso (i.e., hip-shoulder separation) and between the alignment of the shoulder and arm, ready for the final unwinding, thigh-torso extension, pull and whip action to release.

These critical positions begin shortly after left-foot down ( $L_1$ ) (**figure 2**, #7-8) while the discus is descending. Peak eccentric tension occurs as the hips spin through (#8-9), pushing well ahead of the shoulder-line, increasing the stretch in the torso, across the chest and shoulder joint.

**\* Part I of a Two-Part Series**

It is here that the popular coaching tip of 'make a bow before you let it go' occurs. In this position the athlete feels considerable tension vertically as the hips press forwards (i.e., the archer's bow shape), and diagonal tension as the hips pull the shoulders towards the final  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn that will complete delivery.

To successfully manage this sub-phase, the knees and hips must spin to the front (i.e. square to the release direction), to face the throwing direction. This is driven by the faster turning rate of the lower torso and limbs, which in turn are pulling around the more inert shoulders, for peak tension. Similarly stretch is increased in the right shoulder by the combined effect of the passive trailing of the discus arm and the rapid rotary acceleration of the lower body during transition that also accelerates the shoulder rotation. For optimum eccentric stretch in the throwing shoulder-arm muscles (i.e., pectorals) the throwing arm and discus must passively trail the shoulder following an orbit determined by the system's path and rotary acceleration through successive phases.

In brief:

During transition and early delivery phases, the momentum of the right leg is transferred to the lower-body, increasing the turning rate of the hips in the pivot. As the hips' rotation accelerates, they rotate slightly ahead of the shoulders and this difference in the alignment of the hips and shoulders increases the eccentric tension

(think of it as stretch) in the torso muscles.

This action also increases the turning rate of the shoulders (i.e., rotary momentum of the lower torso and limbs being transferred upwards) because the hips are literally pulling the shoulders around and because the shoulders are leading the arm, the inertia (i.e. resistance of the passive discus arm) also increases the muscle stretch across the shoulder joint and chest.

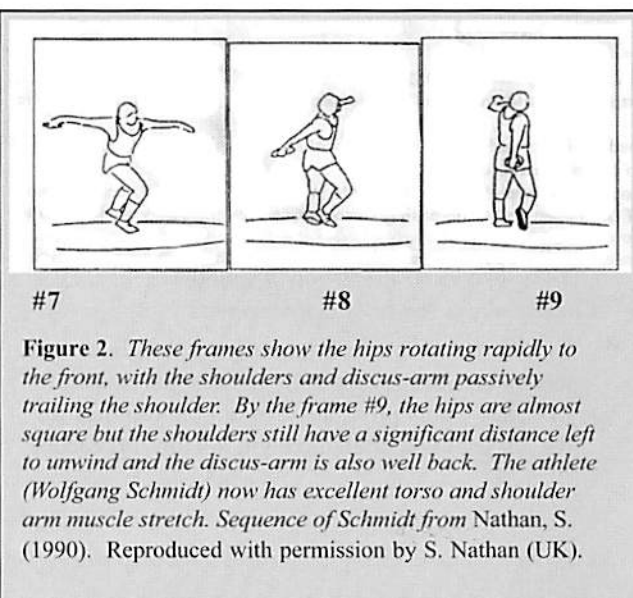
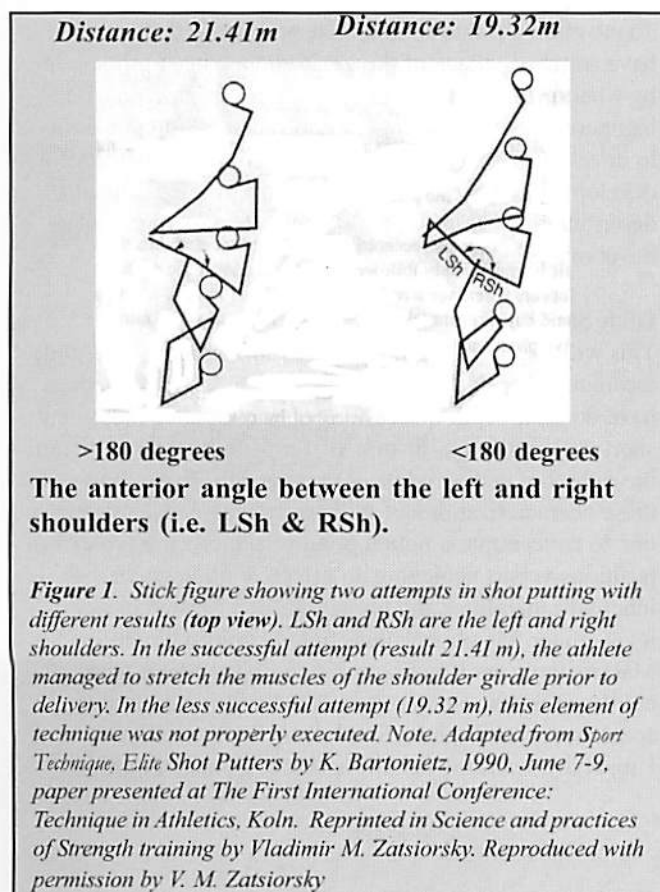
Summary:

- The hips spin slightly faster than the shoulders;
- The hips pull the shoulders around creating torque (stretch) in the torso;
- The shoulders pull on the discus, stretching the right-shoulder, chest and arm muscles;
- The inertia of the discus trailing the shoulder while going downwards further increases the tension (stretch) in the throwing arm and shoulder as the rotating system moves forward and upwards.

If timed correctly, pulling the left-arm backwards, in-line with the throwing arm, also increases the tension in the chest, further augmenting the pectoral stretch (figure 3, frames 28-29), just prior to unleashing the powerful synchronised concentric contractions of the legs, torso, shoulder, chest and arm muscles.

When these combine, the athlete is set to synchronize and utilize forward and rotary momentum, vertical leg drive, extension and unwinding of the torso, the shoulder-pull and whip-arm delivery. However while positions and sequence of these parts can be practiced and applied in standing throws and full throws, more vigorous complex drills are required (e.g., South Africans) to hit these positions at close to actual competition speed, and to elicit and condition the SSC effect.

*\*L&S\**



# REALISTIC 'MASTERY' OF THE GLIDE SHOT

BY CRAIG SHUMAKER, USATF MASTERS CHAMPION

Shot putting, at any age, is an event that requires tremendous skill and a matching level of strength. Through research, observation, experimentation and perseverance several things about the event have shaped my pursuit of the *perfect put*. My goal in writing this article is to share the salient points that seem to me to capture the essence of the event and how to prepare for it in a comprehensive and realistic manner. While written largely with the Masters audience in mind, I hope it will be of some value to others who perform the glide.

Some may disagree or question what follows, some will say that it is too elemental, but that is okay – debate is good and sharing observations with others makes being a thrower a fun avocation.

While there are many, many articles that discuss glide shot putting technique, weight training, conditioning and performance, there is no one article that provides the 'Rosetta Stone.' And, therein lies the problem – while there are several inviolate principles, we all have different body types, time for training, training capacities, health issues, and family and personal commitments that impact how far we throw. This article will not provide the illusive Rosetta Stone, but will hopefully provide enough information for fellow 'gliders' to *develop their own plan for realistic mastery of the glide shot put*.

This article will examine the following as they relate to mastering the glide shot put: 1) Inviolable Principles; 2) Technique and Technical Training; 3) Weight Training; and 4) Personal Considerations.

## Inviolable Principles

- ◆ The *glide is a straight line technique* and any body movement that impedes straight line movement is counterproductive.
  - Bringing the left leg behind the right leg when beginning the movement out of the back of the circle to the power position causes one to be out of balance, the hips to drop and subsequently open too soon
  - Not standing square to the back of the circle causes the hips and shoulders to begin in an open position, vice opening as part of the technique
- ◆ *Consistency is the key to effectiveness*
  - Every action has a reaction, so keep the glide technique simple, especially if using the classical "T" start which provides several opportunities for the left leg to be lifted too high, too low, off center,

pulled in front of the right leg before extending to the toe board, etc.

- Find a technique that doesn't violate these principles and works for you – comparison with others and too much video watching clouds one's ability to concentrate on what works for you
- ◆ Gliding is a *slow to fast* movement
  - Too much speed out of the back causes one to hop into the power position
  - Too much speed out of the back causes the back to rise too soon and places your center of gravity between your feet in the power position, instead of behind it
- ◆ The *head and right shoulder must be kept back* as long as possible, allowing the lower body to effectively rotate, the chest to open more fully and enable a long arm strike
- ◆ *Muscle memory will take over when you throw*, so practice correct technique on every put
  - When you begin a put, you can only concentrate on one part of your technique at a time
  - Practice parts of the technique only to correct a known deficiency
  - Practice the whole technique more than the individual parts in isolation

To me gliding is that simple. The problem is that we all have watched videos of the great gliders, been influenced by what we see other throwers do, read articles, and are hampered by physical imperfections that inhibit our ability to develop an *effective* glide and/or have contributed to developing bad habits. The rest of this article is aimed at describing how to best prepare ourselves so as to violate the above principles as little as possible.

## Glide Shot Put Technique

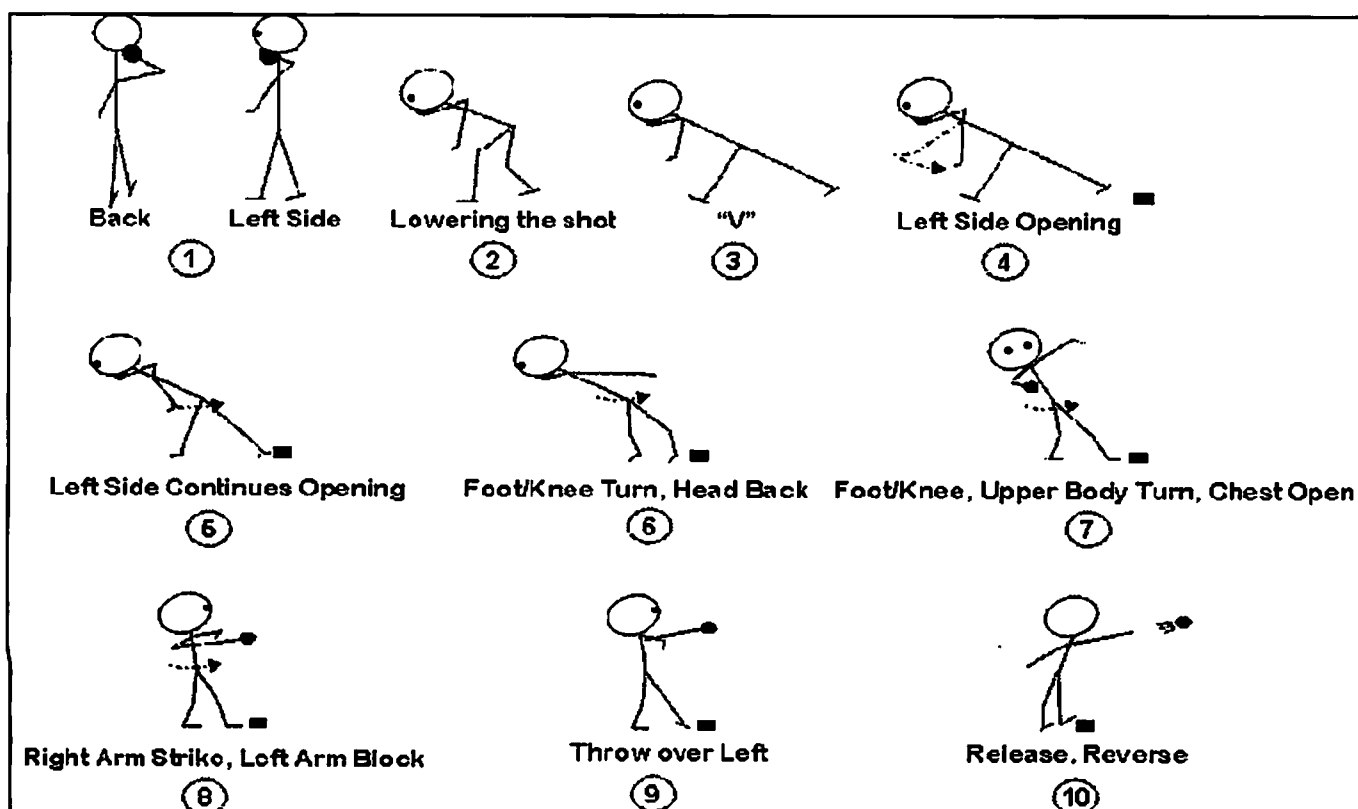
This will not be your typical discussion of comparing glide techniques because the debate can be endless and others have done in-depth discussions on the topic already: long-short vs. short-long, lift-turn vs. turn-lift, how much to turn the right foot in the middle of the ring, etc. To me, however, these characterizations of glide technique needlessly cause one to concentrate on attempting to achieve the proscribed positions versus achieving an effective glide given the inherent capabilities and limitations of a Master, or any level, glider. My observations, interactions with fellow Masters throwers Ron Summers and Mike Shiras, and conversations and training sessions with noted throws coaches, especially John Smith from Southern Illinois University, leads me to believe that a 'Dynamic/European

glide' is the most effective glide technique for Masters throwers. It is a hybrid technique that reinforces the inviolate principles to the greatest degree because it enables one to *minimize the opportunities to 'personalize' the glide*, keeps the body in as straight a line as possible and maximizes consistency.

I have also observed through teaching at coaching clinics, especially as it relates to high school girls, that the classical 'T' glide technique has some inherent instability. The observation is that their right legs are not strong enough in single support to hold the rest of the body in a steady position as the left leg is moving in toward the body at the back, as well as out of the back of the circle toward the toeboard. This causes them to drop their hips to maintain a more stable position on one foot and they cross the left leg behind the right at the back of the circle to help maintain balance. While not trying to offend my fellow throwers by comparing them to high school girls, I have observed these same actions and reactions among Masters gliders and neither leads to anything good. I suspect that since most of us don't do much single extremity work, especially for the legs, that the same thing might be true at the Master's level and that the Dynamic/European glide would provide a more stable body position at the back of the circle and cause less wasted/errant motion.

The figure below portrays my concept of a Dynamic/European Glide. As you examine the stick figures (my personal attempt to illustrate the technique), there are several Key Points:

- ◆ **Position 1** - Standing position at back of circle with shot in place.
- ◆ **Position 2** - Lowering the shot as the initial movement is as simple as collapsing the right leg to the degree one feels comfortable, while pulling the left leg toward the back just enough to get a little bend in it.
- ◆ **Position 3** - As you settle after the 'collapse,' drive the left to the toe board and begin to straighten the right leg.
- ◆ **Position 4** - As the left is fully extended, drive off the right into the 'V' position.
- ◆ **Position 5 - Key Point** - As the drive off the right is occurring, begin to open the left shoulder - keep the head and right shoulder back as much as possible. Suck the right foot under as far and as fast as possible. *This will probably have the most impact on the remainder of the throw.*
- ◆ **Position 6 - Key Point** - as the left is grounded, continue to open the left side and turn on the balls of both feet simultaneously. Keep the head and right shoulder back as long as possible.
- ◆ **Position 7 - Key Point** - As the feet and knees come around, let the right side of the body and the head come to the front. This places the chest in full stretch and in a position that mimics a standing bench press.
- ◆ **Position 8** - Block with the left side and begin the right side strike.
- ◆ **Position 9** - Throw over the left leg, using it like a pole vault to give the shot that last thrust.
- ◆ **Position 10** - Release and quickly reverse.



## Dynamic/European Glide

### Technique and Technical Training

Technique and technical training is the training you do to strengthen the muscles used in throwing by doing drills that mimic the throwing action, but place particular emphasis on one part of the body and technique training is done to fix quirks in your technique.

#### ◆ Technical training/drills

- Straight leg – this drill focuses on getting the right leg under you out of the back of the circle, keeps the weight over the right leg in the center and retards jumping into the throw. At the back of the circle get in the beginning position of the glide ‘T’, raise and lock the left leg so that it is straight behind you in the air and drive off the right into the center of the circle, pulling the right leg under you in the center. Do not bend the left leg at any time. Your center of gravity should be over/behind the right leg.
- Straight leg and throw – do the straight leg as above but finish with a throw.
- Double hop – this drill also focuses on getting the right leg under you out of the back of the circle but also reinforces hitting a good power position. Do the straight leg drill as above, but when you pull the right leg under you in the center do not ground the left; immediately after the right leg touches down, drive off the right again. If you are in a bad power position, i.e. your body mass is not over the right leg, you will not be able to drive off the second time. You should end up in a solid power position after the second hop. This drill takes about 10’ – 12’ to complete.
- Double hop and throw – do the double hop as above, but on landing the second time, finish with a full throw.
- Throw over an object for height – this drill teaches one to get the chest up and release the throw at the highest point. Do a standing throw but throw over something about 10’ high that has been placed about 10’ in front of the thrower.
- Standing throw/overweight shots – use the standing throw with overweight shots to build the throwing muscles. Conduct the standing throw as you normally would but remember that a shot that is probably 4 to 5 pounds over your competition weight may impact your technique.
- **Note** – much has been written about the use of overweight shots and if you think about it, at what point in a 10 year Master’s cycle do you generally get your best throw for a given weight? Probably your first year in a 10 year age group, especially once you progress

beyond the 16lb. *That should tell us that throwing overweight implements may be as helpful as weightlifting.*

- Shot Box throw – this drill adds a plyometric piece to the full throw. Place a low box or an aerobics step base, no more than six inches high, just outside the back of the circle. Stand on the box and do a complete throw.

#### ◆ Technique training

- Standing throw – use the standing throw to mimic the power position. Ensure that your weight is correctly distributed over the right leg, the head and right shoulder is back and then complete the throw by pulling through the left arm and turning both feet as the left side comes around.
- Kick the can – this provides audible and physical awareness for someone who has trouble getting the right leg pulled under them out of the back of the circle. Place a soda can a little short of where your right foot touches down in the middle of the circle and do a complete throw, trying to kick the can out of the way with the right heel.
- Watch the bottle – place a water bottle about 4 feet behind the circle, keeping the eyes focused on it as you do a complete throw. This will help keep the head and right shoulder back as long as possible.

### Weight Training

There are innumerable ways to obtain and maintain the strength necessary for the shot. For shot putters, weight lifting must be balanced with other considerations, such as technique and technical training. So, how does one get ‘strong enough’ to throw? And what is ‘strong enough’? Much lifting research indicates that for an elite male athlete, strength levels for the 16lb shot need to be roughly equivalent to a 1RM squat of 2.5 - 3 x body weight and a 1RM bench press of 1.5 - 2 x bodyweight. Matt Byrnes, one of the most knowledgeable persons I know when it comes to the glide, provided the following numbers from the book Throwing and Putting by H. Gundiach (1991):

<u>16lb Shot: 23m</u>	<u>5K Shot: 17.0m</u>	<u>6.25 K Shot: 17.0m</u>
Back Squat: 250 kg	125 kg	135 kg
Bench: 250 kg	105 kg	120 kg
Push Press: 240 kg	80 kg	100 kg
Snatch: 145 kg	75 kg	85 kg

If you extrapolate these numbers to a thrower who weighs 100 kg’s, the numbers come out fairly close to the above 1RM formula for the 16lb shot and 23m. You can draw your own conclusions from these numbers, but one obvious one to me is that the majority of Masters throwers can already attain the lifting numbers under the 5 and 6.25k shot columns. So why don’t we throw 17m? It’s really simple – age, technique and technical training.

As we age, achieving and maintaining these lifting levels are probably doable, but changes in voluntary neural drive make it more difficult to generate explosive strength (exert maximal strength in minimal time) that can harness your strength. So, how can we *slow down* the effects of aging as it relates to throwing and perhaps even increase our capacity for explosive strength?

- ◆ Maintain as much *muscle mass* as possible
- ◆ Combine lifting in the range of 65-85% of 1RM with lifting heavy to stay as strong as possible
- ◆ Use plyometrics and/or isometrics to increase/maintain rate of force development (slope of time/velocity curve)

§ **Note** – depth jump plyometrics can be hard on the joints so instead of them try single leg bounding, double leg hops and seated jumps (sit in chair and jump out as far as you can). Also, a study done by the University of Bristol in 2005 found that isometrics resulted in developing the same levels of rate of force development (slope of the time/velocity curve) as plyometrics. So isometrics might be a good alternative to plyometrics. The type of isometrics that is probably most beneficial for a thrower is termed ‘yielding’ – hold a bench press 3 inches off your chest or hold a partial squat for 30 seconds. These are different from the old type of isometrics where you pushed against an immovable object.

- ◆ Incorporate variable resistance training along with traditional lifting

§ **Note** – variable resistance training utilizes bands to vary the amount of resistance throughout a lifting motion. The following web site has extensive band exercise examples: [http://asp.elitefts.com/qa/default.asp?tid=101&\\_\\_N=Band%20Exercises](http://asp.elitefts.com/qa/default.asp?tid=101&__N=Band%20Exercises)

Success of the actual weight training program that one follows will be impacted by one's body type, neurology, motivation, injuries and capacities – the latter four coming into play almost every lifting session. If one wants they can spend hours and hours pouring over valuable resources such as *Long & Strong*, *The Ring*, *Westside Barbell* and numerous other web sites for strength training articles with the intent of finding ‘the one’ that will provide them with the greatest chance of success. Across these resources, one will find programs that stress periodization, Olympic lifting, power lifting, body building, plyometrics, and various combination programs. Some are more strength-oriented, some more speed-oriented and some are blends. The trick however is to know where your strengths and your deficits lie and to develop a plan to increase the deficits to approach a better balance. But that is also part of the rub – we get comfortable with a plan that we think is working, which lessens the opportunities to press the boundaries and consider something new that might in the end help us reach a new personal best.

While the many lifting programs provide options and ranges of possibilities, we (Masters) are not 21 anymore, injured more often than not, and the breadth of exercises described for one training session and the corresponding volumes are probably not attainable anymore. So they need to be tailored to our individual capacities and physical status. While you may have found ‘the plan’ you are going to adopt, you must be willing to accommodate changes in exercises and volumes, and not be driven by rote following of a plan developed for a college/Olympic caliber thrower.

For these reasons an alternative strength plan for Masters is what I call ‘Chaos Training.’ Chaos Training is where what you do on any given day is driven by four things: 1) how you feel, 2) what you did previously, 3) where you are in your lifting/throwing year, and 4) your list of basic and special strength and core exercises.

My concept of Chaos Training follows a split routine, upper and lower body on separate days and Olympic lifts, if you do them, on separate days. The rationale is that as one ages the ability to quickly recuperate diminishes and to combine both upper and lower body on consecutive lifting days is too taxing for a Masters athlete. Also, lifting on consecutive days is probably too taxing. On off days do something different, like a stationary bike, Pilates, or something that uses the muscles in a different way and helps build some level of aerobic fitness. For a Masters thrower, aerobic fitness is necessary for the obvious health reasons, but also because it helps provide a foundation for completing lifting and throwing sessions.

Core exercises are something generally ignored because who wants to do sit-ups; but exercising the core is essential to good back health and to support transfer of power from the ground/legs into the upper body. There are several alternatives to the sit-up which should be mixed into a training day and don't take a lot of time, but pay huge dividends. The core exercise list that follows is compiled from **Ultimate Back Fitness and Performance**, by Dr. Stuart McGill. Dr. McGill emphasizes these core exercises because they minimize stress on the back, while effectively exercising both the abdominal and back muscles.

- *Curl-Up* – lie on your back, arms extended behind your head; curl the shoulders up until they are just off the ground and hold. You can also do a variation where you have one arm extended above your head and parallel to the floor, raise the opposite leg six inches off the ground, curl up and hold. The arm on the side of the raised leg is held a couple of inches off the floor.
- *Side Plank* – Lie on your side with the feet toe-to-heel, raise your body by resting on a bent elbow, stabilized

- under the shoulder and hold. Do for both sides.
- **Front Plank** – Lie face down on the floor, bend both arms at the elbow, with the elbows under the shoulders, and raise yourself up so your body is parallel to the ground and hold.
- **Balance** – Get on all fours, extend one arm to the front and the opposite leg to the rear, both parallel to the ground and hold. Switch to other arm/leg combo.
- **Stork** – Starting erect bend at waist, and as you bend forward balance on one leg, raise the opposite leg to the rear and stay in the balanced position. Use your arms out to the side for balance. This also helps with balance, which is important at the back of the circle as you initiate the glide.
- **Hanging Curl-Up** – hanging from a curl up bar, raise your legs together and try to pull your knees in to the stomach

What does Chaos Training look like? Let's assume you have been lifting for a month or two, doing high reps in a three or four set routine in order to get the body used to lifting again. Many people try to follow a periodization scheme, but I am not convinced they apply to Masters, especially the concept of peaking. To me, driving the body to a hard point in time a couple of times a year is too taxing for a Master. After all, how many records are set at big meets and how many of us are trying to set an American record? I find it interesting that world-class shot putters may experience a differential of almost a meter between competitions, but a Masters shot putter will probably vary no more than .5m between meets. *For most master's athletes I believe it is more important and more achievable to be consistent than to try and plan to hit just one big one at a specific meet.* As we age it is harder to manipulate the nervous system and bring ourselves to a peak level of performance at a specific point in time. Constantly changing ones routine challenges the body and keeps the mind fresher and more stimulated.

Using from a set of basic and special strength lifts/exercises several weeks of Chaos Training might look like the following:

- ◆ **Week 1:**
  - Day 1 upper body: bench (5x5 or 5-4-3-2-1, or 6x1), press behind the neck (3x8) and core exercises
  - Day 2 – Off or aerobic exercise, stretching
  - Day 3 – Technique and Technical Training
  - Day 4 lower body: squat (5x5), single leg bodyweight/db squats or step-ups (3x10 -12) and core exercises
  - Day 5 – Off
  - Day 6 – Off
  - Day 7 – Full throwing
- § **Note** – if you mix everything related to throwing into one session, I think you run the risk of trying to achieve too much without focusing on what needs to be fixed/strengthened. Throwing also taxes the nervous system so much that one of the throwing sessions will be less than optimal if you try to do everything, everytime.

- ◆ **Week 2**
  - Day 1 – Off
  - Day 2 – upper and lower body: bench/bands (3x8), push jerk (5x5 or 6x3); squat/bands or variant/step-ups/lunges (3x8) and core exercises
  - Day 3 – Off or aerobics, stretching
  - Day 4 – Full Throws or Technical Training
  - Day 5 – Off
  - Day 6 – pulls (3x3), bench press throws (on a Smith machine) or db throws into a sand pit/throwing sector, squat jumps/db or sled pulls and core exercises.
  - Day 7 – Off or aerobics, stretching
- ◆ **Week 3**
  - Day 1 – Technique and Technical Training
  - Day 2 – upper body: close grip or rack bench (5x5 or 3x8), press behind the neck (3x8)
  - Day 3 – Off or aerobics, stretching
  - Day 4 – lower body: box squat/squat variant (5x5 or 5-4-3-2-1 or 6x1), db pull throughs (4x10) (legs shoulder width apart, reach between the legs holding a db in both hands and swing the db up to shoulder height)
  - Day 5 – Off
  - Day 6 – Full Throwing
  - Day 7 – Off or aerobics, stretching

Most lifting research indicates that your body will adapt to a routine, including both exercises and scheme, within two to three weeks. So using the above model, one can fashion the exercise mix and set/rep routine that feels best to them and/or targets the areas they need concentration on. Then every three to four weeks you can manipulate the base and special strength lifts/exercises/set/rep scheme and move out again. As you approach a big meet, you might reduce the volume, take more throws and more days off, but other than that, I believe one could follow this type of program throughout the whole year. *Live to lift/throw another day.*

If you need to follow a more established, reproducible set routine, the Westside Barbell routine of Dynamic and Maximum Effort days probably best approximates my theory of Chaos Training, because it follows a constant rotation of exercises. However, when you examine it closely, the sets/reps/exercise mix and volume is probably too much for a Master. The lifting article written by Ron Summers in *Long & Strong* is also an effective program which has paid huge dividends for him, and I am sure could be of value to others that are trained in the Olympic lifts.

### Personal Considerations

- ◆ *Impacts of aging can be marginalized*
  - Observations of and conversations with fellow master's throwers and Olympic lifters leads me to believe that strength decreases at a slower rate over time than speed, assuming an appropriate weight

training program is followed. So, as one ages keeping as strong as possible will enable you to keep your distances more consistent and drop offs less dramatic.

- Losses in flexibility can be compensated for through maintaining strength. As one ages it is harder to hit the correct positions because as our flexibility declines the amount of leverage we can utilize is diminished. Again, keeping as strong as possible enables one to overcome to a degree the loss of flexibility.
- ◆ *Rest is as important as training*
  - This one is fun and natural because you don't have to do anything. As we age, recuperation takes longer and I am convinced that the mind needs the break from activity as much as the body
- ◆ *Injury*
  - Everyone who has been injured knows how hard it is to come back, largely because being driven individuals it is difficult to do nothing. Depending on the injury you should still work unaffected parts of the body to keep the body energized and the mind engaged.
  - Remember RICE – Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, if you sustain an injury and apply it as soon as possible. There is also a compound called Traumeel, made in Germany from arnica and other natural substances, which is very good at supporting injury recovery.
  - One of the greatest discoveries I made for injury recuperation was finding a therapist that performs Active Release Technique (ART). ART manipulates muscles, tendons and ligaments, as opposed to chiropractic manipulation. For injured shoulders, elbows, back and hips, it works wonders.
- ◆ *Medications*
  - Many of us find that medications become a fact of life as we age. I know from personal experience and conversations with other Masters throwers that medications for cholesterol and blood pressure can affect your energy levels, cause muscle and joint pain and disrupt your normal sleep pattern. So if you use any of these medications and have physical symptoms that you didn't have before, check out a different protocol with your doctor.
- ◆ *Supplements*
  - Fish oil, seed oil combinations, and glucosamine and chondroitin are all good for supporting joint function and relieving the affects of arthritis.
  - Other common supplements that throwers and lifters might be tempted to use, such as creatine and glutamine might have some value to younger

throwers, but for older throwers, I suspect the impact is minimal. Use your money on good food, milk and the things in the first bullet.

◆ *Motivation*

- This is a hard one because some days you will just not have the urge to do what you were capable of doing just a year ago. This is a very sobering fact of life because no one likes to admit they are getting older. When those days come, try to take them in stride and get after it when you have the drive again. Taking a week off won't really hurt your performance that much and will make a world of difference to your frame of mind.

◆ *Odds and Ends (in no particular order)*

- Why is it that when you go to a meet you never see anyone warm-up before throwing?
- Meeting and encouraging old friends at meets is one of the best parts of being a thrower.
- If you have more money than time, go to meets in places you've never been and take the wife.
- Do what you can very well and don't try to do more.
- It's better to be under-trained than over-trained.
- Bad habits are difficult to overcome; practice correct technique every throw.
- Throws should land in the center, or left of center in the sector.
- Strive for consistency; peaking is for Olympians.
- Speed is lost before strength.
- When training, do no harm – if it 'hurts' stop.

\*L&S\*

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# JAVELIN EINSTEIN: KARI IHALAINEN

BY JEFF GORSKI, KLUB KEIHAS

*I met Kari Ihalainen in June, 1999 during my first visit to Finland for Keihaskarnivaliit- the famous Finnish Javelin Carnival. I had a couple of athletes who came with me to experience the great culture and reverence for javelin in this country, and we were all treated like royalty by Kari and the staff at the Olympic Training Center in Kuortane, one of nearly a dozen across Finland (compared to 2 in the U.S. with track facilities).*

*Kari and I rapidly became great friends bonded by the javelin at first and by a variety of other aspects of life (like carpentry) afterwards. After a few visits back and forth across the pond, Kari moved to the U.S. in 2006. This move resulted in many more exposures to Finnish javelin training and technique for many U.S. throwers. Kari worked several clinics and camps with me after his arrival as well as speaking at a number of coaches clinics and education seminars. In 2007 he started to work with Breaux Greer- you see how that resulted! He's not shy about his ambition here in the U.S. - to make U.S. javelin throwers feared across the world. His influence has already been felt outside of Breaux: Chris Hill of University of Georgia was first trained by Ty Sevin who trained under Kari in his many trips to Finland during his career; both Corey White and Adam Montague have worked with Kari in training camps in Chapel Hill. This marks the first time there were three U.S. men under 21 years and over 80m since the javelin change in 1986. And my 1987 Mercedes Benz "Grease Car" has benefitted from his repair ability as has my wallet because of that skill!*

*Kari is currently employed by the South Korean Olympic Committee to train their javelin throwers at the Korean Olympic Training Center in Seoul and emailed me the answers to several questions about his life and, of course, the javelin.*

**Long & Strong:** *Tell us a little about your background.*

**Kari Ihalainen:** I was born in Hankasalmi, a village in central Finland, June 27, 1954. I am the oldest child and have two brothers and three sisters who also had athletic interests: mostly throwing, jumping and cross country skiing.

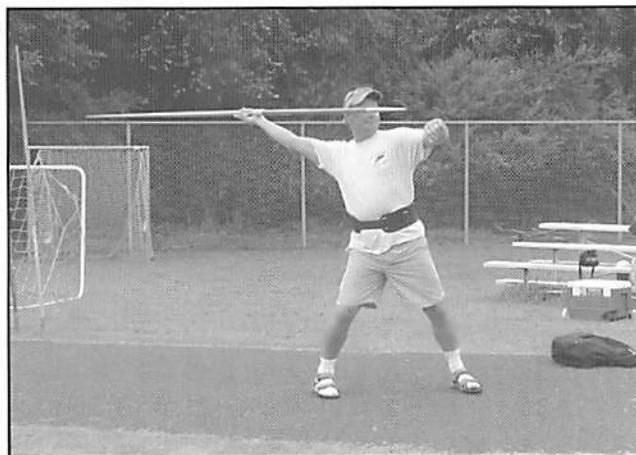
At home in the warm months of spring and summer, there was always lots of work for us in both the forest and farm fields. The fields always had lots of rocks and each spring we would have to carry the rocks out of the fields, but I was lazy and would throw the rocks instead. Maybe that is why I got so good at throwing!

From age 7 to 10 our school was 5km from my home, so Monday through Friday, we would walk or run to school and back each day. In the winter we would ride a bike or cross country ski. When I was 9 and 10 years old, I was the central Finland cross country skiing champion, but at school in cross country running (Finland has also had quite a reputation in distance running- Pavo Nurmi and Lasse Virnen are national heroes) I was always the last one. I like to ski but I don't like to run long distance!!

When we came home from school, we started working around the house or farm: chopping and carrying firewood or helping my dad do different work, like a handyman. From him I learned to build and fix many things. We were far from places for repair or doctors, so we learned to fix things ourselves- even to "repair" some injuries! In school at this age I was the best at throwing a baseball and the shot put, as well as cross-country skiing. And I was so strong at throwing snowballs, I could never use other snowballs because they would break apart. I could only throw the strong ones I made myself!

**L&S:** *When did the javelin become important to you? Tell us about your early javelin career, up to 17 or 18 years old. Javelin is so important to Finland, were you attracted to the event because of tradition or because it was best for your personality?*

**KI:** When I was 10 years old, my dad bought me my first javelin, an 800gm wooden model. Pauli Nevala won the gold medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. He was a big hero in Finland at that time, even before his Olympic win, and everybody wanted to throw like him. My first throws were maybe 5 or 6m up to 10 or 12m before I made my own javelin from a birch tree in the forest.



**"Do it this!":** Kari instructs on technique at the first Field of Dreams Camp- July 2006

The travel for myself to school each day, walking, running, skiing or biking gave me good basic training and conditioning. At 15 I was the Finnish Cross Country skiing champion, but I had a growth spurt and got too heavy to ski. I was 181cm/80kg (176 lbs). No fat, just thick and strong. At 15 I had my first throws competitions- the 600gm javelin went 56.76m and 50.08m with the 800gm. I was not so good in the javelin by Finnish standards. I was much better in shot, discus and hammer. At the Finnish Junior Championships, I placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the shot, discus and hammer. But in the javelin- I was last!

When Jorma Kinnunen got the silver medal at the 1968 Mexico Olympics and the world record the next year, I started to think more about the javelin and that maybe I could get better: Jorma lived in the same territory as I, only 40km away, and I thought, "If Jorma can throw so far at only 174cm tall and only 75kg, why can't I also?" I trained for 15 years and never got to his level, but I trained hard and did try! Boy, did I train!!! (See training log chart in sidebar)

I started lifting weights at a very late age. I had a very bad lower back from falling out of a 10m-high tree that caused bad back pain from between the ages of 17 and 20. And I got hit in the back with a javelin when I was 19 - thrown by my coach!

I left home for carpentry school in Jyväskylä in central Finland from between the ages of 16 and 20 years old, and I had to decide what I wanted to do with my life. I needed to take control, SO I DID!!

**L&S:** When did you change from athlete to coach? Was it difficult for you to make this change?

**KI:** I was in the Finnish Army when I was 20-21 years old. This was a good time for me as I could think, "What will make me happy?" This was the last really free time of my life.

"What's going to make me happy? I wasn't sure- maybe the central Finnish javelin record (92.70m/304'1") would. That's something I had to find out, otherwise I would walk away from this part of my life still wanting, as if something was missing or not finished- an empty feeling inside.

So, I started training and studying coaches education and this helped me understand my own training. I learned how to coach a junior thrower, my little brother, who at 14 years was 2<sup>nd</sup> best in Finland in javelin (62m with 600gm) and hammer. In five years he was at 68m with the 800gm javelin, but had to stop throwing because of shoulder problems. I also was helping Hanka Hankasalmen, who grew from 40m/130' at 14 yrs with 400gm javelin, to 53m/174' with the 600gm.

But the change to coaching just came along on its own- I did not even think of it or notice. People would come to train with me as an athlete and have some results. For example, Petri Castren came to train with me at 13 years old and I coached him as I was also training. After four years he was World Junior champion. He beat Steve Backley and set the 17 year old world record of 75.80m. But when he was 20, he "broke" (a popular Finnish athlete's term for a serious injury) his elbow. Bad things happened and he

*Some testing results and my progress (16-30 years old)*

Year	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Height	181	181	181	181	181								
Weight	86	86	88	89	88	90	91	90	92	92	93	94	93
Javelin	66.98	65.8	66.24	70.52	74.76	71.66	78.74	77.9	80.92	83.88	85.82	87.04	85.84
Discus	38.5	38.9	43.36	44.42	46.06	47.7	45.74	46.6	47.6	48.7	49.98	51.16	47.88
Shot	11.9	12.25	13.26	13.41	13.94	13.86	13.62	14.32	15.01	15.12	15.8	15.72	15.74
Hammer	42	46.42	51.3	50.18	51.78	48.7	51.68	50.14	54.9	53.14	56.08	55.14	52.62
Snatch	95	95	105	110	110	115	120	125	130	125			
cleans&jerks	125	125	130	135	140	145	155	160	155				
Full Squat	160	165	170	175	185	190	200	210	205				
Bench Press	80	90	100	105	110	120	125	130	130	130			
Pullover	80	90	105	110	120	140	130						
Backward (5.4kg)	16.2	17.05	17.1	19.5	20	20.4	21.1	21					
Forward (5.4kg)	14.6	15.8	15.7	16.5	17.8	18.4	19.2	18.4					
Overhead (4kg)	15.1	16	15.9	16.5	17.8	18.82	18.3	18.6					
Standing Throw (2.5kg)	32.5	34	34.4	35	35.8	37.5	38	36.8					
Standing Start (30m)	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.14	3.9	4.02	4	3.75	3.98			
Cooper	29.6	30.4	29.5	30.5	29.75	30	29						
Standing (5 jumps)	14.67	14.7	15.02	15.12	15.1	15.3	15.3	15.34	16.14	15.7			
Standing (3 jumps)	9.1	9.5	9.65	10.1	10								

threw only 79m and I started to think, "I am not such a good javelin coach - there must be something wrong with how I train them and myself."

*Finnish Athletics is following the most common "five level standard" of Education for Coaches in European Union Countries.*

**Level I** – the course for Athletics Instructors (18 hours)

**Level II** – the examination for Coaches in club level (100 hours)

**Level III**– the examination for Coaches in federation level (the process of three months with three intensive successions, four days per each)

**Level IV**– the examination for Professional Coaches (the process of twelve months with eight intensive successions, five days per each)

**Level V** – the Academic Master Education in Jyväskylä University (the process of four and half years)

**L&S:** Tell us about some of your training partners and experiences.

**KI:** In 1984, Olympic Champion Arto Harkonen beat me only once that whole year, at Keihaskarnivaalit (the Javelin Carnival) with a 92.40m. And I was not selected for the Finnish Olympic team even with a best of 85.84 and an average of 85.28m/280' in 10 meetings. I didn't like that!

I had many great training partners when I lived in Javaskyla. I had a new coach, Ito Turyanen who started coaching me in 1976. He also coached Antero Puranen, who came to Javaskula to study physical education- he threw 78m that year and I threw 74m. Four years of training later Antero threw 92.74m and I threw 81m. Antero went on to place 5<sup>th</sup> at the Moscow Olympics.

In 1982 Tapio Korjus threw 78m and Jyrki Blom (76m best) came to Javaskla to study physical education at the university there. Jyrki soon came 4<sup>th</sup> at European Championships and Tapio was the Olympic Champion at Seoul Games. I think I should have studied physical education also!

I do think that training with these guys helped when I became national javelin coach in Finland. They stood up for me and said I knew how best to coach and train throwers- they were good friends and trusted me for correct information and said I would be like that for all throwers.

**L&S:** As National javelin coach was it hard to make your ideas work with athletes? Did you have enough money for training camps, travel? Did you get support for all the programs you asked for?

**KI:** At first the old coaches and throwers questioned my

selection: "How far has he thrown?" It was very hard the first two years, but I had a lot of support from personal coaches of current athletes and it took time to get my ideas accepted. I would ask, "You are so strong, but what is your weakest area?"

It also helps that I am a little shy, but I am a very good listener. If I do not have the answers, I have to find some way to get them. Head coaches and national coaches are hired at minimum with 50% being part-time, and half of them as full-time. For example, in the throws we have a full-time head coach, javelin coach, hammer coach, discus and shot coach, who are responsible for the development of their own events. There is also at one extra coach for the training camps and practical work to work with the national coaches. They have their own budget, but are not hired. So every event has two "professional" coaches from the Federation.

Area coaches do not get any salary, but they have small budgets for driving, etc.

Very strong pressure has been put on personal coaches. Almost every athlete (in the throws) has a personal coach, who attends a high percentage of training camps together with their athletes. The negative side is that support for personal coaches is still very minimal.

**L&S:** At what level do Finnish throwers start to get special attention? Do you just see talent and pick them or are they expected to meet result standards, like 75m at 18 years?

**KI:** Javelin throwers get special attention at 17-18 years old from the Finnish Federation with programs like the National Team and Super Juniors. Results such as boys



**Lots of Meters:** A group photo from the 2001 Keihaskarnivaalit in Phitapudas, Finland- from L to R- Kari (87m), Bob Sing (78m), mayor of Phitapudas, author (78m), Jyrki Blom (85m), Jan Zelezny (98m), Uwe Hohn (104m). PR average- 88.33m

with 65 to 70m throws with 800g, and girls 46-50m with 600gm (normal weight for competitions at that age is 700gm boys/500gm girls) then you have a chance to get into this group. Team Finland is the highest group in our system. To get to this group, the athlete must be at an international level.

Inside this group there is a small number of so-called Olympic athletes, which get support from the Olympic committee. The amount which the NOC (National Olympic Committee) gives to funding between 2,000 – 10,000 E (\$1,300-\$6,500.00) to the athlete and up to 9,000 E/\$6,000.00 to the coach. Support from the Finnish Federation directly to the athlete is about 10,000 E. If the athlete is in European Championships, World Championships or Olympic Games, he has the chance to get 15,000 E/\$9,700.00 extra as salary (1200E/\$900.00 each month).

The National Team and Super Juniors are the largest group, which includes both top juniors (18 - 23 years old) and senior athletes who might have the chance to develop to the international level. Financial support is about 3,000 E/\$1,900.00 plus admittance to the training camp system (five-day training camp to athlete and coach each month during the winter in our training center). Camps are reserved for all in the event group. For example, in the javelin there are about 26 athletes in camps each winter, every month. The national coach is responsible for all aspects of planning and conducting these camps.

NMV is an area camp system (not national level). NMV 1 group (the medalists from Junior Championships) is paid for by the Federation and NMV 2 is paid for by local clubs. All levels of talent athletes can belong to these groups. They have four 2-3 day training camps during the winter. Area coaches are responsible for running these camps. This is clearly junior athletics and doesn't belong to our top athlete program or part of that elite system. In NMV, athletes are selected based on their results.

Junior camps are 3-4 times in a year, 1-2 days at a time in smaller areas. Camp groups are based on event groups (jumps, throws, sprints, etc.) and different event techniques are taught in these camps. The clubs pay the expenses for these by themselves.

Junior camps occur 3-4 times in a year, 1-2 days in duration in smaller areas. Groups are based on event groups like jumps, throws, sprints and different event technique are taught in the camps. The clubs pay the expenses by themselves

**L&S:** *Who are some of the very gifted or special javelin athletes you have seen or worked with?*

**KI:** One of the most gifted athletes I have seen is Harri Haatainen, who set several World Junior records- his best

being at 19 years was 82.52m. Harri is also quite photogenic and has modeled for many magazines in Finland, and balanced elite athletics with modeling for several years. He was a finalist in the 1999 and 2001 World Championships with a best of 86.63m, but injuries sent him into modeling full-time for several years. He returned to javelin competitions in 2005 and has been close to 80m.

Also there is Seppo Raty, whose special power and throwing ability is legend. In Finland we say, "Seppo is not normal," as his testing results in the weight room, special exercises and throwing tests are beyond what others have done.

**L&S:** *What other countries have you seen with javelin (or throws) programs that produce results you find interesting? Germany? Russia? Australia?*

**KI:** I have gotten a lot of information on Germany's training programs. There is a lot that is similar to what we do in Finland, except the German women have stronger results of late. It was good to see their top throwers (Raymond Hecht and Peter Blank) training for some weeks in North Carolina in 2000. The same with Russian athletes and coaches with good programs and results. You have to keep your eyes open in all directions to see and learn things. Australia has some good throwers at times, but does not have a long javelin culture yet.

**L&S:** *You have been able to travel much of the world and seen quite a bit of interesting things.... a favorite place to visit or a special adventure you could share?*

**KI:** Wherever you are, if you are with other javelin throwers, you are at home. I do like your house, too!

**L&S:** *What are most important points in javelin, or throwing in general, for regular long throws?*

**KI:** I like to "just do it," and check the results. After a reasonable amount of trials, modify the performance, and then do it again. The 'Ah hah!' comes AFTER you throw your javelin, not before!

Good practices in your personal life and beliefs will protect you from harm. Use the Cartesian method to examine what you have done after you have done it and are away from the field of play. Effective science and discovery lead to good practice efforts from observations of what works, before deep technical understanding. As long as we leave a little pinch of curiosity and wonder for what we do, the 'new' discoveries will come. 'Ah hahs' have their own agenda and we have ours. Let us leave little openings in our agenda's for the 'Ah hahs' to peek through. Believing before doing is of primary importance, not only generally, but specifically. It does require, however, an effective understanding of biomechanics, and learning by the coach

and athlete, and the rapport necessary for both to learn these in principle.

Seppo Raty said, "TRAINING SHOULD BE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT FORWARD." Finding the right training for oneself and the correct ratio of training and rest is the basis of one's success. When this basis is set, the athlete is not cheating himself and his self-confidence is high. It is as simple as that.

When a thrower is on the javelin runway in a competition, he is completely alone. At that point he needs a very high level of confidence and the fewer "advisers" there have been taking part in the athlete's preparation process, the better his confidence will be. Every person is different though. Somebody might need a coach in every practice session, and for another athlete, that would be an extremely negative thing.

**L&S:** *Any favorite drills or exercises for training your throwers?*

**KI:** Dancing, fishing, sauna, and hiking in the forest is good for relaxing and recovery. Throw everything you can get your hands on, and throw it far! Of course there are all the traditional javelin exercises that are very good, but you must look to your weak areas. Always running and jumping are important- the legs work most in throwing- and much power work for stomach and back. You must not be able to be "broken" too easily.

**L&S:** *Any special talents when looking for javelin athletes: throwing ability, jumping, flexibility?*

**KI:**

- First, you have to have a good throwing arm/ hand- you can throw a baseball far.
- Good javelin throwers are usually talented in many areas of athleticism and all of the body parts are in balanced development
- Technique, sense of rhythm, natural speed, elasticity, flexibility and ability
- To develop explosive strength
- Mental talent
- Will, self confidence, motivation, ability to learn, high resistance to pain,
- balance in life and positive attitude
- Will is the source of power which pushes an athlete to train as hard as he can,
- Constantly test his limits and achieve his goals.

**L&S:** *Anything else you would like to tell our readers?*

**KI:** Pauli Nevala (Olympic Gold Medalist, 1964) describes a javelin thrower in his own "rugged" words as:

- egoistic
- never gives up
- ambitious

- wants to be in control of things
- wants everything for himself
- is everything that an average person is not allowed to be

#### JAVELIN THROW: WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY

The stretch-shortening cycle occurs when elastic loading, through an eccentric muscular contraction, is immediately followed by an explosive concentric muscular contraction. The tension developed in the musculo-tendinous junction by the eccentric loading of the muscle causes it to act in a similar manner to a rubber band. When this stored energy is released, it helps to increase the strength of the following concentric contraction. These neuromuscular considerations have huge ramifications for the preparation of javelin throwers.

The main exercises in every week are throws!

Full concentration with an easy rest or recovery exercise the day before a throwing day. Throw a big amount of throws, about 12,000 throws per year, half with a javelin, and half with overweight shots to make you confident of the technique and building throwing durability.

Clear and realistic aims for the training year and longer terms such as the next Olympic Games. The goal is to improve all the test records a little bit every year. Explosion, elasticity and speed qualities, which have already been reached, are maintained while strength qualities increase at the most 5-10 % per year. The main goal is to create a long career. You have to do every little thing as good as possible, even better than all of the other rivals, because they are also training today! The thinking must be always within you!!

Thinking is always advisable – if you think you can reach the top - it's possible! \*L&S\*



**Kari & Jeff:** Author and Kari with "sport drink" on my 2nd night in Kuortane, Finland July 1999. Don't ask about my first night there.



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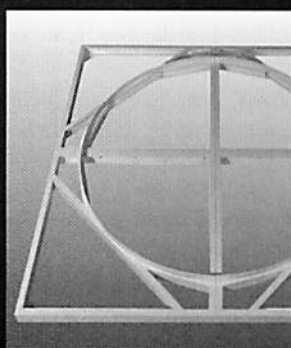
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# VICTORIA BLOSSOMS

BY LANE C. DOWELL

*Glancing at Bob Gourley's [rmgourley@fctvplus.net](mailto:rmgourley@fctvplus.net) weekly national prep hammer throw leader board, one is impressed with the growing number of athletes, the distances they are achieving, and the states with high-schoolers who participate in the dance of the ball and wire.*

*As the American renaissance of this unique and addictive event consumes our national landscape and Uncle Sam moves back toward the center of the world hammer arena, there is one constant. Small, but mighty, Rhode Island, has never wavered in its support and development of fine young masters and mistresses of the "ball and chain."*

*Providence's Classical High coach Bob Palazzo continues to craft excellent throwers. This year is no exception with the queen of New England preps, Classical High School senior, Victoria Flowers (179' 0"- May 10), dominating area competitions.*

*As is obvious to most aficionado's, Bob Gourley is the standard bearer for national high school hammer throw. L&S asked the sage of the ball and wire to describe the focus of this article, Victoria Flowers.*

*"Aside from track and field, she is very involved with family, community/church activities, is a peer tutor in most subjects at Classical, and active in coaching middle school track and field athletes. In summary, she is a wonderful and well-rounded young woman who is very hard working, dedicated, focused, and sincere."*

*Recently, Long & Strong spent time chatting with Coach Bob and his queen of the New England ring.*

## The Coach

**Long & Strong:** What makes your athlete an excellent thrower?

**Bob Palazzo:** Victoria works very hard. She has a gift of talent and she is a fierce competitor.

**L&S:** As she moves toward her college years, how much better can she become? Specifically, what does she need to do to reach her prep potential?

**BP:** Victoria must become a better student of her events. When she begins to understand the concepts

and applies them, the sky is the limit.

**L&S:** How difficult has it been for you to overcome objections to the hammer for high school kids?

**BP:** The hammer has always been embraced in Rhode Island. It is something I grew up on. Just like hotdogs, apple pie and Chevrolet.

**L&S:** What do you say to those who think the hammer should not be an event for our preps?

**BP:** I think the hammer is the most eloquent, explosive, and exciting event in track and field. It is one of the most attractive events our sport can offer. To not offer it to our peers is counter-productive to our sport.

## The Athlete

**L&S:** Why/how did you get involved in the hammer?

**Victoria Flowers:** Going into high school, I didn't know about the sport of track and field. When I began throwing, I started throwing the hammer as a freshman during the outdoor season.

**L&S:** Using yourself as an example, what does it take for a young athlete to be successful with the ball and wire?

**VF:** Right off the bat you have to have the discipline to stick with things when they get difficult, because that is one of the things that comes with the territory of being a weight thrower. You have to be **determined to want to succeed and not to give up**. You have to understand that this event, along with the other throwing events, takes a lot of time, sweat, and hard work. Other than that, a lot of practice is needed and you should be successful.

**L&S:** Would you recommend this event to others? Why?

**VF:** I definitely would recommend this event to other people, because when it comes to the spins, you have to be able to notice the slightest thing if something goes wrong. Personally, it has helped me to notice some of the little things and has made me so much more alert. Above all things, it **teaches so much discipline**, because throwing the hammer is not an easy thing to do at all. You have to work to succeed in these events.



**L&S:** Briefly, talk about your *in-season* and *out-of-season* workouts/preparation.

**VF:** Out-of-season, I worked on my **footwork** the majority of the time. With the hammer, speed is a necessary element and you can't be fast unless your feet move. So I spend some time running and doing **anything that helps my feet move faster**.

In-season, I work on my footwork, but I also **lift weights**. Cleans, squats, bench press, and abdominal workouts are just some of the things I do.

**L&S:** The biggest objection one hears when talking about the hammer is that it is not safe? How do you answer this question?

**VF:** Yes, I do hear that a lot. Honestly, there is a risk with the hammer, but then again, there is a risk in playing any other sport. I feel that people are especially afraid of it because it just flies so high into the air and comes down at a rapid speed. But if people take the necessary precautions and follow the rules and give instructions, then the **hammer can be as safe as any other sport**.

**L&S:** What opportunities does this event present to a high school thrower/you?

**VF:** I am a former basketball player, and to compare what I experience now to what I experienced in basketball, it is easy to stand out in track. A track meet doesn't affect anyone else but me. In basketball, if I was the center, and I was playing horribly, it would affect my entire team.

This **event opened doors for me**. The hammer has brought me, which is so important. It has also given me the chance to travel to other states to throw with some of the best throwers in the country.

**L&S:** Discuss any interest you are attracting for post-high school education? What are you looking for in a college?

**VF:** I am looking for something not too far from home that has a strong program in my major, which is Mathematics and Secondary Education. The college has to have a campus that is not extremely difficult to get around.

**Finally**, the track and field program has to be place where I can further my career in throwing and continue to get better. I am glad because I found all of this in the **University of Connecticut**, which is where I will be going in the fall.

**L&S:** You burst into national prominence last winter with your national scholastic record in the weight throw [61'00.75" at the 26th Annual Brown University Track & Field High School Invitational, December 28, 2007]. Tell us about your record-setting effort.

**VF:** It happened totally unexpectedly. The way we planned out the season, big numbers were not supposed to happen until February or March, because we were training heavy in the weight room and the workload was so high with plyo work. It all just happened, and I just felt great physically. You are always learning in this event.

**L&S:** Contrast the hammer and weight throws for us. Do you have a preference between the two?

**VF:** The weight is my personality; short, fast and explosive. The hammer is a long, progressive dance, and discipline of position is not a great strength of mine.

**L&S:** What are your goals in life and how has the hammer throw helped/will help you achieve them?

**VF:** My goals in life are to be successful and to do something that I enjoy. I would like to **help other people** which I feel, will make me a better person.

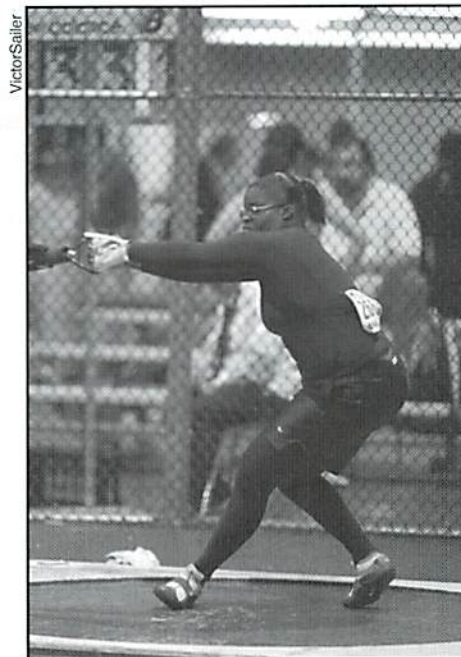
The hammer, along with my other throwing events, has made me successful and happy. I enjoy throwing weights, and it is something that I love. With my skills and knowledge, I can help kids who want to try throwing and teach them what I know. Somewhere down the line **I could even become a coach**, which is something I would like to do because I would be giving back to and helping other people.

Throwing has made me a better person, because I appreciate the people who help and support me like my coach, my family and friends. It has taught me things like patience, which is something that everyone needs. **\*L&S\***

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Thanks,  
Glenn Thompson (Publisher)



Victor Sailer



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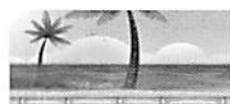
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