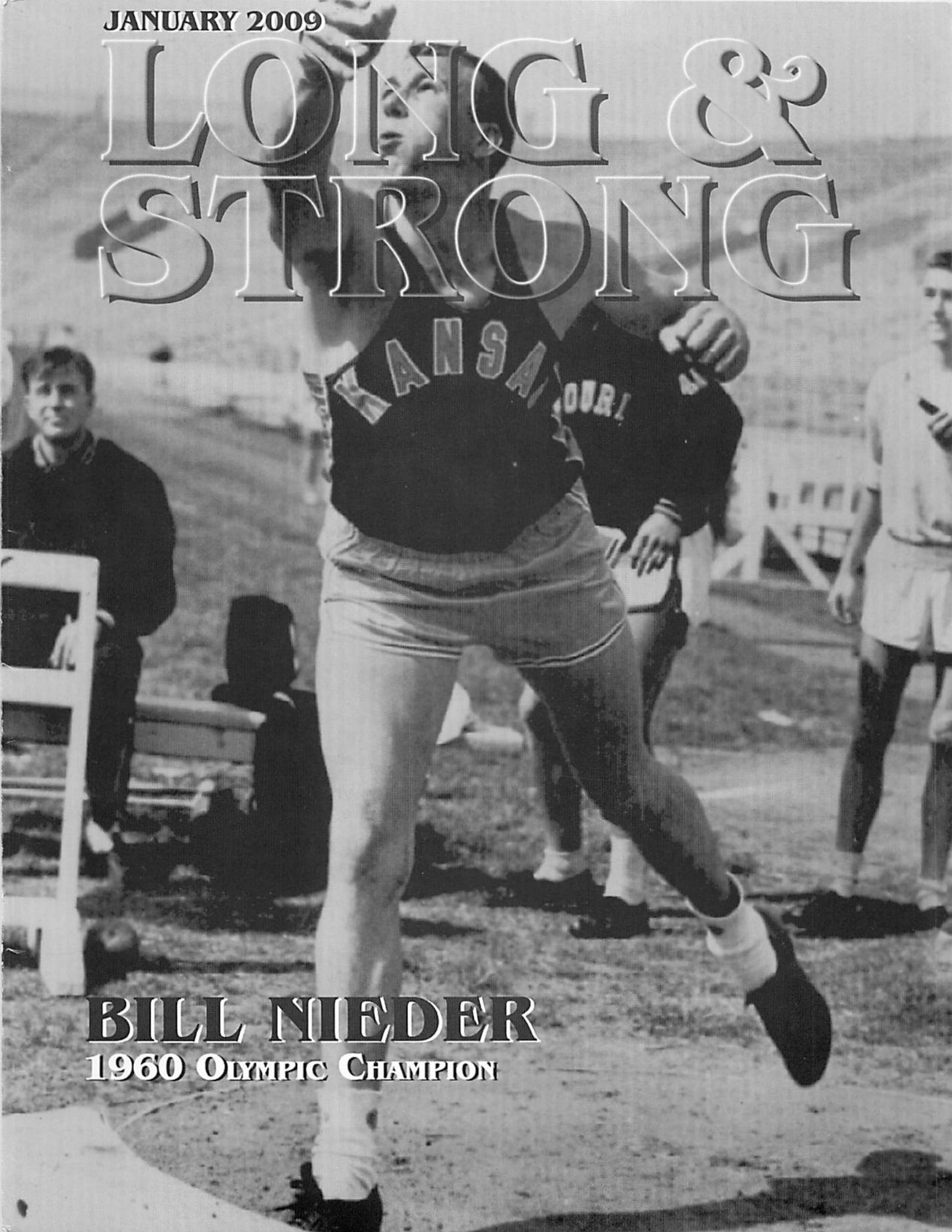
JANUARY 2009

LONG & STRONG



BILL NIEDER

1960 Olympic Champion

On the cover: Bill Nieder (University of Kansas Athletics)
This page: Rachel Yurkovich at the 2008 Olympic Trials (Victor Sailer)

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Letter From The Editor

Chosen One

"No doubt, that's your son," said the waitress of the three-year-old perched on my right leg during a recent meal.

She was referring to the newest member of the *Long & Strong* family who was officially inducted on September 4, 2008. What he lacks in stature (approximately 3'2", 35 lbs.), he compensates for with boundless energy and charisma.

My wife Denise and I have been foster parents since August, 2003. Those of you who have thrown the discus with me since that time might have noticed my Denfi with the clear plastic plate. That plate has pictures taped inside of "our kids," past and present. School portraits of all those boys decorate our home to this day.

Jeremiah, and his two older sisters, entered our lives in May of 2005. I recall my wife, the official matron saint of our household, calling me at work. A social worker had contacted her about three siblings, ages 10 months, two and four, who needed a place to stay until some domestic issues were resolved. I reluctantly agreed, knowing that even if we were over-matched, it would be short-term.

I came home that evening to a literal mad house and wondered, "What have we done?" Our sole focus was making it to bedtime each night.

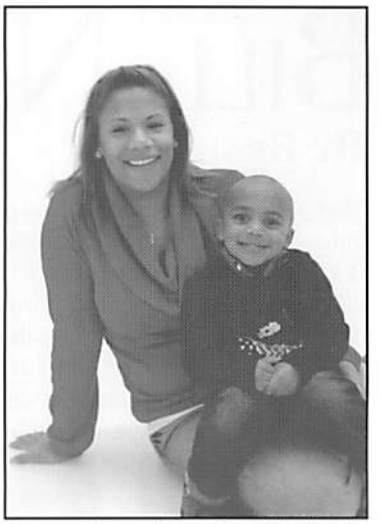
Week-after-week, then month- after-month, passed with no resolution of those domestic issues. Given that we had several boys in the house already, an additional three pre-schoolers were bit much for us to handle, and Jeremiah's sisters left for other foster homes.

But Jeremiah (the youngest of the trio) or "Papi", as he was called by his sisters, remained.

He was labeled developmentally challenged upon his arrival, but that diagnosis was quickly discredited. Denise bought him a walker, and he raced all over the house. The playpen we borrowed offered no resistance to his rapidly developing climbing skills. He was fully ambulatory by his first birthday, and was walking up steps alternating legs shortly after. He was riding a scooter and doing elementary skateboard tricks by eighteen months. He had his own hammer made from a softball and bungee cord and could do some pretty decent hammer turns.

He was also speaking in full sentences. And just like any toddler, among his first words were "Mommy" and "Daddy." The challenged one had become, in fact, quite precocious, trying to keep up with foster brothers seven or eight years his senior.

As each day passed with no resolution of his situation, our thinking shifted. The initial exhaustion of parenting a toddler morphed into Jeremiah becoming the unquestioned star of our household. It seemed that a day didn't pass when he didn't blow us away with his verbal skills, physical prowess or sense of humor.



Jeremiah and our daughter Caitlyn, who recemtly enlisted in the Navy.

Much of what you've read over the past two-and-a-half years has been penned with Jeremiah on my lap in my office. I dial-up *Dora The Explorer* or *Curious George* on Tivo to entertain him while I peck away. When he was younger he would fall asleep on my chest with a bottle in his mouth.

Now he's advanced to WWE. He asks me to wrestle every night, he has probably a dozen wrestler action figures, knows their names, and does a great John Cena ("You can't see me!" complete with hand gesture).

The problems that put Jeremiah on our doorstep was never resolved and adoption became an option. No, that's not entirely true. It became a divine mandate. Adoption was nothing more than a formal acknowledgement of a little boy who had become the centerpiece of our family.

Papi is now Jeremiah Eligius Thompson (JET). His new middle name is Latin for 'Chosen One,' but we feel like we were blessed with the privilege of raising such a special little man. I would never swap Jeremiah for my own flesh and blood. I could have never created someone this cool.

Many would say that he is fortunate to have found us. And in some sense that is true. But we can't help but see it the other way around. We have had the tremendous privilege of co-writing the early chapters of this precious life. Perhaps someday a child without a home will be lucky enough to find their way to his doorstep. He'll be the best father ever.

As we walked out of the courthouse after the adoption I was holding our new son. A man on the steps with no idea of the morning's proceedings commented, "No denying he's yours, bro'."

No doubt . ***L&S***

1960 Olympic Shot Put Gold Medalist

Bill Nieder

By Brad Reid

Shot-putter Darrow Hooper likely had no idea what he initiated when at the 1952 Kansas Relays he saw a young Bill Nieder put the shot. "There is no hope for you. You will never break the record," Nieder recalls Hooper saying, reflecting on young Bill's less-than-polished shot-putting skills. Bill Nieder had no rejoinder, not then anyway, but Hooper's off-hand assessment set off a chain of events that would culminate years later in an Olympic gold medal for Nieder, a feat Hooper would miss by the narrowest of margins.

On the day of his appraisal of the young Kansas high school senior shot-putter, Darrow Hooper was the reigning NCAA shot put champion out of Texas A&M sporting a one-inch victory over USC's Parry O'Brien at their memorable 1951 NCAA Outdoor Championship duel, 53'-11" to 53'-10". At least one account of O'Brien's loss to Hooper by the matter of a single inch, and an earlier similar loss to Otis Chandler at the '51 Fresno Relays, remarked that these losses literally transformed O'Brien. He became obsessed with shot-putting, spurring the development of the eponymous "O'Brien Glide" perfected in a back alley, the essence of which would soon elevate Parry above all other rivals for years to come compiling an astounding 116 straight victories and 17 shot put world records. Darrow Hooper, just weeks after his illiberal comment to Nieder at the 1952 Kansas Relays, would go on to finish a distant second to O'Brien at the 1952 NCAA Outdoor Championship, O'Brien 57'-5/8" to Hooper's 54'-2 6/8". But, Hooper again beat O'Brien, this time by a scant two centimeters at the 1952 Olympic Trials, Hooper 17.41m to O'Brien's 17.39m. Finally, in a reversal of fortune, Hooper would lose to O'Brien a few months later at the 1952 Olympics with the exact same marks recorded at the Trials, this time with O'Brien coming out on top by the same two centimeters margin: O'Brien 17.41m to Hooper's 17.39m. Parry O'Brien had his first Olympic gold medal!

And, the record Darrow Hooper spoke of as being beyond the reach of Bill Nieder? It was his, the national high school shot put record of 59'-10.125" he set as a junior in 1948. A year later in 1949 as a senior, Hooper would throw 59'-5.5", almost two feet farther than the second-ranked prep shot-putter, another budding star who had a best of 57'-9.5", a name you can likely guess: Parry O'Brien! If he and Parry, already two shot-putting elites by 1952, had failed to exceed sixty feet in high school just a few years earlier, Hooper must have thought certainly the big Kansas kid throwing with a novice form would come up short.

60 Feet!

Well, little unintended snubs often act as great motivators, as Bill Nieder went on to become the first high schooler to throw farther than sixty feet with a throw of 60'-9.375". Of historical interest, it was actually the first competitive shot put throw over 60 feet for any weight shot (12 or 16) as the 16- pound shot put record had not yet exceeded that magic mark. Nieder's milestone puncturing of the 60-foot barrier would last for exactly one week as a Taft California shot-putter named Leon Patterson would throw slightly farther, 60'-9.875", the following weekend. News of Bill Nieder's 60+ foot throw hadn't made its way to California by the following weekend as such high school news traveled slowly in those days, so some old press clippings describe Leon's 60+ foot throw as the first to exceed 60 feet, but Bill Nieder got there first and he will forever hold the honor and distinction as the first high school shot-putter to exceed sixty feet. Too, his first record would establish for Bill Nieder a knack over a long throwing career of setting such milestone shot put marks.

So, there it is: Darrow Hooper unwittingly provided a tiny catalyst to the two men who'd go on to own the Olympic shot put gold medals for the next three Olympiads! What a difference a few days, a single inch or a few centimeters, or a simple scoff can make in the matter of how history unfurls. Chaos theory: the flapping of a butterfly's wings can alter the path of a tornado!

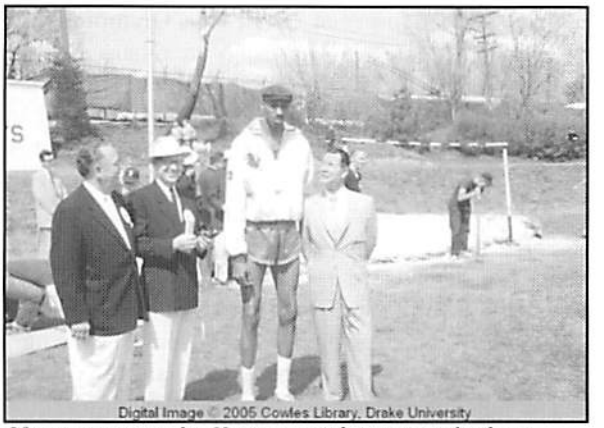
Bill Nieder, High School

I should back up long enough to mention that Bill Nieder concluded his senior high school track & field season ranked number two in the nation in the shot put behind the aforementioned California star, Leon Patterson, who ended up the top-ranked shot-putter and discus thrower (177'-5") in 1952. It was Leon Patterson who'd been named "Athlete of the Year" by *Track & Field News* after his junior year in 1951 for both the shot put and discus events, a rare double honor among high school boy throwers (Dallas Long and Randy Matson were two others). It was well-deserved, too, as Patterson had a fabulous career as a thrower over the entirety of his high school years. In 1951, then high school junior Patterson had tossed the shot 59'-2.5" and the discus 173'-3.75", both national best efforts.

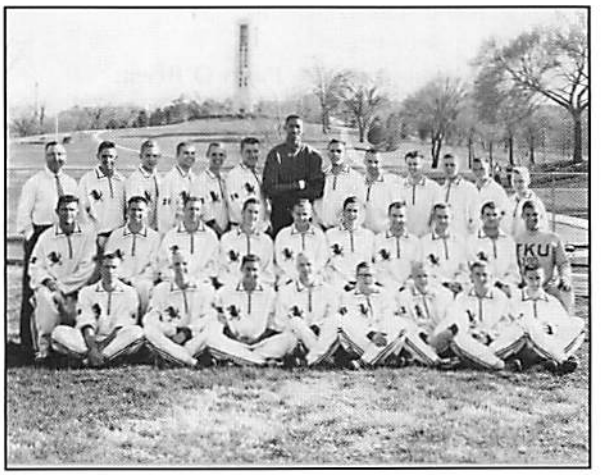
A Later Starter

Interestingly, as I researched historical archives, I found Bill Nieder absent his junior year from the 1951 shot put national rankings. "What had happened?" I asked Bill. Bill replied that as a high school sophomore and junior, he had dabbled at other events, high jumping in particular owing

to his 43" vertical jumping ability. But, even with his athleticism, he failed to get over 6 feet. At the beginning of his junior track & field season (1951) and on his very first throw, he tossed the shot put 44 feet and it instantly became his "event." It was one of those serendipitous moments in life strikingly similar to what would happen to a young Al Oerter just a year later in 1952 when the 15-year-old Sewanhaka High School sophomore was running on the track and an errant discus skipped onto it. Young Al picked it up and threw it back farther than the discus thrower had thrown it in his direction! 51 years later, Al Oerter confirmed the fairy-tale, "Yes, it's a true story. I started as a sprinter, then became a middle distance runner for a few months, and then this happened." Thus, adding further to my list: the matter of a single inch, an off-hand comment, a virgin toss of a shot put, and an errant discus throw landing at the feet of Al Oerter by someone whose name is lost to history… this all yielded an astounding 3 Olympic Gold medals in the shot put, and 4 Olympic Gold medals in the discus.



If you were on the Kansas track team in the late 50's, you might have seen Wilt Chamberlain strolling around the track facility. It's certainly not hard to pick him out in the team picture.



From his first throw as a junior, Bill made rapid progress and concluded his junior year in the 58 foot range adding an unbelievable 14 feet over a single season. One can only guess what Nieder might have thrown if he'd had three full years of training and competition in high school. I should mention that Bill Nieder's shot put credentials were largely secondary as regards his early athletics. In Kansas and around the nation too, he would become better known for his football prowess where he became a high school All American in both football and track & field. As good a shot-putter as Bill was, the one hundred or so universities that contacted him were recruiting him for his football talents… just as Parry O'Brien had attended USC on a football scholarship.

The University of Kansas

So, Bill Nieder left high school to attend his chosen university, The University of Kansas, on a football scholarship where he awaited his chance to play varsity football. He was as excited as his coaches were as he suited up for his very first collegiate varsity game as a sophomore, a game held in Fort Worth, Texas against Texas Christian University, the year, 1953. What happened next changed Bill's life, perhaps more so than any other event over his athletic career. The author opines that Nieder would've likely gone on to collegiate football stardom and then likely a career in the NFL. He was that good. His shot-putting days would likely have slowly diminished in favor of football, perhaps he'd have still been good enough to win collegiate meets and conference championships, but much less likely that he would have forged a path to compete at two successive Olympic Games. You see, Bill Nieder's collegiate football career and any prospects to move on to the NFL all ended when he was blindsided by a vicious hit and his right knee absorbed a tremendous blow while his cleats were lodged in the football field. Three ligaments were torn; Bill's knee was completely destroyed. His injury deteriorated further after Bill was put in a body cast up to his armpits and his leg swelled cutting off its circulation by pressing tightly against the cast's plaster. Doctors advised that his leg needed to be amputated as Gangrene had already set in. Bill was very much against the idea, secured a promise that such an action would not be taken, and slowly and quite miraculously started the process of recovery.

Bill's Path to a NCAA Championship Victory

In 1953, knee ligament surgeries were nothing like they are today, and Bill's football days were over. But, legendary Kansas Coach Bill Easton thought perhaps Bill could regain enough leg strength to start throwing the shot put again for Kansas. Nieder was too great an athlete not to try to salvage some of his potential contributions for the university. It took time, but little-by-little, Bill recovered with the help of Coach Easton and several Kansas coaches and trainers. There is not much to report about what would have been Bill's 1954 sophomore track season as he was far from fully recovered and no distances of relevance would yet occur. Bill recalls some low 50s throws, in that general range.

By his junior season of 1955, he was back in good form and started the season out by setting a Big 7 Conference Indoor shot put league record with a throw of 53'-10.75". Bill followed his strong indoor season winning the Texas, Kansas and Drake Relay Triple Crown. Finally, on June 16, 1955, Nieder ascended to the top of the collegiate shot-putting world by winning the NCAA Outdoor Championship with a put of 57'-3" winning by a half-inch over Tom Jones out of Miami University in Ohio. Too, he defeated a very fine thrower, Don Vick, who placed third, and a name football fans will likely recognize, Rosey Grier, who'd go on to NFL football fame who placed fifth. A recovered Bill Nieder had quickly moved up to rank number three in the world shot put rankings.

1956: Records, another Milestone, Disappointment, Silver Medals

1956 would be another stellar year, another record-setting year. Bill Nieder had passed the 60 foot milestone distance in high school with a 12-pounder, now he was in his senior and final year of eligibility and was looking to become the first collegian to eclipse 60 feet with the 16-pounder. At the Texas Relays, Bill threw 59'-9" to set a NCAA record, and one week later, he became the first collegiate shot-putter to throw over 60 feet. Bill had now conquered 60 feet twice: first in high school and now again, first in college. He repeated his Texas, Kansas, and Drake Relay Triple Crown in 1956. The only remaining goals for him after his conference meet would be to secure a second NCAA shot put title, then earn a likely spot on the 1956 Olympic Team. It almost worked out that way.

1956 NCAA Outdoor Championship

At the 1956 NCAA Outdoor Championship, Bill Nieder entered as the reigning shot put champion and a strong pre-meet favorite to repeat owing to his very successful 1956 season. But, Bill showed up well underweight and worried about his critically ill father. In the preliminary rounds, it was obvious that he had no snap and was laboring to find his technique. This was not the meet to show up and compete at less than one hundred percent as big Ken Bantum, out of Manhattan College in New York, came onto Edwards Field like a gladiator and the crowd roared as the giant hit a very long 59'-5.25" on his second throw. Bantum, standing a towering 6'6" and weighing over 230 lbs., was a very powerful and fast man having run the high hurdles competitively in under 15 seconds. In my interview with Bill Nieder, I asked him of his recollections of the giant African-American thrower and Bill said he was lightning fast across the ring. Fast! No one had ever seen such a large man move so quickly across a shot put ring. On a subsequent throw, Bantum tossed one out 60'-1.5" to establish a new NCAA meet record and secured the 1956 NCAA national shot put title. Bill Nieder would hustle and manage to pull up to a second place put of 57'-3.125" for a hard-earned silver medal. On that day, it was all he had and he failed to defend his title.

The 1956 Olympic Trials

Bill Nieder managed to get back in shape and ready for the 1956 Olympic Trials. Parry O'Brien won the meet with a throw of 60'-10" to secure his second trip to an Olympics. Ken Bantum, off his great success at the NCAAs, managed a put of 59'-6.75", that distance ahead of Bill Nieder's third place toss of 58'-1.5". These three men would represent the United States of America at the 1956 Olympics.

1956 Olympic Games – Australia

Bill Nieder had what turned out to be the best outcome possible at the '56 Games. By 1956, he was still clearly a less dominant thrower than Parry O'Brien, the defending Olympic shot put champion, and it would likely take a very big throw to overcome O'Brien, else the gritty O'Brien would have to have an uncharacteristically poor meet and that was unlikely. The series for each of the men went like this:

Parry O'Brien:
17.92, 18.47, 18.37, 18.45, 18.57 (Olympic Record), 18.23
Bill Nieder:
foul, 17.61, 17.81, 16.82, 18.18, foul

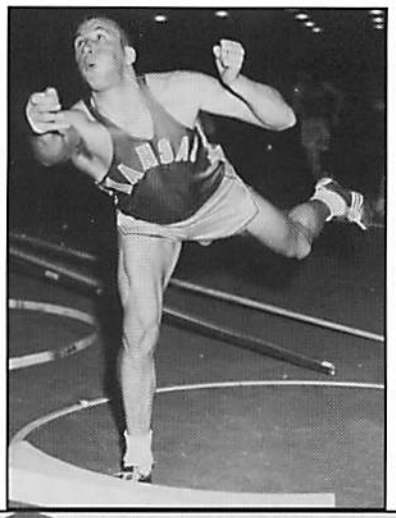
Parry O'Brien would win his second Olympic gold medal over silver medalist Bill Nieder. But, Nieder was back in the hunt again and just shy of his best distances in the biggest meet of his life. He rather easily defeated Ken Bantum, by the way, who'd finish out of the medals. Ken Bantum would compete for another year, and then never be seen again as a shot-putter.

Trouble Down Under

After his event, Bill and a few athlete friends were winding down having a few drinks at a local pub. They left and as they crossed a street heading to the beach, a taxi got perilously close to running over Bill. Instead of driving on, the cabbie had the poor sense to back up and give the Americans a dressing down issuing a few expletives to express his opinion of them. Bill and his accomplices grabbed the vehicle and flipped it upside-down, cabbie and all, then proceeded on across the street and jumped into the surf for a quick swim. When Bill and his friends came out of the water and walked back up on the beach, cameramen were snapping photos of them. A day later, the local paper flashed a headline to the effect, "Americans Throw Wild Orgy at Beach." As Bill has said over the years, the whole affair wasn't really that bad and they really shouldn't have turned the taxi over, but the reporters added a measure of hyperbole to the whole story, and it resulted in a warning to Bill from the American Olympic authorities that "this will be your last Olympics." Reflecting back on this funny anecdote, I wonder: What the heck was the Australian cabbie thinking when he stopped to swap words and insults with several rather large American athletes?

Back at KU: Bill, Al, and a 7'1" thrower named Wilt?

How KU could end up with so many legendary athletes at the same time is beyond me, but a very young Al Oerter unexpectedly returned from the 1956 Olympics with a gold medal in the discus event, Bill Nieder with his silver medal in the shot put, and the school had yet another fine track & field athlete, one who was better known for his basketball skills: Wilt Chamberlain. Three great athletes from one school created lots of interesting stories and anecdotes. Chamberlain was a truly great athlete and wasn't shy about saying so and challenging others to odd physical contests. Readers may recall that years later, Wilt would challenge Muhammad Ali to a boxing match claiming that his unbelievable power and unmatched reach would overwhelm the shorter Ali. The match never took place… but many earlier impromptu competitions did, some dating back to his days at KU.



Nieder (top) led the Jayhawks with the shot. Teammate Al Oerter, pictured above with Nieder in an interview, was an Olympic gold medalist (1956) while still on campus.

Wilt, The Shot-Putter

On an autumn night in 1956, one such match occurred out behind Carruth-O'Leary Hall, then a Kansas University dormitory, when the three highly decorated athletes — Bill Nieder, Al Oerter and Wilt Chamberlain – convened a meeting to determine who could put a 16-pound shot the greatest distance. "What?" I exclaimed to Bill Nieder hoping for an explanation of how such a contest could even be considered between two world class throwers sporting Olympic medals and a lanky basketball player. Bill answered that Wilt, in fact, won the bet and $10. Bill went on to say, "Oh! There was a bit of handicapping. I had to throw left-handed and Wilt could throw it any way he chose." So, Bill explained that he managed a throw in the low 50s left-handed, Oerter made his regular right-hand shot put toss, but Wilt used two hands and threw it up and over his head and won the bet. Wilt, who the following spring would high jump 6'-6.25" to tie for first place at the 1957 Drake Relays, was truly no slouch.

Wilt, The Arm-Wrestler

Readers may recall another story that has floated around for decades about Wilt Chamberlain's prodigious strength, that he had defeated the world class shot-putter, Bill Nieder, at arm-wrestling back in college. Shot-putters were strong, yes? And, if Wilt had defeated a world-class shot-putter, it made him Superman, yes? I asked Bill whether the story was true. Bill chuckled and said he saw his good friend Wilt occasionally over the years and not long before Wilt died, he ran into him at a bar in San Francisco where they reminisced about their college days. "Why do you keep repeating that old story about beating me in an arm-wrestling match? We tied, neither of us being able to pin the other's arm." Wilt replied saying "Bill, it makes a better story." Bill responded, "Sort of like you sleeping with 40,000 women?" Chamberlain smiled and replied, "Yes, just like that."

On Al Oerter…

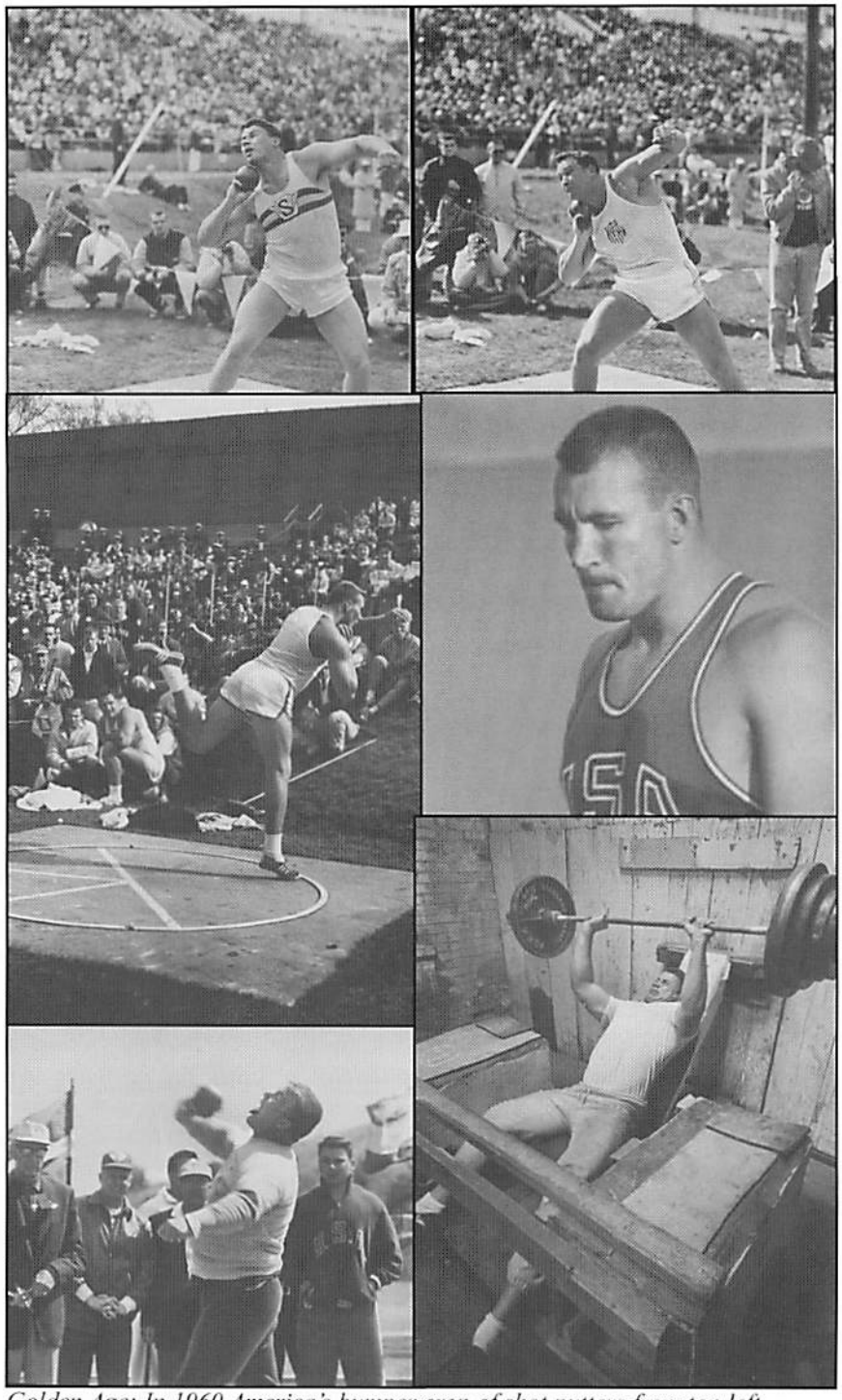
I asked Bill Nieder of his impressions of a then young Al Oerter, who'd be his KU teammate for several years. A Kansas school album this author uncovered described the two Kansas kids soon heading off for the 1956 Olympics and the tone of it, while hoping for the best for both of them, sort of suggested they were in for quite a competition, especially Al Oerter. Al brought back the gold medal defying all odds as Fortune Gordien and others were expected to compete for the top honors, not him. Bill said he thought Al Oerter was at his most competitive state at the Olympics, that he seemed slightly less motivated at smaller venues but that he was made for the Olympics where he could muster and focus all of his energy to secure gold medals under circumstances causing others to falter under the severe pressures.

Wilt, The Discus Thrower

Al Oerter, too, had interesting interplay with Wilt Chamberlain while at KU. Years later, when Al was asked about where the discus world record might go one day, he was quoted as saying that, "a person can physically throw 80 meters, the limiting factor is the size of the circle. A young person with a height of about 190 cm, a good arm length and a phenomenal turning capacity can definitely throw much further than the world record. I tried to show basketball player Wilt Chamberlain how to throw the discus once, but he couldn't do it because, at 216 cm, he was too tall for the ring." So, there it is, even Al Oerter wondered what someone with Wilt's wingspan and power might do as a discus thrower, but the experiment failed.

Post-Collegiate Days: New World Records

Bill Nieder would win his one and only open national championship in 1957 with a fine throw of 61'-6.5". Parry O'Brien was not at the meet. Things were quiet for a few years but, beginning in 1959, the field of quality shot-putters had increased with the appearance of the youthful Dallas Long on the scene. 1959 became the year when things would heat back up as aspiring Olympians got back to serious training for the upcoming 1960 Rome Olympics. Dave Davis, too, was tossing big throws. It would all culminate in a very competitive 1960 Olympic Trials and 1960 Olympic Games. Bill Nieder tossed his first world record in March of 1959 throwing 63'-2" (19.2m), but it was thrown on a sloping field and never ratified. Then, on March 19, 1960, he tossed a 19.45m bomb for a world record, then after being passed briefly by Dallas Long, he hit another world record of 19.99m on April 2, 1960. He owned the longest put, the world record, and carried it into the 1960 Olympic Trials.



Golden Age: In 1960 America's bumper crop of shot putters from top left, clockwise, Dave Davis, Parry O'Brien, Nieder, Davis (inclining), Dallas Long and Nieder.

The 1960 Olympic Trials

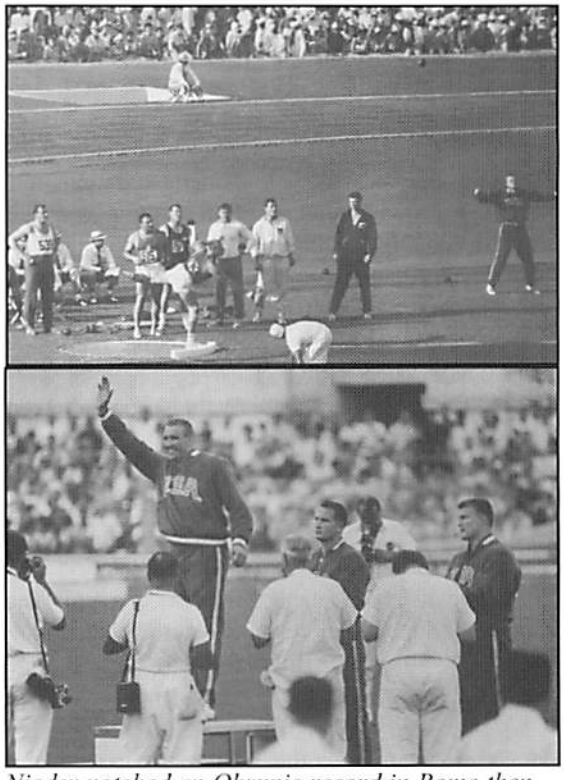
I won't rehash the very interesting verbal sniping that went on when a crowded field of talented American shot-putters began competing for one of three coveted berths on the upcoming 1960 Rome Olympic Team. For a full accounting of the antics, records and competitions, refer to my article on Dallas Long (*LSTJ*, April 2004). In addition to the shot put world record passing among four different men in a very short period of time, Parry O'Brien took a slap at Bill Nieder's great world record toss of 65'-7" (19.99m) at the Texas Relays calling it a "cow pasture" performance and implied that Nieder and the others had been dodging him at meets. Nieder responded by saying that it was O'Brien, in fact, who'd been dodging him referring to Parry as the "LA Dodger."

Nieder would go into the 1960 Olympic Trials as the favorite. However, a few weeks earlier, Bill made the mistake of going water skiing for the first time and twisted his right knee badly. This would be a bad omen. To add to the already heightened tension surrounding the 1960 shot put trials, Dave Davis failed to show up as the competition kicked off. Where was he? The competition started without Davis. Long and Nieder, both with their recent world records, looked strong in the first two rounds. Davis finally showed up after paying to have a seaplane fly him to the Palo Alto Harbor where he then found a ride and changed into his throwing clothes as he approached the field. Meet

officials conferred and granted Davis a full six throws and, on Davis' fourth throw, he hit 62'-3.5" to dislodge Nieder as the third best performer in the meet. Nieder fouled off a throw in a later round that would have moved him into second place, so Bill Nieder, the current world record holder, had failed to make the 1960 Olympic team. Dallas Long won the competition with 63'-3.75" followed by O'Brien with 62'-3.75". It would be Long, O'Brien, and Davis in that order. Nieder was fourth with a best put of 61'-9.75" and despondent. "Just call me choker, that's all," said Nieder of his performance.

The Nieder Press, first over 20 meters, The Olympics!

A disgruntled Bill Nieder left the '60 Trials emotionally drained only to receive a call from Payton Jordan of Stanford encouraging him to stay in shape and keep trying by attending the pre-Olympic meets, that one could never know what might happen. Nieder quickly got back in the swing of throwing by competing in three pre-Olympic meets. In the first meet in Eugene, he outdistanced the Olympic team members by over a foot and a half. He won again at the second meet at the Los Angeles Coliseum and then capped it off with a new world record at Walnut on August 12, 1960 where he set a fabulous world record toss of 20.06 meters (65'-10"). Bill had swept the three meets! He was the best shot putter in the world, but he was still not on the 1960 Olympic team.



Nieder notched an Olympic record in Rome then enjoyed the fruits of his labor on the podium afterward.

Then it happened: As the alternate, he was moved back onto the team, and here is how it happened. Bill Nieder, not recognized for great weightlifting exploits as, say, Dallas Long and Gary Gubner were, was known for a pet lift he practiced for his shot-putting. It became known as the "Nieder Press" and it was performed with a shouldered barbell thrust forward at sort of a standing incline press angle, then quickly retrieved to the shoulders, then repeated. Bill became very good at his innovative lift, once demonstrating the snappy Nieder Press to a writer by performing the motion with almost 300 lbs. for five repetitions. Well, Payton Jordon was prescient as Dave Davis injured his throwing wrist while performing, you guessed it, the Nieder Press. I suppose Davis might have been looking for the source of "magic" responsible for Nieder's huge twenty-plus meter put. With Davis now forced to drop out, it opened the door for Bill Nieder as the alternate to make the trip to Rome on the 1960 Olympic Team. What a circuitous path he had followed to get back to a second Olympic Games. Whether the Nieder Press actually has any value for shot-putting might be debated today, but it played a pivotal role in putting Bill on the '60 Olympic Team. Dave Davis likely wished he had never tried the exercise.

1960 Rome Olympics

Readers who have read my various biographies or tangential comments about the six great Americans who'd go on to win all six shot put and discus medals at the 1960 Rome Olympics know that this was truly a special group of athletes, to a man. They would achieve something no other country has ever done by sweeping all of the medals in the shot put and discus events. For the American shot-putters, just making the team itself had been an ordeal as tough as the Olympics would be, much tougher in fact for Bill Nieder. But, by 1960, Bill Nieder was the best shot-putter in the world. He had thrown two very long puts a bit beyond the capabilities of a young Dallas Long and an older Parry O'Brien. It was his Olympics to lose. He wouldn't.

Parry O'Brien, always a great big-meet competitor, came out of the first round with a slight lead throwing 18.77m for a new Olympic record, Long would then notch the record up to 18.88m in the second round and O'Brien, too, would improve yet again to 19.11m. Nieder sat back in third with a second round toss of 18.77m. Neither Dallas Long nor Parry O'Brien improved on their third puts, but Nieder found his technique throwing a long foul on his third attempt at distance well beyond his own world record. On Bill's fifth put, he hit 19.68m for a new Olympic Record. Bill knew he had won the gold medal with that throw as it was almost two feet beyond O'Brien and Long. Parry O'Brien sat on a bench nearby and Bill, wearing a cowboy hat perhaps mocking O'Brien's "cow pasture" comment aimed at him, tossed his towel to the old lion and said that it was all over. It was. Nieder would win his gold medal, O'Brien would have to settle for silver and Long won the bronze.

The 1960 Rome Puts Series

Dallas Long	16.80, 18.88, 18.66, 18.25, foul, 19.01
Parry O'Brien	18.77, 19.11, foul, 17.41, 18.39
Bill Nieder	18.67, 18.77, foul, 19.68, foul

Concluding Bill Nieder

First over 60 feet in high school, first over 60 feet in college, first ever over 20 meters, a NCAA shot title in 1955, a national title in 1957, 3 ratified shot put world records and a fourth non-ratified, a silver Olympic medal in 1956 as a collegian, then the Olympic gold medal in 1960. What a fabulous record! Bill had literally pulled two feet beyond the competition by 1960. Why stop? If one searches the archives, Bill seems to largely disappear after the 1960 season. In an attempt to make some sort of commercial success out of his Olympic fame, Bill made an unwise career move by allowing himself to be convinced that a professional boxing career would be lucrative. It ended almost as quickly as it began, but to Bill's credit, he realized the silliness of attempting to cross over to another sport and dropped it. Nieder actually formally petitioned to have his amateur status reinstated, but lost by a single vote, thus ending any opportunity to defend his title at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. It would be Dallas Long who'd win the gold medal in 1964 over a young phenom named Randy Matson. Could Bill Nieder have possibly beaten Dallas Long in 1964? Winning a second gold along with his silver from 1956 would have brought him equal in standing to Parry O'Brien's Olympic medal count, the greatest record of all shot-putters of the post World War II era. Instead, Bill Nieder, while well-known in throwing circles, never achieved the general notoriety and fame associated with Parry O'Brien or Al Oerter.

We will never know what might have happened if Bill Nieder had stayed singularly focused on the shot put. After a few years absence from competition after the 1960 Olympics, Bill found himself throwing 63 feet after about ten practices, a much faster recovery to almost full form and distance than he had ever imagined. Too, he experimented with a rotational shot put style with good results for a brief time. But, Bill would never throw competitively again. Dallas Long, too, retired from throwing after the '64 Olympics. Parry O'Brien, the "old lion" would never set another world record after the 1959 season as Long and Nieder had moved it out of his range, but he concluded a great career with two gold medals (1952, 1956), a silver (1960), and a fourth place at the 1964 Olympics. He'd throw competitively until 1966 throwing a personal best of 19.69m that year, never matching Nieder's best distances from six years earlier, but a great competitor to the very end.

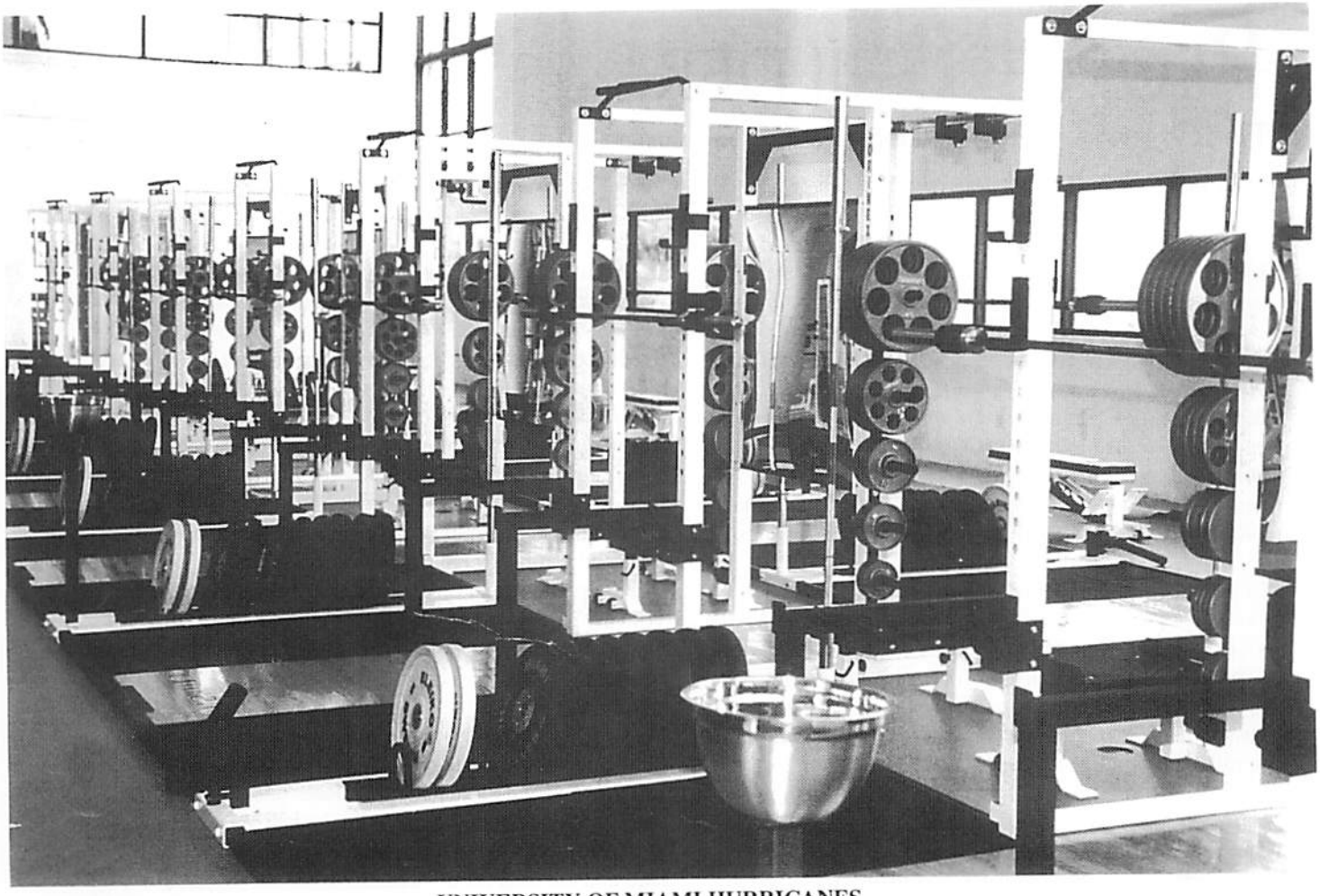
Dedicating Bill's athletic biography to Leon Patterson

And, what of Leon Patterson, the great high school thrower and athlete from Taft, California? Why no more sports news about Leon? Bill Nieder, Al Oerter, Parry O'Brien, and other mentions went on to make news for decades or more. After Leon's very successful high school career, he was recruited by USC where he would set a freshman discus record in 1953 with a fine distance of 166'-11". Leon, however, had discovered in high school that he was suffering with a likely fatal liver disease and that giving up athletics would extend his life expectancy. Leon refused to quit and instead gave up football and the dashes to concentrate on the shot put and discus events. After his great college freshman year, sophomore Patterson placed third at the 1954 NCAA Championship in the discus with a throw of 169'-03/4". He earned All-American honors in the discus event. Leon's greatest ambition was to participate at the 1956 Olympics and it was said that he worked tirelessly to achieve his life-long goal. It didn't work out that way: Leon Patterson succumbed to Bright's disease and died just a few months later on November 21, 1954, at the very young age of 21.

Leon Patterson

Would Leon Patterson have challenged a young Al Oerter at the 1956 Olympics for the discus gold medal? Would Bill Nieder have won the 1964 Olympics? I suppose we aren't supposed to know the answer to such questions. It's that butterfly again flapping its capricious wings altering the very course of history: a spoken word, an inch here or a few centimeters there, picking up a shot or a discus for the first time revealing a hidden talent, an injury working out for good or for bad... or a tiny microbe lodging itself in the organ of a young man.

Allow me to dedicate this athletic biography of a truly great shot-putter, Bill Nieder, to a fellow thrower with whom he shared a brief history: Leon Patterson. Two high school kids in 1952 with all the talent in the world, separated by the distance of half a continent, both over 60 feet, one right after the other... and then their paths separated. ***L&S***



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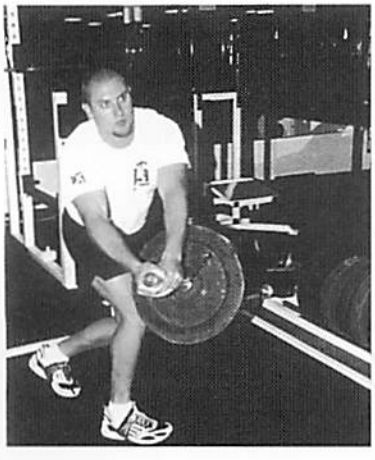
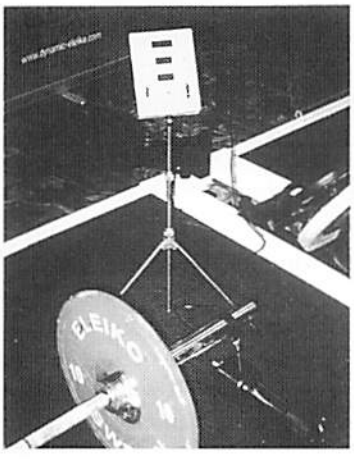
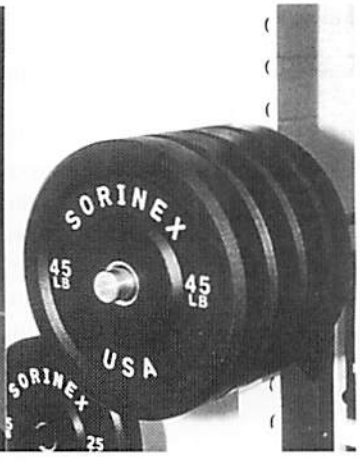






Dave Dumble

PEOPLE BUILDER

BY GLENN THOMPSON

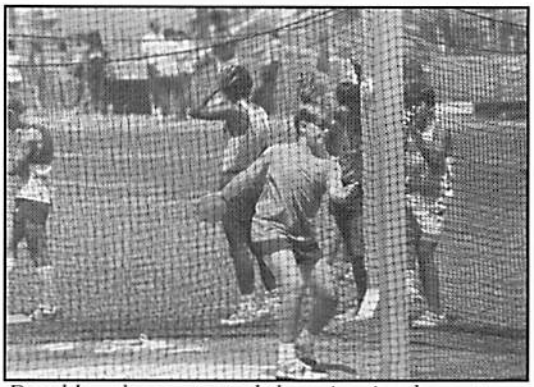
Many of the best managers in the business world have learned their craft from the ground up. Although it may not happen that often, who would know more about a business than someone who starts in the mailroom, is mentored by senior associates, then breakout on his own?

Such is the story of Arizona State's Dave Dumble. He was taught the fundamentals of throwing in and around Bakersfield, CA. He attended a junior college before moving on to the big-time at UCLA under the tutelage of throwing legend Art Venegas.
Dumble developed into a cornerstone of the UCLA team, a 200'-plus discus thrower, and Olympic Trials qualifier.

By 2001 he was branching out on his own, landing a Division I coaching gig at Virigina Tech before moving on to Arizona State a year later. The Sun Devil women have been the driving force behind NCAA championship squads and their male counterparts are joining the party. Dumble took some time out of his team's fall preparations to talk with Long & Strong.

Long & Strong: *What sports did you play in high school? How were you exposed to track and field?*

Dave Dumble: I was athletic all my life, partly because my whole family was athletic. In high school I played two sports, football and track. I played offensive guard in football at about 5'9 and 180lbs at a large high school. So obviously I did not start. In fact I was third string and was pretty much a practice dummy. This was not fun, so I quit after my sophomore year. I was much more interested in my progress as a thrower.



Dumble, above, started throwing in elementary school, following the lead of older sister Dawn.

As a young kid, I dabbled in many sports just like my older sister Dawn. She was introduced into throwing the shot put in 6th grade. She did pretty well and continued to throw throughout junior. high. I am two years younger and when she went out to practice with my dad in 7th grade, I went out and started learning as well. So by the time I decided to quit football, I had already been throwing for five years and enjoyed the individual success I had achieved.

L&S: *Tell us about your high school track career. How did you wind up at UCLA?*

DD: It has been a while since I reflected on my high school career, partly because there isn't too much to remember. My PR's my senior year were 47' in the shot and 163' 2" in the discus. My discus PR came my senior year at the Valley meet that qualified us for the California State meet. I ended up only a foot away from getting third and qualifying. It was very motivational for me because I had started to see some success, but the season was prematurely over for me.

Growing up in Bakersfield (CA) there are two choices for higher education, Cal State University Bakersfield a DII, four year school, and Bakersfield College a Junior College. With my parents paying the bill for college and a little interest from the coach, Don Crow, I was going to junior college.

My two years at Bakersfield College was a great experience for me. I matured in many ways, first being physically. I was still growing and put on about 2 inches and 35 lbs. in the two years since high school. With the help of teammates that were motivated to train and lift, I hit the weight room hard and put on a lot of strength. I was introduced to the hammer and javelin and broadened my scope of what throwing was all about.

I was also maturing in my actions and learned to be more dedicated to my passion of throwing. I had coaches that invested time in my development and teammates that made me more aware of the throwing world. I learned about dedication and how much time and energy was necessary to better myself. I spent hours out at the hammer field by myself doing thousands of turns until I felt comfortable with the new movements. I felt like this was an event where I was on a level playing field with all freshmen in college. I wanted to learn this event quicker and better than anyone else and finally be able to win something.

All the hard work paid off and I started seeing improvements. At the end of my freshman year, I matched my high school discus PR with the college implements and threw 165' with the hammer. I was very happy with the progress I

had made this year and was very motivated for more. During my sophomore year, I dealt with a major ankle sprain and Valley Fever, but my marks still improved. I threw discus 170' 7" and hammer 175'. These marks were good enough to get some attention from Division I programs and I was starting to get recruited. After weighing all my options, I decided that UCLA was the best option for me.

L&S: *Talk about your collegiate and post-collegiate career.*

DD: The next 6 years of my training would occur at UCLA. It was definitely an eye opener when I began training with the other Bruin throwers. As much of an adjustment as it was from high school to junior college, the change to UCLA was much greater. There was an atmosphere that either made you or broke you. This very competitive environment was perfect for me, and I had to work hard every day just to not become the guy who came in last.

I continued to mature physically my first year there. I was done growing vertically, but continued horizontally. I put on another 15 lbs the first year and another 10 lbs. the second. By my senior year at UCLA, I was competing at my largest weight, 255. I also narrowed my focus to concentrate only on my better events, the discus and hammer. I was honing my skills in the ring and was beginning to throw very far. At the end of my collegiate career, I ended up being a two time All-American in the discus with PR's of 205' in the hammer and 197' 11" in the discus.


Dumble at UCLA.

After graduation I didn't know what I wanted to do as a career, but knew that I still wanted to throw. Now being independent of my parents and scholarships, I began finding part-time jobs that could support me in my endeavor of throwing discus. I ended up working part-time at Home Depot to make ends meet.

I focused on throwing discus and in 1998 I hit my first 200 footer. 1999 was my first year ever that I did not have an improvement, and I learned how to deal with injuries. About this time I started to decide that I would give it one more year to either start throwing far enough to travel to Europe and make some money, or shut it down. I had a very successful season in 2000. I improved my PR to 207' and qualified for the Olympic Trials. This was the end of my throwing career and I was happy to end on a high note.

L&S: *Was it a professional goal of yours to become a coach?*

DD: I didn't know that I wanted to become a coach until only a few years ago. I had ideas of what I wanted to do as I grew up, but throwing took me further than any of my other passions. When I was in junior college, I wanted to major in forestry and become a forest ranger. When I had graduated from UCLA, I was up in the air and had no direction as far as a career. It was the time during my post-collegiate career when I started coaching, just to make a little money. I coached high school athletes, national caliber decathletes, sprinters in the weight room, and anyone else that would pay me. I enjoyed helping others learn and succeed in their endeavors. Then in my final year of throwing, my coach, Art Venegas, suggested that I try to coach in the collegiate ranks. As my final year of throwing wound down, I began to get excited about a full-time job where I could continue with the same passion I had felt for years.

L&S: *Talk about your first job at Virginia Tech.*

DD: After putting out 15 to 20 resumes in the summer of 2000 and making lots of phone calls, I finally got a call from Virginia Tech. They were a separate program that wanted a joint throws coach to help them with both genders. As soon as they offered me a position, I accepted.

I was very excited to move across the country and become truly independent for the first time in my life. I was going to build a very strong throwing program there, just like the one that made me a good thrower. But, I was in for a very big shock. The athletes hadn't had a real throws coach and didn't have structured practices. When I began to implement what I thought was normal lifting and throwing practices, they all thought I was crazy. But as the year went on and they got stronger and threw farther, they began to see things a new way. That first year was an eye opener, and I began to realize what it took to have a great throwing program.

During this first year of coaching, I also learned to trust my knowledge of throwing that I had already accrued. When I ran into situations where athletes were struggling or failing to see the path of success, I began to question myself. I had never had the responsibility of other throwers' success on my shoulders. I felt that if they didn't succeed, then I must have coached them wrong. But over time, I started to understand that there are many factors to a thrower's success that is out of my direct control, and I was giving them the right information within a productive program.

L&S: *What brought you to Arizona State?*

DD: A job offer. It was an opportunity to move back to the west coast and to coach in the Pac-10, one of the toughest athletic conferences in the country. My sister, Dawn Dumble (now Dawn Godbehere), was the coach at ASU for two years, 1999 & 2000. She was going to get married and was starting to contemplate what she wanted with her new life. With the hours that a coach needs to put in, it would be tough raising a family and spending enough time with the children. In the end she decided that being a great mother was more important than being a top level Division I throws coach.

Dumble continued to train at UCLA after graduation, and competed in the 2000 Olympic Trials (below) after leaving UCLA.

When the job came available, I applied immediately. It was an opportunity that I could test myself as a coach. I felt like ASU could be very attractive to many high school throwers based on climate, facilities, education, and the city of Phoenix. I kind of felt like I was in over my head as a second-year coach, but there was only one way to find out if I was going to be successful in this field. I am very grateful to ASU to have given me this opportunity to coach at such a high level at a young age. I am happy to have had such success and to have continued the tradition of great throwers at ASU.

L&S: *Give us some insight into a typical in-season practice schedule for yourself.*

DD: It is a long day at the track. Depending on the day, I am out coaching for about 5-6 hours. I start the afternoon at noon working with the heptathletes and decathletes, teaching them the basics of the throws. At 1pm the javelin throwers will have warmed up and be ready for their hour practice. Then at 2pm I will either start with one of my shot or discus workouts. At 3pm the second shot or discus group will throw. I try to limit each group to 4 or 5 throwers. Too many throwers will crowd the ring and drag the practice session on too long. With 3 or 4 throwers, they can get their repetitions in during a relatively short period, which helps keep their focus. Then around 4 one of the hammer groups will start. And finally, around 5pm I can begin the throwing session with my post-collegiates. Every semester the schedule changes, but the hours at the track stay the same. I have learned to put on a nice coat of sunscreen before the day at the track begins.

L&S: *What did you learn from your coaches that you now employ yourself?*

DD: I was lucky enough to have several great coaches during my development as an athlete. My first real meaningful coach was my dad. He was the one that kept dragging me out to practice and making sure I was putting in the work. He taught me about work ethic and making that work count.

My first real throws coach was my high school throws coach, Scott Semar. He was a very accomplished throws coach before moving to Bakersfield High School and was able to build a very strong program there. I worked for four years with him and was able to establish a great foundation of technique. There are many technical ideas and cues that I use from him.

During my time at Bakersfield College, I had several great coaches. Two of them in particular had a big impact on me. Don Crow was my throws coach for the first year. It was interesting to hear coaching cues in a different way, but with the same message. I learned that you could build on the same ideas, but with new mental cues.

The other coach that had a big impact on me was the Head Coach, Bob Covey. He was the one that introduced me to the hammer. He also took a personal interest in me and helped me develop also as a person. He was very personal and easy to approach. This type of friendly guidance was very motivating for me and made a big impact. From my experience and strong relationship with him, I realized how important it is to have a good relationship with your athletes. They have to trust you and know that you are doing the best for them.

My last coach was the one that probably had the biggest impact on me. I worked with Art Venegas at UCLA for 6 years (3 in college and 3 post-collegiately). I developed a lot under his guidance, and as a part of the program, I learned the intricacies of throwing and how much detail there is in just a single two-second movement. I was also affected a lot by the training atmosphere when I arrived at UCLA. I was immersed into a situation where no one slacked, no one gave up, and no one wanted to lose, at anything. This positive yet competitive environment is what helped push me to my limits. Motivation from the

coach is very important, but positive peer pressure from your teammates can sometimes have a bigger effect. I encourage this same type of atmosphere at ASU. I select throwers that want to better themselves and will work hard to do it. Just as laziness is contagious, so is winning.

In season Dumble logs long hours in the desert sun with his athletes.

L&S: *Can you give us a couple technical points you like to emphasize for each of the four events?*

DD: Wow, what a question! I don't know how I can give you just a couple per event. There are so many things that are important, and each thrower should emphasize different things. I will try not to be too specific because I would be writing for a long time.

Discus and Spin Shot

To solve several problems coming out of the back of the ring, I use the cue of pushing off the right foot to initiate the forward movement. I find that as the athlete initiates the rotation with their left foot, their right foot is usually behind which causes problems with the rest of the entry. If the athlete enters by initiating the rotation with their upper body, they lose separation and usually balance. Use of the right foot is difficult, but pays off with a wider toe to toe distance, greater rotational momentum, better balance, and greater hip to shoulder separation.

I emphasize the correct use of the legs from a balanced power position. When entering from the back of the ring, the power position will start when the left foot touches down. With the shot put and shoulders twisted back, I emphasize the rotation and extension of both legs simultaneously to deliver the shot or discus with maximal force.

Another key point that I emphasize during the throw that helps maximize efficiency is the ability to stay on a pivoting right leg. Most young throwers fail to conquer this skill and may underestimate its importance. When athletes create rotational momentum with a large sweeping right leg out of the back of the ring, creating a good axis on the right side is important to transfer this momentum into the shot.

Dumble (back row, second from right) has spent enough time at the White House in recent years to serve as a tour guide. This past November the Sun Devil men and women celebrated their dual 2008 NCAA Indoor championships with 'W'.

Javelin

One of the most essential movements when throwing the javelin is the block just prior to delivery. Without a good understanding of how to get into a position that will produce a productive block, it is difficult and frustrating to attempt to attain. Knowing that the left leg will block horizontal momentum, the left leg must have leverage to do so. If the right leg extends prior to the landing of the left leg, the center of mass is too high and the left leg cannot block the horizontal momentum. So one of the important cues I give is to drop the right knee, and keeping the center of mass behind the left foot so that it can block.

When working with young javelin throwers and sometimes even accomplished throwers, I find that I must constantly remind them to keep their arm and the javelin all the way back. This position constitutes not only a straight arm, but a stretched core, neck, and shoulder. When an athlete delivers a javelin from this position, they feel the correct delivery instead of an arm throw.

Hammer

I think the most difficult part of executing a great hammer throw is the entry. Trying to link up the body and feet with the hammer takes many repetitions and patience. One of the cues that I use is letting the ball lead the athlete to the left on the entry. This eliminates the dragging of the ball and allows for the correct acceleration of the hammer in the following turns.

Another emphasis that has helped a lot of my hammer throwers is feeling their balance through each turn. Each turn presents an opportunity to accelerate the ball, but only if the athlete is in the right position. I like to emphasize the balance in single support phase. If the athlete has correct balance when the right foot touches down, the athlete will be in a productive position to accelerate the hammer.

L&S: At a high level, what is your weight-training philosophy over the course of a year?

DD: We break up the lifting into three parts over the year. A few weeks after their track season is over, they will begin their summer

lifting. This constitutes high volume and low recovery on the main lifts as well as a lot of variation in their accessory lifts. The goal is to get fit, balanced and healthy.

The second phase of the year is during the fall semester. When all the athletes come back to school, we start to introduce the Olympic lifts back into their regimen and start dropping the reps. Our goal is to really push the weights and gain as much strength as possible. We end the semester with max-outs to test their gains from the last year. During this phase we use three-week cycles in order to give them plenty of variation. While training at a very high intensity, we make sure they do not get over-trained by introducing new lifts regularly.

The third phase of the year is the longest. There are different emphases throughout this phase depending on the proximity to the championship meets. Our main goal is to prepare their bodies to throw far during the season and especially the championship meets. As we are further from the big meets, we will still keep the intensity high to gain strength and maintain their previous gains. Then as their championship meet approaches, we will taper the volume to keep them fresher for practice and meets. This de-emphasis in the weight room allows them to develop precise timing in their throws. During their peaking we try to maintain their absolute strength while improving their speed.

L&S: *What traits do you see in your most successful student/athletes?*

DD: One of the commonalities of the successful student-athletes that I have worked with is that they are all self-motivated. Some more than others and of course they are all motivated in different ways. This motivation is translated into success because these are the individuals that will do all the things necessary to be successful. When related to success in throwing, this motivation means that they do the right things even outside of practice to prepare them for the next day.

L&S: *On the female side, you've lost a couple of All-Americans in Tai Battle and Jessica Pressley. What are the 2009 prospects the Sun Devil men's and women's throwers?*

DD: We did lose a couple of very talented throwers that performed very well last year. We did not pick up any new throwers on the women's side this year but we will have a new addition of C.J. Navarro, who red-shirted last year. She was fourth in the discus at the 2008 Jr. Nationals. We are also excited for more great performances from Sarah Stevens during her senior year.

On the men's side we have a few more additions. Our biggest addition is Jordan Clarke from Anchorage, Alaska. He obviously had a great senior year and we are excited about his huge upside. We also have two javelin throwers that are joining the ranks and will hopefully make up for the graduation of our 72m javelin thrower, Brad Roth.

L&S: *What advice would you give to athletes who aspire to join the coaching ranks?*

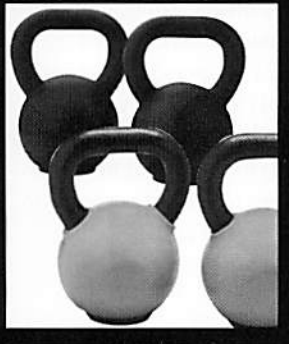
DD: There are a couple of things I would suggest. If you are still an athlete, you should try and learn as much as you can from your current coach and training location. Find out why you lift a certain lift, why you lift with certain sets and reps, why the practice structured the way it is, or why you do certain drills. Understanding the areas in which you need to improve is one thing, but learning how other athletes can improve is another task. Observe your coach and learn what they are saying and why. Watch them coach. Try and predict what they would say to the athlete after their throw or lift.

The second piece of advice I would give would be to continue your education of training theory and throwing technique. There are so many successful ways to train out there and you can always improve the way you would train your athletes. Ask plenty of questions and learn from other coaches' and athletes' successes. There is no reason you should have to re-invent the wheel. As you would be asking your athletes to improve in certain areas, so should you in your coaching.

L&S: *Can you share some of the more rewarding moments in your coaching career?*

DD: I think some of the most rewarding moments in coaching are very hard to describe. They happen gradually over long periods of time. The reward is watching my athletes mature in all areas of their lives guided by the demands of being successful in my throwing program. I ask a lot from my young athletes. When they begin to understand that what I am asking of them is not for my benefit, but more of a demonstration of what it takes to be the best in a very competitive field, I feel a sense of pride and accomplishment. The moments that make me look back and see this transformation are when they graduate, earn top academic honors, receive top level jobs after graduation, or call me after their career is finished and thank me for the lessons they learned from going through the program.

Some of the most exciting moments in my coaching career have got to start with my first individual National Championship and Ryan Whiting's Collegiate Record. Both Sarah Stevens and Ryan Whiting had phenomenal performances in their second NCAA Indoor Championship, winning the shot on their last throw. These were very emotional, not only because they PR'ed and won, but because the competition was so tough and they were able to come through on their last throw. Their performance was a demonstration of total preparation; physically, mentally, and emotionally and I was very proud to be a part of it. ***L&S***



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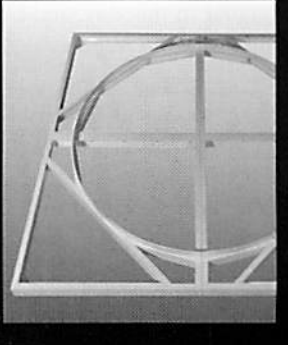

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Rachel Yurkovich

Oregon's Own

By Kurt Dunkel, Shippensburg University

University of Oregon senior Rachel Yurkovich is a fresh face in American javelin throwing. Along with Purdue's Kara Patterson, she represents the next wave of U.S. spear throwers with an opportunity to bridge the gap to the world's elite.

Yurkovich reinforced her status this past season, winning the NCAA title (56.58m/185-7) and following that with a third-place finish at the Olympic Trials (56.41m /185-1). Her lack of an 'A' qualifier kept her in Eugene as the U.S. team headed to Beijing.

Yurkovich took some time to talk to Long & Strong about her decision to attend Oregon, her training, and her future.

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

Rachel Yurkovich: A little bit about myself..., I was born in Forest Grove, Oregon but have lived in Newberg, Oregon for pretty much my whole life. Growing up I played pretty much any sport my mom could get me into soccer, basketball, softball, gymnastics, and volleyball. As I got older and sports become more competitive and time-consuming, I focused mostly on volleyball playing on club teams including Nike NW Juniors, basketball, and softball, which I played year round on numerous traveling teams. My freshman year of high school I played on the varsity volleyball team, swung between JV and varsity for basketball and was on the varsity softball team. After having been the only pitcher on the team and pitching every game, I chose to forgo softball for a second year and decided to try out for the track team my sophomore year. Sophomore year also brought the opportunity to play on a high level club volleyball team; taking that opportunity meant I had to quit basketball. After trying a lot of different events on the track team; I was drawn to javelin because there was a boy that I liked, named Alex Wolff, who threw. We are still together to this day, and he also throws here at the University of Oregon.

L&S: *What is the high school javelin scene like in Oregon? Pretty competitive?*

RY: The high school scene in Oregon was extremely competitive when I was in high school but unfortunately seemsto not be quite at that level anymore, even though there are quite a few good throwers out there that have a lot of potential. I think it is all about coaches and parents getting their athletes and children out of their home state and for them to see what else is out there, get them exposed to athletes at different levels and to experience meets in different parts of the country. I believe that was a crucial part of my success when I was in high school. My coach did everything he could to get his athletes out of just the little high school meets and expose them to the really competitive part of track. Thanks, Coach Boutin!

L&S: *When did you first throw the javelin and how did you become interested in the javelin?*

RY: I first started throwing the javelin when I was a sophomore in high school. I had just quit the softball team and during the first day of practice I was trying different events out, but I was drawn to the javelin for more than just the fact that it was interesting and that I had been throwing a softball my whole life and thought I would be good at it. There was a boy that I had a crush on who threw the javelin; my first encounter with the javelin was by coincidence because I simply wanted to talk to this boy. After that I can accurately say the rest is history. Alex Wolff (the boy I had a crush on) and I will have been together for 6 years this coming track season (March 21st), and we both still throw javelin side by side at the University of Oregon.

L&S: *What has been your progression (i.e. personal bests at various ages)?*

RY: My progression has been as follows: sophomore year of high school (Year #1) my personal best was 158'9"; junior year of high school (Year #2) my personal best was 161'11"; senior year of high school (Year #3) my personal best was 176' 5" (high school American Record). Freshman year of college (Year #4) my personal best was 179'10". Sophomore year of college (Year #5) personal best was 189'11". Year #6, junior year of college my personal best was 191'1".

L&S: *What is your height and competition weight?*

RY: I am 5'10.5" and my competition weight is always around 160 lbs., give or take a couple of pounds. Just coming off a winter of intense weight lifting, I am usually heavier at the beginning of the season and then tend to lose a little toward the end of the season.

L&S: *What are your weight room bests (i.e., power clean, snatch, back and front squat, dead lift, push press, pull-over)?*

RY: In the weight room my bests are as follows: power cleans: 87.5k, back squat: 225lb, front squat: 185lb. Over

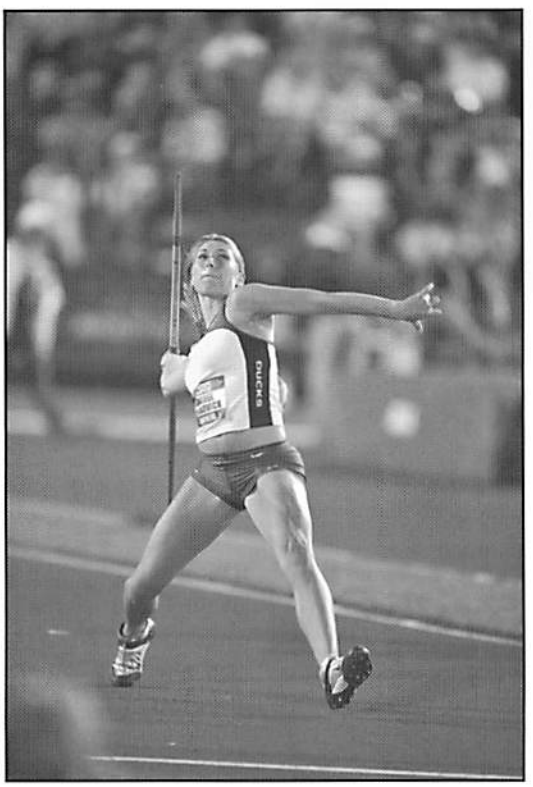
the last couple of years I have been recovering from injuries so I have not done much if any upper body lifting like push jerks and press, and snatch, but this year I feel like I am fully recovered and am getting back into those kinds of lifts.

L&S: *What are your training bests in the 30 meter (or 40 meter), overhead shot (forward/backward), standing long jump, standing 3 jumps? Have you done any other track events? If so, what are your personal bests?*

RY: Best in training, overhead backward 4kg shot: 16.06m; forward underhand/overhead 4kg shot: 14.04m; forward overhead 2kg shot: 15.16m. Also we have started testing how many pull ups we can do, so far my bests are; front grip - 17; reverse grip - 20. I have never done any other events in college, but in high school I did the 4x100 relay and did the long jump once and jumped 16'-something.

L&S: *Tell us about your coach, Lance Deal. How is your relationship with him? Has he talked you into throwing the hammer yet (ha, ha)? Was he a factor in you choosing to attend Oregon?*

RY: Coach Deal is a great coach; he and I have a great relationship. He knows how to get me to do what I need to do, work hard, push my buttons, and make me reach my potential. The reason I chose to come to the University of Oregon was not because I thought Lance was the best javelin coach, but I knew he had been at the level of competition that I wanted to be at one day and that he could help me get there mentally. He never threw the javelin but has done everything in his power to learn everything he can about it in order to teach us. He has taught me a lot about competing and being a good competitor, making the right decisions in competitive situations. He has helped me be confident in myself and realize the level that I am currently at and the level that I can reach in the future. I have tried to throw the hammer but just for fun once or twice; coach never lets me even touch it during important parts of the season and lets me know that I am a javelin thrower and that I run in a straight line and that I'm should not be capable of turning in a circle.


VictorSailer

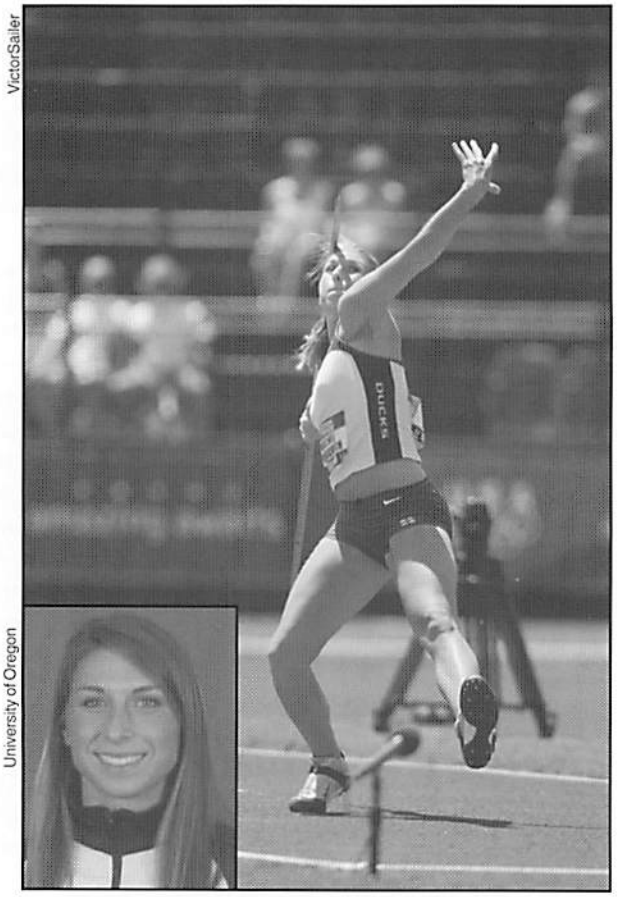
L&S: *Speaking of which, could you talk about your experiences as a recruited high school athlete? How did you choose Oregon? Was it a difficult choice?*

RY: Choosing Oregon was an easy choice for me, although I was recruited my many schools including heavy recruitment by UCLA, Brown University, Florida State, etc. I knew before the date even came when coaches were allowed to make contact with me that I wanted to come to Oregon. Sarah Malone was someone that I really looked up to and had heard good things from her about Coach Deal. Once I met Lance it sealed the deal, (no pun intended). He was fun, exciting, and seemed to have the same ideas I had about my future as a javelin thrower. But what cannot go without mentioning is the fact that Eugene is "Track Town USA." How could I pass up the opportunity to have the best facilities, great people/fans, and the legacy of Hayward field? To me it was a no-brainer.

L&S: *Tell us about volleyball. Were you recruited to play volleyball by the schools that recruited you? What was your volleyball experience at U of O?*

RY: I miss volleyball a lot, and sometimes I wish I would have stuck with it, but then I realize that I would probably not have the success that I have had in javelin had I continued. When I was a senior in high school, I was recruited by many schools including Oregon, Oregon State, Florida and Long Beach State. But I never gave much thought to going to college to play volleyball because I was getting a lot of big scholarship offers for the javelin and knew I couldn't pass that up. I tore both ligaments in my right ankle during a practice early in the season my senior year and sadly gave up the idea of ever playing volleyball again. Then one day Coach Deal contacted me and said that the new volleyball coach was wondering if I wanted to play for the team at Oregon. Jim Moore had never seen me play; he had just seen that I had been recruited by the former coach and having an extra scholarship available, he offered me a spot on the team. In order for me to play volleyball and compete in track, I would have to be on a volleyball scholarship, I had already signed my letter on intent for track with a full scholarship, so they just switched it over so that I had a full scholarship for volleyball. Unfortunately, I didn't know what I was getting myself into; I had only met Jim once and didn't really know much about the past

of the University of Oregon volleyball team. I came into daily doubles with a bad ankle, not having played volleyball for about 9 or 10 months. A day after getting home from the Pan-American Games, I got a call from the volleyball coaching staff saying that we were to report earlier than planned, I left 5 days later for Eugene. So much for a vacation!! Once we reported to Eugene and started practice, I realized that this was going to be the most mentally challenging thing I had ever done. It was hard for me from the get go because I went from being the star in Newberg to nothing here, so sitting on the bench was really hard for me. There was one game at home where we were winning by a lot and after the second game break we came back onto the floor and Jim pulled me aside and asked if I wanted to play and give up my redshirt year or keep sitting. This was the first time we had even discussed redshirting or his plans for me as a player and I had to make a decision fast because the game was starting. I chose to play in the game, even though it was only for a few plays. I am glad that I chose not to redshirt because I would have never played in my last year of ever playing volleyball. I played every now and then from that point forward when a starter was doing really badly. I grew increasingly unhappy and depressed as the season went on. It may have been from not having a break and being tired or simply that I could never please the coaches in practice or in games, no matter how hard I worked. Towards the end of the season, I had a meeting with Lance and Jim and decided to forgo volleyball do to the previously discussed circumstances and focus solely on javelin for the rest of my college career. My scholarship switched back to track at the end of the year. When I look back now, I wish I would have looked into attending a smaller college so that I could have continued doing both, but at the same time I would never give up what I have achieved at Oregon as a javelin thrower.


VictorSailer

University of Oregon

L&S: *Is your javelin training fairly standard or do you do some things that are specific to your needs/goals or specific to Lance's approach?*

RY: My javelin training is fairly standard; of course everyone has their own style and techniques, but overall it is pretty typical. The only specialized things we do are when it comes to injuries; then we are just more careful to only do the things in the weight room and in normal practice that are comfortable for the person and their injury.

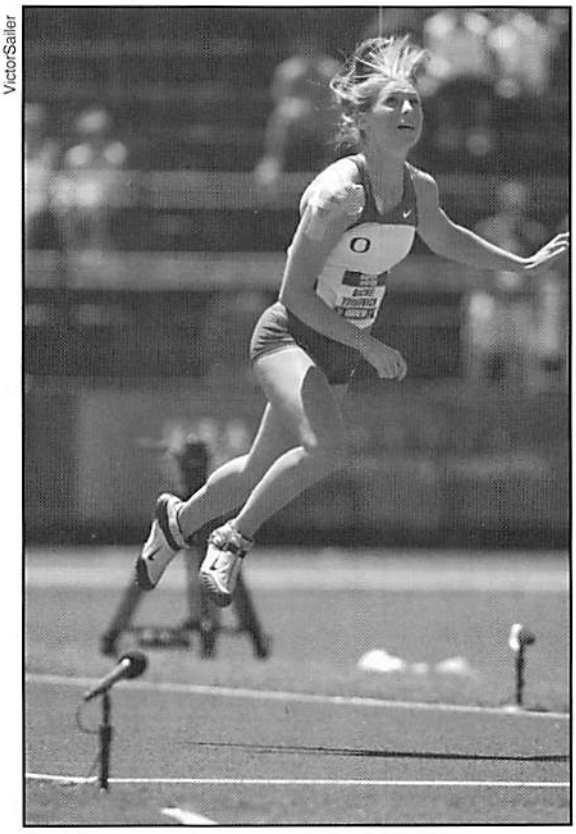
L&S: *What motivates you and keeps javelin fun and enjoyable?*

RY: I think that I used previous years' seasons to keep me motivated and to keep things fun and enjoyable, because when I look back on the previous year and how I felt at the end, I always want to improve or change how I felt. If I was tired and worn out, I take that into consideration and try to change some things so that I don't feel like that at the end of the current season. If I felt good at the end of the last season I think about what went on though out the past year that made me feel that way. When I quit volleyball I was really worried that I would get bored because all my life I have played more then one sport throughout the year and it kept me from getting too wrapped up in one thing or getting bored. But Lance, and now Christina (Scherwin, Danish Olympian), have done a really good job at making sure that we mix things up and that we have fun while we workout. Having little goals though out the season is fun for me to, whether it is in the weight room or getting faster in sprints, or just doing something that I currently couldn't do.

L&S: *How do you maintain your health in an event which can be so physically demanding? You were wearing a shoulder wrap at the trials. Were you injured? If so, did it impact your performance?*

RY: Staying healthy is tough when participating in the javelin because it really isn't a natural motion, or it isn't natural to run down the runway as fast as you can and then come to a complete stop! I haven't had the best track record when it comes to this! I have dealt with back and shoulder injuries every year since I have come to college, last year being the healthiest I have ever been. At the Trails

I wasn't wearing a shoulder brace; I was wearing Kinesio tape. There are many types of Kinesio tape, ranging in elasticity made for different things, but mostly it promotes circulation. I wore this the entire year, but at the Trials the tape was black in stead of the usual nude color. I have a partially torn labrum which has given me trouble since sophomore year where I hurt it at the Oregon Twilight. It is something that will most likely never go completely away so I just do my best to deal with it. Some days are better than others as far as pain goes, but better then bad days have been the recent trend. My shoulder was in a moderate amount of pain at the Trials, but I will never use that as an excuse.


Victor/Sailer

L&S: *Tell us about your experience at the Trials. Your big throw on your final effort was very exciting. What was that like for you?*

RY: My experience at the Trials was a good one. Although I didn't throw the best I have or wanted to, it was still fun and a good experience. The plan going into preliminaries was to go for the 'A standard right off the bat. Lance and I figured that it had been a long season so knowing this and the fact that usually my shoulder would not handle two days of competitive throwing very well, this would be the time if any that I would throw the 'A' standard. So I went for it in prelims and failed at the attempt, so I was really disappointed not only that I didn't get the standard but that I had thrown terribly. I felt like I was letting people (fans/family/friends and coaches) down. After I got over this feeling and was ready to move on to finals, the goal was to just have fun, no matter what happened.

Going into finals there was a little bit of drama; my javelin had gone missing and for some reason no one could find it. I summoned Lance and told him what was going on and he was able to help find it. Thank God we were at Hayward for the sake of knowing the facilities and a lot of the officials. Throwing during finals was almost comical; I wasn't throwing terrible but every throw was almost exactly the same distance. It was frustrating and funny at the same time. Just before my last attempt in finals I was in second to last place, with a reverse order for final attempts, so I was throwing second. I just went over to the high jump mat, lay down and closed my eyes, went to my happy place and tried to forget about what was going on in the competition. As they called for the first thrower I got up from the mat and walked over to my javelin. I picked it up and went to the runway and watched the 1st thrower throw her final throw (Lindsay Blaine). Still thinking about my happy place and being relaxed, I stepped on the runway and took my last throw to put me in the running for the bronze medal. My place stood strong as an injured Kim Kreiner was unable to pass me. I was really happy; who wouldn't be?! So overall it was great! I was proud of myself; I didn't know I had it in me.

L&S: *Would you mind sharing some of your goals with us? Would you like to continue professionally after your collegiate career is over?*

RY: I do plan to throw professionally after college. I plan to stay in Eugene while Alex is finishing his eligibility and train. My goal this year is to win NCAA nationals again and to do whatever it takes to get to Berlin (IAAF World Championships). The 'A' standard is now 61 meters (@202'), so this is what I have my sights set on this year. I of course want to stay healthy and have fun and just overall have a great senior year season.

L&S: *What are you studying at U of O? In terms of career, what is in store after school and javelin throwing?*

RY: My major is Economics with an emphasis on Finance and Banking. I would like to do something in Finances, budgeting stuff like that! But I am open to anything; my major is a very general one on purpose, I want to be able to do whatever comes my way. I would love to coach after I retire from javelin but also want to work and have a family.

L&S: *In terms of making an impact on the international scene, the U.S. women javelin throwers seem to be in a better position than the men. With Dana, Kim, Kara, and you, the next four years may well be exciting. What will it take for an American woman to medal at the World Championships or Olympics?*

RY: As far as medaling at the Olympics for the women, it will take us throwing farther but I have no idea how far that will be. We just need to get after it, work as hard as we can to be contenders. I think that in most foreign countries,

they start throwing and just overall preparing in the right ways a lot earlier then we do here in the U.S. which makes a difference, but other than that I don't know what it will take.

L&S: *You seem to have a lengthened phase of crossovers. How has this developed?*

RY: The amount of crossover that I take has developed from my high school days when we were taught to go off of feel and not to count our steps. I have been working on cutting the amount I take down considerably, but it is going to take a while for me to get ahold of what I am doing and to stay consistent with it. That is one of my goals for this year and something that Christina and I have already begun to address. Practice, practice, practice!

L&S: *Talk about some of your strengths as a javelin thrower. What aspects of your throw would you like to improve?*

RY: I think my strengths as a javelin thrower include my speed (if I can control it), my competiveness and not wanting to lose, throwing through the point, explosiveness, I work hard, and I have a good mind body connection. Things that I am working on are counting my steps and being consistent with the number I take, my physical strength, not getting worn out easily as the season goes on, and using the strength in my legs to my advantage.

L&S: *School and competition can be stressful. What do you do to relax and have fun?*

RY: Things I do to have fun are just hanging out with Alex, my friends, family and teammates, going to movies, shopping, and just being social. Alex and I golfed quite a bit this summer which was fun. Most of all I just try and take advantage of the time I have off. When I get a day off or a short break, I take full advantage of it; you're crazy if you don't! I work hard when it is time to work hard and rest when it is time to rest. I enjoy going for an occasional jog and being outdoors. ****L&S****

KEEP THAT SPRING

BY CLARENCE BASS

"Do you do any jumping?" asked Dr. Terry Todd, co-editor (with wife Jan) of ***Iron Game History*** and keeper of the Todd-McLean physical culture collection at the University of Texas, Austin. Talking to Terry is always fun and informative; he's in touch with just about everybody connected with the weight sports. Terry - a big man who weighed over 300 pounds in his heyday as a champion lifter - regaled me with the story of how he used to win tavern bets by jumping flat-footed up on bar counters. Turning serious, he related that, approaching 60 years of age, he still includes jumping and fast lifting movements in his training. "You know," he explained, "people lose the spring in their legs when they get older; I've seen old people who literally cannot jump up on a curb." Obviously, Terry doesn't intend to let that happen to him.

More Disuse Than Age

Terry's colleague at the University of Texas, Dr. Waneen W. Spirduso, confirms that losses of strength with age are typically greater in the lower body than in the upper extremities. However, she says the results posted by Masters powerlifters suggest that the discrepancy may be due more to disuse than age. As measured by the best deadlift and bench press performances of champion powerlifters between the ages of 40 and 75, there is little or no difference between upper- and lower-body strength losses until ages 70-75. Apparently most sedentary people simply use their arms more than their legs.

Supporting Todd's observation that many older people have no spring in their legs, Dr. Spirduso says that losses of strength with age are greater in fast - rather than slow - velocity movements. Unfortunately, this decline is found in older athletes, as well as their inactive peers. Performance in events that require explosive strength seem to be less well maintained.

For example, Masters athletes show a greater decline in throwing events, such as the discus and shot put, than in endurance events, such as long distance running. Likewise, performance in complex jumping events, such as the high jump and triple jump, declines faster than simpler running events, such as the 100-meter dash. Again, however, there are exceptions: Al Oerter threw the discus until age 48, competing in four Olympics, with practically no decline at all.

Likewise in lifting, the brute strength required for powerlifting (squat, bench press and deadlift) seems to be maintained better over the years than the strength in combination with speed, coordination and balance required by the snatch and clean and jerk events performed in the Olympic Games.

For those not familiar with the Olympic lifts, the snatch is a maneuver where the bar is lifted, using mostly leg and back strength, all the way from the floor overhead in one superfast motion. In the clean and jerk, the bar is first lifted to the shoulders in one quick motion, and then explosively powered overhead, again using the strength of the legs.

Performance Constantly Improving

The good news is that the performance of Masters athletes in all events, fast and slow, is getting better with each passing year, suggesting that intelligent and persistent training can overcome much of the decline that inevitably comes with aging. In Dr. Spirduso's words: "Most of the decline seen in strength and muscular endurance, at least until age 70, is due more to disuse of the neuromuscular system than to aging."

By the way, my answer to Terry's question is yes. From time to time, I do flat-footed jumps up the stairs in our house. (The stairs are well padded.) More importantly, however, I regularly include explosive strength movements, such as the power clean and power snatch, in my workouts. The difference between these lifts and the Olympic lifts is that you don't lower yourself under the bar to catch the weight. For example, in the power clean you bend the knees slightly to catch the weight at the shoulders, rather than going into a full squat as is done in the clean and jerk. This makes for a smoother movement and less jarring on the joints, while still maintaining the explosiveness of the lift. Similarly in the power snatch, the weight is caught overhead with only a slight dip of the knees.

As some readers know, for the first 20 or so years of my lifting career, I competed in the Olympic lifts. If you think about it, the snatch and clean and jerk are essentially jumping movements with a heavy barbell - that's how Terry developed the ability to jump flat-footed up on a bar counter. While I did little formal jumping during this time, I know that the snatch and clean and jerk put plenty of spring in my legs. I never tried jumping up on a bar, but I could easily do a flat-footed jump over the steel backed benches at the local swimming pool, and I also did a jump-reach of well over 30 inches when I was still in high school.

Quickness Returns

When I took up the power snatch and power clean a few years ago, after doing no explosive lifting for almost 20 years, I found that I had lost a good deal of my ability in the quick lifts. Happily, most of my quickness soon returned. Actually, I'd forgotten how exhilarating it is to power a weight from the floor to the shoulders or overhead in one quick movement. Like Terry Todd, I intend to keep the spring in my legs with these movements for a long time to come. ***L&S***

Developing A Comprehensive Training Program For The Strength Athlete

By John Wojciechowski

In this article I will discuss the key physical components that a strength athlete must include in his/her training program, and how these components work together to form a complete, balanced and comprehensive training system. By "strength athlete" I'm referring to those whose sport requires an emphasis on strength and power as opposed to muscular endurance or general fitness.

The weight training component outlined in this article is based on the methods and principles initially developed in the former Soviet Union and detailed in the book *Science and Practice of Strength Training* by Vladimir M. Zatsiorsky. Louie Simmons and his army of world-class powerlifters at Westside Barbell have since popularized these methods and numerous articles about their training can be found on the web. For the remainder of this article I will simply refer to this collection of weight training methods as "The Westside System." This philosophy of training is not new, yet somehow it still remains in the shadows of the more popular and less effective weight training programs traditionally used in the United States.

I will only briefly discuss Olympic lifting, plyometrics, grip training, flexibility, diet and event training and how these components work together with the weight-training component to form a well-rounded program. Near the end of the article I have provided a sample template that you can modify for your own use.

Strength, Power & Hypertrophy

Power is not strength and strength is not power. People use the terms strength and power interchangeably when actually they are not exactly the same thing.

Strength has been defined as the maximal force that a muscle or muscle group can generate at a specified velocity.

Physics defines power as work divided by time (where work equals force times distance).

$$\text{Power} = \frac{\text{Work}}{\text{Time}} \quad \text{or} \quad \text{Power} = \frac{\text{Force} \times \text{Distance}}{\text{Time}}$$

Strength and power are expressed differently, but they must be trained together in a comprehensive program along with hypertrophy training (increased muscle size) to ensure maximal progress.

Let's quickly review some common methods of training to understand *why* some methods work and some don't.

The Progressive Overload System and Why It Fails

We've all benefited to a certain degree by the traditional 5 sets of 5 or 3 sets of 10 type training model, adding a little weight to the bar each workout and trying to outperform your previous workout's best. You will gain decent muscle size and some basic strength with this method, but by training all your lifts this way week after week, you will not develop maximum strength or maximum power.

This is the old progressive overload system and it is still useful with your assistance exercises for hypertrophy and basic strength, but it fails when used as your primary method of training. Most often the weights that you are using are too light to develop maximum strength or too heavy to develop maximum power.

The Western Periodization Model and Why It Fails

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the concept of having an off-season, pre-season, in-season, post-season, etc. You're supposed to systematically move through these seasons in order to "peak" for the most important competitions of the year.

This periodization model fails us because it concentrates on developing hypertrophy, strength and power in separate lengthy microcycles. This is ineffective and detrimental to optimum performance because you will experience detraining (a reduction in training adaptation) in those areas you are not currently working on. In fact, detraining can occur in as little as two weeks.

The Westside System

Overview

The Westside way of training is a "conjugated periodization" program relying on a combination of different methods to simultaneously develop maximum strength, power and hypertrophy in one comprehensive system. The program outlined in this article is only one variation of this method of training.

This is an extremely intense program and should not be attempted by beginners or those who lack the experience and solid understanding of weight training methods. Remember that using maximum weights increases your risk of injury and requires the use of one or more spotters to ensure your safety.

Keep in mind that Westside Barbell uses these methods to develop competitive powerlifters, focused on developing maximum performance in the bench, squat and deadlift. For them, these lifts are their events. Although this program is focused on these three lifts, it can be adapted for almost any lift and for any sport.

Many of the exercises the elite lifters at Westside perform involve the use of chains, weight releasers and bands attached to the bar for various training effects. Most of you will not have the equipment available to use these more extreme methods, so I will not be discussing their use in this article. I do however encourage you to learn about these methods, as you will eventually want to incorporate them into your training to exploit the benefits of this program.

It's important again to remember to understand *why* these methods work, not just *how* to follow the program. Understanding *why* will give you the knowledge and the freedom to adapt these methods to your own goals and abilities. Don't ever blindly follow an exercise program simply because it seems popular or because someone encourages you to do so.

Guiding Principles

- The Westside program consists of four main workouts per week with 2 days devoted to upper body and 2 days devoted to lower body. For both upper body and lower body, one day you will focus on maximum strength and on the other day you will focus on speed work. One day is your Max Effort (ME) Day and one day is your Dynamic Effort (DE) Day.
- Choose one primary upper body exercise and one primary lower body exercise that have the most carryover to your sport. These two exercises will only be performed on Dynamic Effort Day.
- You will NEVER perform your primary exercises on Max Effort day. The key to Max Effort day is to use maximum weights on exercises that are similar to and use the same muscle groups as your primary exercises. By rotating these max effort exercises at least every three weeks, but never actually using maximum weights on the primary exercises you perform on Dynamic Effort Day, your CNS (central nervous system) is never over trained. Rest periods between ME exercise sets should be kept under two minutes. Rest periods for all assistance exercises should also be kept under two minutes.
- An alternative on Max Effort Day is to occasionally perform a multi-rep max set to failure with less than 90% of 1RM to further guard against the possibility of overtraining and CNS exhaustion. These days should be used prudently and be kept to a minimum, perhaps once every 8 to 12 weeks.
- You will ALWAYS perform your primary exercises on Dynamic Effort Day. Rest periods between DE exercise sets should be kept between 45-60 seconds. Rest periods for all assistance exercises should be kept under two minutes.
- With this system, squatting is ALWAYS done with a box. It is imperative that you learn the proper way to box squat by working with a knowledgeable strength coach. Performing box squats using between 50% and 60% of your box squat 1RM on your Dynamic Effort Day is the most effective method for increasing your explosiveness in the squat.

  The eccentric phase of the box squat utilizes the property of kinetic energy contributing to the stretch-reflex. By pausing on the box, thus breaking the eccentric-concentric chain, you can momentarily relax your hip flexors while keeping the rest of your body tight. By re-engaging your hip flexors and exploding off the box with a dynamic concentric effort, you are developing a tremendous rate of force development (RFD). This is not possible by training normally with the regular squat.

  The box squat also happens to be a very safe exercise when performed properly because it allows you to sit back further than normal, ensuring that your shins are at least vertical which takes the pressure off your knees and your patellar tendons.

- Remember that all programs must battle the principle of accommodation. It is a fact that your body will eventually adapt to a particular exercise and your progress will slow down or stop in as little as two or three weeks. Therefore, max effort exercises and assistance exercises should be rotated between one to three weeks. Advanced lifters will need to rotate their exercises weekly due to higher levels of motor unit activation as a result of greater neuromuscular coordination and motor learning.
- A max total of only five exercises are recommended per workout. The idea is to work quickly and complete your workout in about 45 minutes to an hour before your energy level begins to drop off dramatically.

Prilepen's Chart

Percentage of 1RM	Reps per set	Optimal Total # of Reps	Range
55-69	3-6	24	18-30
70-79	3-6	18	12-24
80-89	2-4	15	10-20
90+	1-2	7	4-10

- Research has shown that there is an optimum amount of repetitions or volume to be performed at any given intensity range (% of 1RM) before a decrease in training effect occurs. A.S. Prilepin of the former Soviet Union developed an intensity chart based upon the performance data he collected from many Olympic weightlifters. This chart serves as a guide for the sets and reps in this program.
- Assistance exercises should be trained with a "modified repetition method" for 3 to 5 sets of 6 to 12 repetitions. Perform these exercises only until your technique breaks down, stopping one or two reps before failure. Continuously training to failure on your assistance exercises only inhibits your recovery ability, and training past the point of maintaining good form will only lead to injury. Again, Rest periods for all assistance exercises should be kept under two minutes.
- 72 hours are required in between extreme workouts for each body part. If your Max lower body day were on Monday, your Dynamic lower body day should be on Friday. Therefore, your Max upper body day could be Tuesday with Dynamic upper body day on Saturday, or Wednesday and Sunday respectively.
- Additional workouts can be done in between Max Effort and Dynamic Effort Days to facilitate recovery. Loads less than 30% of 1RM can be used for general conditioning and to help recovery. I will not be getting into these methods in this article, but I encourage you to learn more about them.
- Sled dragging is another preferred method of recovery and is often used to increase one's level of general physical preparedness (GPP), which is basically one's capacity for performing work. Therefore, I also recommend you read up on doing sled work.

Max Effort Day - Lower Body

Weights at 90% of 1RM or above are absolutely necessary on Max Effort Day to develop maximum strength and muscle recruitment. You should only train a particular exercise at 90% or above for no more than three weeks before your CNS is adversely affected. Therefore, it is possible to train with this intensity throughout the year as long as your ME exercises are rotated every one to three weeks.

Keep in mind that on a yearly basis, 60% of the lower body ME exercises used should be different types of good mornings, 25% squatting movements and only 15% dead lifting movements. Good mornings are extremely effective at developing the posterior chain muscles of the calves, hamstrings, hips, glutes, lower back and upper back, which is why this program places such an emphasis on them.

Choose one ME exercise per workout keeping in mind again that you never perform your primary exercise on Max Effort Day. Use any variation of a box squat, front squat, good morning or dead lift other than your primary exercise. You will find endless variations of these exercises by using different foot widths, different box heights, different bars (safety squat bar vs. Olympic bar), partial movements, etc. Warm yourself up and work up in sets of 3 to a max effort triple, double or single. It's not important that you actually achieve a new personal best in this lift each week, but it is important that you whole-heartedly attempt to. Again, rest periods on ME exercises should be kept under two minutes.

The remaining four assistance exercises you perform should include one exercise that focuses on your posterior chain muscles (good mornings, pull-throughs, hyper-extensions, etc.), one for developing your Vastis Lateralis or teardrop muscle of your thigh (step-ups, lunges, etc.) as this muscle contributes greatly to your jumping ability, one exercise for your calf muscles (seated or standing) and one exercise for your abdominals (leg raises, twists, side bends, etc.). You should work these four areas in this exact order, as this is the order in which they contribute greatest to your squat strength. All of these will be trained with the more traditional 3 to 5 sets of anywhere from 6 to 12 reps depending on the athlete. These assistance exercises are done for basic strength and hypertrophy. Rest periods for these assistance exercises should be kept under one minute.

Dynamic Day – Lower Body

Weights between 50% and 60% of 1RM (one rep max) are used on lower body Dynamic Effort Day for developing maximum velocity and training your CNS to maximally recruit the motor neurons involved. You must explode off the box as quickly as you can to train your CNS and increase your RFD. The eccentric phase of the box squat should be swift but controlled. Rest periods should be kept under one minute.

Your dynamic lower body exercise will always be your primary exercise, meaning it is the one lower body exercise that you have determined to have the most carryover to your sport. You can attempt a new back or front box squat record about every 9 weeks on your ME Day and adjust your Dynamic Effort Day training weights accordingly.

You will be using a cycle called the Pendulum Wave to vary the sets, reps and percentages on your Dynamic day. After week three, start right back at week one.

Week 1: 50% of 1RM for 12 sets of 2 reps (45-60 second rest between sets)
Week 2: 55% of 1RM for 12 sets of 2 reps (45-60 second rest between sets)
Week 3: 60% of 1RM for 10 sets of 2 reps (45-60 second rest between sets)

Some athletes might want to use a four, five or six week wave. The point is to remain within that 50%-60% of 1RM range for maximum velocity and find what works best for you.

As with your ME day, the remaining four assistance exercises you perform should include one exercise that focuses

on your posterior chain muscles (good mornings, pull-throughs, hyper-extensions, etc.), one for developing your Vastis Lateralis or teardrop muscle of your thigh (step-ups, lunges, etc.), one exercise for your calf muscles (seated or standing) and one exercise for your abdominals (leg raises, twists, side bends, etc.). All of these will be trained with 3 to 5 sets of 6 to 12 reps with rest periods kept under one minute.

Max Effort Day - Upper Body

As with your ME lower body day, weights at 90% of 1RM or above are necessary on ME upper body day to develop maximum strength and muscle recruitment. Remember to rotate ME exercises every one to three weeks to avoid any possible adverse affects on your CNS.

Choose one ME exercise per workout keeping in mind you never perform your primary exercise on Max Effort day. Use any variation of the flat, incline or decline bench other than your primary exercise. Shoulder presses can also be used if it applies to your sport. You will find endless benching variations by using different grip widths (narrow grips are most recommended), different incline settings, floor presses, board presses, different bars, partial movements, etc. Warm yourself up and work up in sets of 3 to a max effort triple, double or single. Again, it's not important that you actually achieve a new personal best in this lift each week, but it is important that you whole-heartedly attempt to. Rest periods should be kept under two minutes.

The remaining four assistance exercises you perform should include one type of triceps extension, one type of lat row (preferably chest supported) and one shoulder exercise (primarily various types of shoulder raises or sometimes an overhead press). You should work these three areas in this exact order, as this is the order in which they contribute greatest to your bench strength. Lastly, you can perform one biceps exercise or a variety of grip exercises. All of these will be trained with the more traditional 3 to 5 sets of anywhere from 6 to 12 reps depending on the athlete (grip training may vary). These assistance exercises are done for basic strength and hypertrophy. Rest periods should be kept under one minute.

Dynamic Day – Upper Body

Weights between 40% and 50% of 1RM (one rep max) are used on Dynamic upper body day for developing maximum velocity and training your CNS (central nervous system) to maximally recruit the motor neurons involved. Perform your presses as quickly as you can to train your CNS and increase your RFD. The eccentric phase of your presses should be swift but controlled. Rest periods should be kept under one minute.

Your dynamic upper body exercise will always be your primary exercise, meaning it is the one upper body exercise that you have determined to have the most carryover to your sport. An athlete may want to alternate between flat and incline bench, rotating them after you've established a new personal best in the lift to further prevent adaptation. You can attempt a new flat or incline bench record about every 9 weeks on your ME Day and adjust your training weights accordingly.

On your Dynamic upper body day, a flat wave of 50% of 1RM for 8 sets of 3 reps each week has proven to be most effective although athletes can use any variation within the 40%-50% range:

Week 1: 50% of 1RM for 8 sets of 3 reps (45-60 second rest between sets)
Week 2: 50% of 1RM for 8 sets of 3 reps (45-60 second rest between sets)
Week 3: 50% of 1RM for 8 sets of 3 reps (45-60 second rest between sets)

As with your ME day, the remaining four assistance exercises you perform should include one type of triceps extension, one type of lat row (preferably chest supported) and one shoulder exercise (primarily various types of shoulder raises or sometimes an overhead press). Again, you should work these three areas in this exact order, as this is the order in which they contribute greatest to your bench strength. Lastly, you can perform one biceps exercise or a variety of grip exercises. All of these will be trained with 3 to 5 sets of 6 to 12 reps (grip training may vary). These assistance exercises are done for basic strength and hypertrophy. Rest periods should be kept under one minute.

Deadlifts and Olympic Lifts

Traditionally, athletes have relied on the Olympic lifts in the weight room to build explosive power. The pulling phases of the Olympic lifts lack an eccentric movement and thus lack the essential stretch-reflex component. In this respect they are similar to deadlifts. Cleans and snatches develop power because they are performed ballistically to generate enough bar speed for the bar to travel high enough to catch at the shoulders or overhead. The deadlift is simply performed to completion with no particular bar speed needed.

Powerlifters who uses the Westside system tend to train their deadlift sparingly as all of the posterior chain work they do contribute greatly to success in the deadlift without having to actually perform the movement regularly. When they do train their deadlift however, they usually perform them immediately after the box squat on Dynamic Effort Day for 4 to 6 sets of singles with 50-60% of their 1RM with 45-60 second rest periods.

There are two choices for those who would like to incorporate the Olympic lifts into a basic Westside template program. First, you can choose one Olympic lift like the hang-clean and train it the same way a powerlifter would train their deadlift, 4 to 6 sets of singles with 50-60% of your 1RM with 45-60 second rest periods on Dynamic Effort Day after box squats utilizing a pendulum wave to vary your percentages.

Second, you can simply perform one or two Olympic lifts in place of box squats utilizing your own routine of sets, reps and percentages. Just remember that Dynamic Effort Day is all about speed and not for going heavy.

Plyometrics
The idea of plyometrics is to train your body to become more explosive by taking advantage of the stretch-reflex component of muscle contraction. The goal is to decrease the amortization phase of your muscle contraction, which is the time it takes for your body to switch gears from an eccentric movement and respond with an explosive concentric effort. A great book for learning about plyometrics is "Power Training for Sport" by Tudor O. Bompa.

Intense plyometrics are known to cause the delayed onset of muscle soreness (DOMS), which occurs approx. 48 hours after intense exercise. To take advantage of this window of opportunity, it is recommended that intense lower body plyometrics be performed the day before ME lower body day and intense upper body plyometrics be performed the day before ME upper body day.

Grip Training
Grip training is perhaps the most neglected aspect of an athlete's program, although nobody would dismiss the value of having strong hands, wrists and forearms. Training your grip will help reduce hand and wrist injuries and actually contribute to your strength in other exercises. When trained properly, your hands can become freakishly strong and a valuable asset to you in the weight room and in your sport.

There are three basic measurements of hand strength: crushing grip, pinching grip and supporting grip.

Crushing Grip: The ability to close a hand gripper, crush a soda can, etc.
- All types of hand grippers
- Plate loaded grip machines

Pinching Grip: Measures the strength of your thumb as in lifting a weight plate in the air with your thumb on one side and your four fingers on the other.
- Use various width pinch blocks to lift hanging weights for single efforts or holds
- Plate wrist curls (pinch grip a weight plate and per form a wrist curl)

Supporting Grip: This combines the strength of your crushing grip with the component of muscular endurance like carrying a heavy dumbbell for distance.
- Farmer's walk (carry heavy dumbbells/barbells for distance)
- Hold's (lift and hold heavy objects for time)

You can be strong at one of these grips but not in another, so an athlete should incorporate a variety of hand and forearm exercises into their program to develop an all-around powerful grip.

I strongly encourage you read the article by John Brookfield about hand strength available at IronMind.com.

Flexibility
Flexibility is also another often-ignored component of a strength athlete's program. Light stretching helps recovery and increases ROM (range of motion), which improves performance and helps prevent injuries.

Stretching should be done lightly and frequently. It's a good habit to stretch lightly after every workout. Keep in mind that stretching should not be painful and it should never be the cause of muscle soreness.

Diet
Proper nutrition is an absolute necessity for recovery, growth and optimum performance. Without proper diet and nutrition, an athlete can easily fall prey to over-training and injury. Learn all you can about nutrition and the metabolic demands of your sport.

Event Training
Workouts specific to your own sport must be woven into your training program along with all of the other components outlined in this article to allow for enough rest and recovery between workouts. How you choose to modify and arrange your training sessions are entirely dependant on your own goals and the demands of your specific sport.

Seeking the advice of well-respected event coaches and finding out how the most successful athletes are structuring their training programs are great sources of information. If something in particular makes sense to you, then try it, just remember not to blindly follow someone else's program just because it works for them. The goal is always about finding out what works best for you.

Summary
With so many components needing to be integrated into one comprehensive program, you need to prioritize your training. Most of us do not have the luxury of being a full-time athlete, able to perform two to three short workouts per day, so be honest with yourself and the time you are able to commit to your sport.

Remember, the key to success with any training program is finding out what works best for you! Do not blindly follow the principles and methods outlined in this article or anywhere else unless you've done your own research and fully understand the "why" behind the "how." ***L&S***

Ballistics Or Baloney?

By Barry Ross

According to Dr. Mel Siff, "Ballistic movement comprises bursts of muscular activity followed by phases of relaxation during which the motion continues as a consequence of stored limb momentum or elastic energy." Dr. Siff used this definition of ballistic movements specifically to differentiate them from co-contraction movements which have a simultaneous contraction of the "agonistic" and "antagonistic" muscles. He later describes the antagonistic portion of ballistic movement as eccentric contractions limiting the range of joint movement at the end of the activity.

Additionally Siff stated, "ballistic movements require the brain to determine every detail of the action in advance by mentally planning the exact sequence of neural activation for numerous individual muscles." The reason for this is that ballistic actions do not have any feedback mechanism to provide information to the brain, which allows for performance of the activity at much faster rates of speed. Running, throwing, and jumping are all ballistic actions used in sport. Olympic lifts are considered ballistic exercises.

Despite mixed opinions as to the safety of ballistic weight training versus training at slower speeds, ballistic (or explosive) exercises are widely recommended for sports training. I'm not going to address the issue of safety in this article because I believe there are other important issues regarding the effectiveness of ballistic strength training that should be addressed before a risk/reward ratio can be expressed.

The most common reasons for recommending ballistic/explosive training are first, a commonly-held belief that ballistic exercises have elements of movement specificity (they mirror movements required during competition). Second, the belief that speed of the lift will translate to faster limb movement, and finally, economy through efficiency.

Movement specificity relates to muscle recruitment patterns necessary during competition. The Olympic clean and jerk, the power clean, and the Olympic snatch are considered examples of explosive/ballistic exercises, yet in relation to faster running, I can neither recall any athlete carrying a loaded barbell to be thrown into the air while running nor can I recall seeing any runner grab a bar off the track surface, drop into a crouch and raise it overhead in a single motion. But, perhaps I'm getting old and the memories are fading.

The nearest event that I can recall matching muscle recruitment patterns of these exercises is...the Olympic clean and jerk and the Olympic snatch!

If Dr. Siff's statement that ballistic movements require mentally planning the exact sequence of neural activation for numerous individual muscles is correct, how beneficial is ballistic training where there is no exact match - such as faster running?

What about the speed element of performing a ballistic movement: creating faster limb movements? The speed of limb movement will never be as fast when limb muscles are loaded as when they are not loaded. If the training load is equivalent to, or less than, the load used in the performance of the sport, it would be better to practice the sport. If the load in training is greater than the load during performance of the sport, then how much greater should the load be for maximum effectiveness?

To move a weight as fast as possible means that the weight must be relatively light for the motor units and the existing density of myofibrils within the muscle fibers to move explosively. The initial propulsion of the weight must recruit motor units large enough to overcome inertia and to increase the speed of the lift.

In other words, you must be strong enough to overcome inertia. If you have previously packed muscles through myofibrillar hypertrophy, they should be ready to perform with the lighter weight. But to move increasing amounts of weight faster, you must get stronger, which doesn't come solely from moving weights faster.

Heavy weights in the 90%-100% 1RM range can only be moved slowly. However, what you see on the outside does not match what is happening on the inside. What occurs in the neuromuscular system is the equivalent of the field commander's tent during a heated battle. Calls have gone to the central command to recruit additional motor units; only the largest of which will do since it isn't clear how long or how often this heavy weight will be lifted. The myofibrils in all of the fiber types are fully involved and working, their motor units firing them at full speed to keep the heavy weight moving. The weight is moving slowly but the motor units are firing as fast as they can, the larger motor units firing faster than smaller ones, to provide the necessary strength. All the new recruits will be trained and ready to work when it's time for competition if command central believes that there will be a continuing demand for the larger motor units and more myofibrils. When the

amount of weight is reduced, there is sufficient strength to overcome inertia and to move the weight significantly faster.

What about economy through developed efficiency as a reason for ballistic training?

Dr. Siff stated that, "ballistic action relying on short-term storage and release of elastic energy (potential energy of stretched tissue) has been shown to enhance movement efficiency in locomotion and many other movements, thereby lowering the energy cost of many activities. Thus, all running, throwing, jumping, and lifting in all sports relies very heavily on ballistic action."

Most coaches would agree with that.

However, the short-term storage and release of elastic energy is also a definition of plyometrics, yet plyometrics do not fit the definition of ballistics provided by Siff since the eccentric contraction occurs prior to the concentric contraction.

In addition, plyometrics often require significantly less strength to overcome inertia.

The basis of plyometrics most likely occurred during the 1960's when a number of studies were done by Margaria of Italy, Zatsiorsky and Verkhoshanski of Russia, and others. Additional studies throughout the 1970's and 1980's showed mixed results as to the effectiveness of plyometric training.

During the 1990's, new studies by Adams (1992) and Newton and Kramer (1994) showed improved results when plyometrics were combined with resistance training. Radcliffe's 1994 study combined weight training and plyometrics in the same session. As research continues, plyometrics appear to be bridging the gap between strength and power.

Both ballistics and plyometrics are training methods that apparently help convert the effects of strength training into usable power.

So is it plyometrics, or ballistics, or both?

Each coach must decide the answer to the question and that decision should be dependent on a variety of factors, not the least of which is the specifics of the sport they coach.

In our strength training program we have eliminated ballistic exercises such as power cleans, clean and jerks, and push presses. Admittedly, that was a sad experience for me, having been raised on a steady diet of power cleans and push presses throughout my competitive years and well into my coaching experience: a total of 33 years.

The main reasons for eliminating these ballistic lifts were the lack of movement specificity, the load-time factor when performing the lifts (see the article *The Holy Grail Of Speed Training*), the increased probability of injury, and most importantly for increasing speed: The contact time differential.

For runners, contact time is critical. Increasingly greater ground force application peaks at minimum ground contact time; different for each runner but affecting all runners. Compared to the amount of ground contact time available to release elastic (or potential) energy during high speed running, Olympic lifts and their derivatives are more snail-like than ballistic. The common forms of ballistics use significantly longer contact times than sprinting allows. The positives of ballistic training are not attainable at top speeds.

Plyometrics describe the rapid change from an eccentric stretch to a fast concentric contraction. The faster the change, the greater the tension in the contracting muscle. That tension aids in creating power. Lots of explosive power!

Do plyometric exercises have movement specificity equivalent to running?

Not all of them do, but several of them are a very close match to what occurs during high speed running. Depth jumps and single leg hops are closely associated to how we run fast.

Stepping off a box then rebounding as quickly as possible upon ground contact is similar to the action that occurs as we approach top running speed. In both cases, bodyweight plus gravity stretch the muscles and tendons eccentrically (the forced dorsiflexion of the foot is a factor in stretching in both cases) followed rapidly by a concentric contraction. Raising the height of the box can increase the stretch because of gravity's effect on bodyweight, but it is not necessary to exceed 39-40 inches.

To those in the sprint coaching community who believe some proper angle of foot dorsiflexion is an element of training that must not be overlooked: What is the proper angle of dorsiflexion?

If you are not sure, here's an excellent way to find it: Lay on your back with your right leg lying on the ground and your left leg raised and perpendicular to the floor. Dorsiflex your left foot (bend your toes toward your head) as much as you can. Hold that position for 1/10 of a second, and then relax.

Repeat, but this time during the 1/10 of a second that you

hold the angle you believe to be correct, have a friend drop a 350 lb. boulder on your dorsiflexed foot.

Were you able to hold the same angle of dorsiflexion?

Assuming you weigh 150 lbs. and you are a trained sprinter, that boulder represents somewhat less than the amount of ground force applied (up to 3 times bodyweight) when you approach top speed. Any attempt to institute perfect dorsiflexion prior to landing will have minimal, if any, effect on sprint mechanics and speed compared to the effects of gravity and bodyweight.

Plyometric training, as with any other training, must be performed within the limits of safety and effectiveness since they have the potential to cause injury if performed improperly or excessively.

We believe our athletes should finish the strength training portion of their workout feeling exhilarated, not exhausted. Since dropping ballistic type exercises from our program, we have reduced the amount of time our athletes spend on strength training to approximately 75 minutes (at least half spent resting) without reduction in speed or power.

Our goal has been to increase strength and power. We continue to see the same increases in both despite removing ballistic exercises.

And that is exhilarating!

Barry Ross has been coaching for more than 25 years, initially a track and field throwing events and general strength training coach. His focus in the last 10 years is on increasing the strength and speed (power!) of athletes in a variety of sports including football, baseball, volleyball, basketball, tennis, rugby, cross country and track. Coach Ross has had a solid percentage of his athletes receive NCAA Division 1 and 2 scholarships in a variety of sports (including volleyball, football, soccer, and track) at UCLA, San Jose State, U.C. Berkley, University of Southern California, UNLV, Washington, and the Naval Academy. Among his most well known athletes are Jessica Cosby, winner of Pac 10 titles in the shot put and hammer, as well as a NCAA Division 1 title in the shot put and Allyson Felix who, as a 17-year-old high school student in 2003, broke all of Marion Jones high school records in the 200 meters and went on to run the fastest 200 meters in the world that year. Ms. Felix also became the first track and field athlete to go directly from high school into professional track. Barry's strength training methods are used by high schools and college athletes as well as professional baseball, tennis and rugby players. He has recently released the book, Underground Secrets To Faster Running, describing his training methods as well as the science behind them. He can be reached at www.bearpowered.com. ***L&S***

Breaking Down Bondarchuk

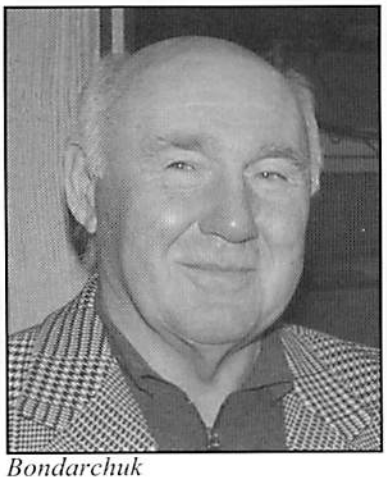
By Dane Miller, www.Garagestrength.com

Sitting in front of the computer helplessly awaiting the shot put results from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, I was ready to throw my television. NBC was showing four heats of the women's 800 meter run while some of the most explosive athletes in the world battled it out in the infield, their athleticism being neglected. I was left to rely on live updates from the Olympic website. My friend and training partner, Dylan Armstrong, was having the best throwing day of his career to date. Over the past ten months Dylan and I spent countless hours training for the shot put in the snow-filled winter of British Columbia with fellow shot putters, Jesse Roberge and Justin Rodhe.

Dylan was sitting a centimeter out of second entering the final throw. Staring at the computer, my blood pressure was through the roof while I anxiously awaited news of my training partner's Olympic success. One by one, athletes continued to fold under the Olympic pressure and Dylan came one step closer to a medal. In the final round, American Christian Cantwell stepped in and bested Dylan's mark by five centimeters, claiming the silver medal and bumping Dylan off the podium. This was one of the few times that our coach, Dr. Anatoli Bondarchuk, had an athlete barely miss a medal in the Olympics.

Arriving in British Columbia on a cold fall day, all I could imagine was a training regimen straight out of Rocky IV: pulling sleds, collapsing in the snow, the driving beat of a cheesy '80s theme song pushing me to my peak while my Russian opponents sweated into high-tech gadgets a continent away.

Childhood fantasies aside, I was about to be trained by an old Soviet master, Dr. Anatoli Bondarchuk. A 1972 Olympic champion and former world record holder, Dr. Bondarchuk coached 18 athletes over 80 meters in the hammer throw, a mark comparable to the 500 home run club in baseball. Three of his protégés are among the best hammer throwers in recent history, including world record holder Yuri Sedych. After leaving the Soviet Union, Dr. Bondarchuk went on to coach Dylan Armstrong, Canadian record holder in the shot put, and Sultana Frizell and Jennifer Joyce, current and previous Canadian hammer throw record holders, respectively. He also recently started training former Canadian hammer record holder Crystal Smith and her fiancée, Kibwe Johnson. His athletes swept four Olympic podiums in non-boycotted Olympics in the hammer throw.



Bondarchuk

I was praying for a transformation into a thrower version of Aleksander Karelin, the Soviet wrestling legend who could have intimidated Darth Vader in a dark alley. To say I was anxious to meet my new coach and begin training under his expertise is an understatement. In the words of Ivan Drago, I wanted to be made into a piece of iron. A machine.

For the past eight years I had spent countless hours in the weight room. Metal clanged four days a week as I broke down and rebuilt my body. But I always felt as though something was missing from my training. I always believed, and was taught that in training for the shot put, absolute strength was the key. The hours benching four plates and squatting five plates would eventually pay off. At some point, I would hit another big throw and everything would be worth it. All the heavy, slow movements would pay off with a great emotional high.

Dr. Bondarchuk smashed every tenet of training I had learned. Every experience and method he used was different from what I knew. He laughed at me when I wanted to skip and stretch before my first training session. A fellow trainee, Jesse Roberge, told me, "No, buddy, just get in and throw." Dr. B followed up with a smirk and told me, "Not need, waste of energy." I soon realized that training was about efficiency. I entered a semi-Soviet style system that focused on training movements with the highest correlation of transfer for competition.

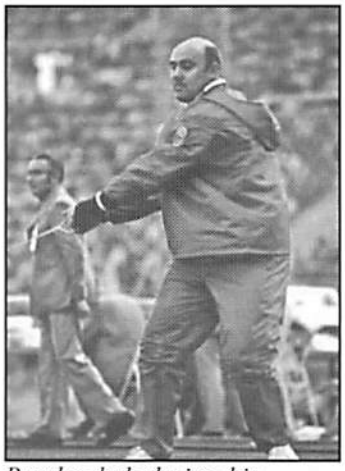
Bondarchuk Lesson #1: Transfer of Training

Focus on a high transfer of training. Use exercises that have a high correlation of transfer from training into the athlete's competitive movement. If you are a shot putter, throw the shot. If you wrestle, train by wrestling. The transfer of training comes from movements that closely mimic the competitive movement. A shot putter needs to focus on improving the rate of force production. The body needs to be dynamic, move quickly and move power into the implement as rapidly as possible.

But what about the extra strength movements? The heavy bench press and big squats? Dr. Bondarchuk prefers what he calls, "special strength." Excelling in one type of movement – like getting a personal record in shot, hammer, or discus – requires a type of "special" strength, a strength tailored to that athlete's focus. The athlete must be dynamic and explosive. Solid absolute strength in the weight room does not necessarily correlate to specific athletic movement.

A foundation of absolute strength is needed in the throws, but that may be achieved in a relatively short period of the athlete's training life. In the throwing events, teenagers can develop absolute strength while still training dynamically. Most athletes avoid dynamic training, only accomplishing dynamic movements while involved in their competitive sport or perhaps while moving weight rapidly, such as a clean, snatch, or jump squat. In the U.S., strength is taught mainly under absolute methodology. Unlike Dr. Bondarchuk, rarely, does a coach prescribe movements that require higher coordination of motor skills.

In training, shot putters may use implements ranging from a five kilo shot put all the way up to a ten kilo shot put, while the competitive weight is a seven kilo. The methodology is unique, changing implements and weight lifting programs are unique to the athlete. After my first throwing session with Dr. Bondarchuk, I headed to the weight room thinking I may start throwing around some heavy weights. After my first lift I told one of my training partners that the weights were unbelievably light. He kept telling me not to worry, that I needed to simplify my expectations for training. I pretended to listen, but in reality I thought maybe the 68-year-old Soviet was nuts and forgot about heavy strength movements. After the rest of the unconventional lifting session, we headed into a throwing room and rapidly threw two-kilo discs against a wall.



Bondarchuk during his competitive career.

What I didn't realize at the time was these types of movements have a high transfer of training to the competitive form. The same lift is accomplished every day at a low intensity, which enables the body to recover fairly well. This also keeps a continuous base of strength levels and bridges together the two dynamic training sessions. The first dynamic session trains the competitive movement, while the second session trains the special strength movements.

A special strength movement is anything that has some sort of simulation to competition. Dr. B's initial explanation was that, "a 20-21 meter shot put throw is done around 13-14 meters per second. A heavy bench press with absolute strength levels is done at less than one meter per second. Instead of training a heavy bench press, throw a dumbbell, perhaps around 16 kilograms. At this training rate, the dumbbell throw may be done within eight or more meters per second." Clearly, this would emulate competition more than a heavy bench press. Other dynamic movements for the shot put are throwing shots for height, standing bench presses emphasizing speed, or clean and throw a bar for height. Most of these movements are dynamic in the sense that the athlete must address a rapid reflex or accomplish complete acceleration through the final movement.

Lesson Number 2: Do Not Waste Energy

This may be a no-brainer to many but it is definitely worthwhile to reiterate this concept. During my collegiate years of training, practices lasted long hours and began with an extended warm up. My first session with Dr. B really threw my body into a new mode of training. Prior to throwing, I was accustomed to an extended warm up that also included numerous standing throws, half turn throws and finally the competitive full throw. As I said, Dr. B. laughed at the inefficiency of skipping around and stretching. His system is about emphasis on the competitive movement, and he views a proper warm up as lower intensity moves of the competitive form.

For example, a proper warm up for a shot putter would involve two to three standing throws at a medium intensity, followed by two to three full throws at a medium intensity. By this time, the body is warmed up to the specific task at hand and the athlete is then able to amp up intensity as needed. This is a crucial part to Dr. B's training. No energy is wasted in a long extended warm up. Instead, the athlete is able to focus on the competitive movement with much more energy throughout the training session.

Energy efficiency is also crucial to other points in the training plan. Normally lifts are done at a low intensity to enable proper recovery. The specific lift is done every day, but rarely does the body tire from the lifts because it has adapted to the training which then allows more energy for training specific movements. Even while training special strength, it is important not to go 100%. The all out effort is saved for the competitive movement and if everything else is trained at lower to medium intensity, the competitive movement can then be trained on a much more frequent basis.

Jesse Roberge and I were having daily competitions while throwing a four kilogram shot put for height. We were using a tall cement wall as our gauge and decided to compete on nearly every throw of each session. After days of yelling and screaming to throw the shot higher, Dr. B came out to Jesse and me and yelled at us. He reminded us that we were throwing terribly everyday and were wondering why. We were putting in a greater effort to our special strength movements and our bodies could not recover in time for a solid throwing session.

It seems in his training system, less is actually more. Each training session will only last about an hour and a half

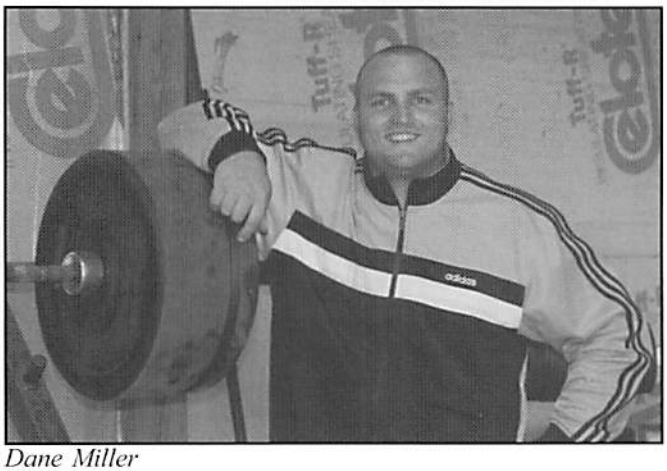
which allows for proper recovery and multiple sessions a day. The competitive movement is then trained at a greater frequency and injuries are much less common than in a system of high intensity weightlifting.

Lesson 3: Understand Your Body

While training under Dr. B, I became much more aware of my body and when it needed a break from training. I learned when my body was feeling tremendous and when it needed more time to adapt. Dr. B aided me in this endeavor. Throughout the training, I would get increasingly frustrated if I was not throwing as far as I could in each session. I finally realized the simple fact that, the body's ability to recover varies significantly with stress levels. As an athlete or coach, this is crucial to setting up a peaking program. Charting out progression of the highs and lows in training will allow the athlete to have a much more reliable peak.

Progress is easily charted with the throwing events. By measuring throws on a daily basis, an athlete and coach can see how many days it takes for the athlete's body to adapt to a program and in turn, set up a program for a major peak later in the year. In other sports, it may seem difficult, but listening to the body enables the process. Chart objective results as well, but notice when your body wants more sleep. Fatigue is a telltale sign that your body is still attempting to adapt to a change in training.

These are all simple methods that can be instituted into any athlete's training program. A bit of creativity and ingenuity from both the athlete and the coach will spark a program that will foster proper progression. Once these foundations for training are understood, additional methods for honing sport-specific skills can be implemented. The program has been mapped out, now it is up to coaches to create their own systems of training while keeping the Soviet master, Dr. Anatoli Bondarchuk, in the back of their mind.


Dane Miller

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L&S

Anatoly Bondarchuk

Reflections Of A Master

By Dane Miller, www.garagestrength.com

FOREWARD

I suspect that this interview is going to stir up a few opinions regarding throwing training in North America. Great, we need the discussion. That being said, Dane Miller – an American - has done what I believe to be the best job I have seen at getting to the core of Dr. Bondarchuk's beliefs and opinions surrounding throwing training... hands down. This, in combination with the videos that will be appearing on our site in April of 2008 and Dr. Bondarchuk's books on training transfer, provide the best information ever available in the west on Dr. Bondarchuk's theory and methodology of training. Enjoy.

--Derek Evely, Canadian Athletics Coaching Centre--

Long & Strong: *What was a crucial aspect of training as an athlete that you were able to implement into your system of training?*

Anatoly Bondarchuk: As an athlete I knew everything could change and for proper progression, things needed to change. I knew the system of training had to change and the technique itself had to change. As an athlete I realized over time, the technique and system needed progression. Average athletes in 1972 had no acceleration with the hammer. Maybe this was because they had no special strength for the hammer. From 1970-1976, I believed the athlete (me specifically) needed to train maximal strength. After this, I recognized the athlete only needed a base foundation of strength. Before I thought athletes would need a 300k full squat for 80-84 meters, now I know that they only need 200-250k quarter squat. Before, I thought athletes needed a 150k+ snatch for 80-84 meters, now I know they only need to snatch their bodyweight for this throw. Before I thought the athlete needed a 3.50m standing long, now they only need a 3.00 -3.15 meter long. This is because the specific throwing training has progressed over 30 years. Now, I realize that the athlete does not need maximal strength but special dynamic strength. Special strength is much more important and has a much higher rate of transfer into the specific throw. In the 1960's, I had a friend that squatted 320k, cleaned 200k, had a fast 100m but only threw 17.20 in the shot put. Later I realized that the maximal strength training does not have a high rate of transfer and my friend was one of many examples for this.

L&S: What do you find is the most important aspect of throwing?

Bondarchuk is always in demand as a lecturer.

AB: The thrower must use and have explosive muscle, not maximum strength. Nelson has amazing explosive muscle, then Hoffa, they both need this muscle because they are smaller and usually smaller athletes have more explosive muscle when compared with taller athletes. Hoffa and Nelson have better muscle than Cantwell but Cantwell also has good muscle for how tall he is. It is very rare to find a taller athlete with very explosive muscle. There are many, many programs of training. Some coaches have athletes throw heavy, some throw light and some just competition weights and some throw all weights. If the athlete needs strength, they may throw heavy and give more volume. If the athlete needs explosive muscle, give them light weights. There are many exercises and programs to help with these problems.

L&S: *How much time should an athlete spend throwing/lifting/special strength?*

AB: Percentages change with each thrower. Some athletes need technique, some speed, some strength. It all depends on the athlete. Strength does not help develop speed and speed does not help develop strength. I have been coaching Dylan (Armstrong) for two and a half years and he needs 70% technique and 30% special strength. He has plenty of natural strength but some throwers may not have this strength. It also goes back to special strength and speed. A 21 meter throw is achieved at about 14 meters/second and a 22 meter throw is achieved at 14-15 meter/second (rough estimates). The closer you train to this, the better. Benching 150k at 8-10meter/second is much better than benching 250k at 1-2 meter/second. Slow, maximal training has virtually no transfer to the throw.

L&S: *At what point should a shot/disc/hammer athlete stop training maximum strength?*

AB: A good measure for shot and discus is around a 160k bench, 200k squat, and 150k clean. The discus throwers could incline a bit more for development of the shoulders. At the average level, every exercise is good. Once the shot putter hits 19, 20 –22, the exercises and transfer need to have a much higher correlation.

L&S: *What is the major problem with U.S. hammer throwing, or U.S. throwing in general?*

AB: The system of technique and strength has not changed in hammer, discus or shot for 20-30 years. In 1972 my

technique was as good or better than some top U.S. hammer throwers today. That was 36 years ago; this should not be the case. The U.S. is always thinking about maximum strength. Until the U.S. realizes the research of special and dynamic strength, there will be minimal hammer throwers over 80 meters. After 1975 in Europe the average athlete no longer used a full squat, only quarter squats, step ups and jump squats. Maybe the U.S. is too influenced by bodybuilding and power lifting which takes their focus away from special strength. The U.S. has not progressed technically in 40-50 years with the hammer. There has been very little progress since Hal Connolly, outside of maybe Deal but even Deal did not have near the technique he could have achieved. Deal's technique was 50/50; he did not push the ball but he also did not pull the ball.

L&S: *Do you feel 80 meters is attainable for a female hammer thrower?*

AB: Sure, no problem with a good system of training. Females may throw as far as males. Why not? The weight is only 4 kilos; this is nothing for a female.

L&S: *Who do you feel has had a good understanding of the hammer system since Sedych and Litvinov?*

AB: All of the Soviet countries have a decent understanding of the hammer system. Yes, they can fix technical aspects but they understand the importance of special strength. Gescek had very good technique. If the U.S. does not change their mind in regards to training, they will never beat Belarus, Ukraine, Russia and most of Europe in the hammer.

L&S: *In the United States most hammer coaches teach the technique by pushing with their entire body. Meanwhile, you train the hammer thrower to push the ball well past the left leg and never really thinking about the feet. What is the advantage of this technical training?*

AB: It is more important to push the ball and the push comes from the upper body. If the athlete thinks about their feet first, they will lose connection with the push and may start to pull on the ball. The athlete needs to be patient in double support, the longer the support, the better. The thrower needs to work the push and then the feet will follow. The push comes from the hands, not from the legs, feet or hips. (Dr. B compares pushing the hammer with doing a plate twist with stationary feet.)

L&S: *Why is the US discus not as strong as the US shot putters?*

AB: The U.S. has been weak in the discus for the past 20-30 years. The U.S. discus technique has not changed and the system of training has not changed. Since Al Oerter, no one has had a good final position. Al Oerter had one of the best final positions into a transfer of all time, since Oerter virtually no one has a good final position. Wilkins has a good final position; that is it. Now discus throwers from the US jump in their final position as soon as the front leg touches. This final position is geared more for high jump than it is for discus.

L&S: *Why has the U.S. had such success with the shot and not the hammer?*

AB: The U.S. shot putters all have excellent transfers with their technique. Nelson, Hoffa and Cantwell all have excellent transfers at the front of the circle. They all have great explosive muscle. Plus the U.S. has countless talented athletes to train for the shot put. Everyone talks about maximum strength but no one keeps their eyes open to these athletes and their explosive muscle. Special strength will tremendously improve the average US shot putter.

L&S: *So you are saying that if the average U.S. shot putter trained special strength, the average distance would indeed go up?*

AB: Yes, yes. Take a tractor engine vs. a Ferrari. Some athletes have the motor of a Ferrari; others have the motor of a tractor. The athlete must train special strength like a Ferrari. The athlete cannot focus on having good special and good max strength. The athlete must train like a Ferrari and for the shot; it is better to throw like a Ferrari than a tractor.

L&S: *In the United States, most coaches focus on turning the right leg and jumping up off the right when teaching the rotational shot and discus technique. You teach a bit differently where inertia keeps the right foot moving, the weight is transferred from a bent right onto a bent left at the front of the circle. Can you explain the difference in this technique?*

AB: It is impossible to stay on the right leg and turn. Biomechanics will let the right foot turn from inertia out of the back. There is no need to think about turning that foot. Look at sequences of Baryshnikov, Schmidt, Wilkins (1976 Olympics), and even some top throwers today. Their middle foot pauses for a brief second because they are not thinking about constantly turning the foot. The athlete needs to think about the legs as one system. There is no need to think of the foot or the knee or the hips, the leg works as an entire system together. Think about the transfer on a bent left leg at the front (right handed throwers). Look at Gunthor, Timmerman, Baryshnikov, Nelson, these throwers all have excellent systems of transfer at the front of the circle.

L&S: *What weights do you recommend using in an entire training system for men's shot/discus/hammer?*

AB: Shot and Hammer: 5k all the way to 10k, sometimes you may use a 12k from standing depending on the

strength of the athlete. [**Interviewers note**: Anytime shot putters throw over the 8k, Dr. B has his athletes throw with a special made glove for protection.] Discus: 1.5k-3k, sometimes even up to 6k shots for stands

L&S: *How about women's weights for shot/disc/hammer?*

AB:
- Shot: 3k - 6k and sometimes 7k for stands
- Hammer: 3k - 7k
- Discus: 700 gram - 2k

L&S: *A lot of coaches discuss the types of athletes that they train. You have concluded that there are 3 types of athletes with a possible fourth. Can you explain?*

AB: Yes, there are three athletes and an occasional fourth. This is not the key however. The key to coaching is finding a type of system that best fits each individual athlete. Each athlete is different with how their body reacts, just like each athlete looks different, walks different and has different personalities.

L&S: *How many times a year can a good coach peak their athletes?*

AB: Some athletes have a short peak condition, some have long peak conditions. Some athletes may achieve 3 in a good system and some may achieve 4 in a good system. It all depends on the individual.

L&S: *What do you do as a coach when you encounter an athlete that is no longer progressing in your system?*

AB: Some athletes have incredible talent in the beginning, and some have a very good ability to develop strength and speed. Some athletes might not have the same ability to continue to grow because of genetics, they might put in a lot of energy but their result may still not grow. Some athletes might grow a lot in another system. Tamm and Sedych always grew. They were the special athletes that continued to progress over time, some others grow and grow and grow but then their body makes a defense and they can no longer grow.

L&S: *How can the U.S. university system fix the underdeveloped high school athletes in regards to hammer and even shot put and discus?*

AB: The Soviets started throwing around 13-14 years of age. They did not throw three implements. If you threw discus, you only threw discus and this was the same with every implement. Sometimes the athletes would throw shot and discus if they were rotational. In the U.S. athletes throw shot, disc and hammer and they are also students. This is difficult. It is ok to throw disc and shot if you are a rotational shot putter, otherwise the athletes should attempt to focus on one event. The other problem with the U.S. university system is the weight throw. The best way to throw the weight is by pulling the weight. It is impossible to push the weight because it is too short. The idea behind the weight is different when compared with the technical idea behind the hammer and this creates more technical difficulties with the athlete.

L&S: *What is the probability of the world's top throwers taking steroids today?*

AB: Steroids first came to the U.S. and reached Europe about 10-20 years later. In Europe, most athletes did not start taking steroids until 1970; in the U.S. it was maybe 1950-1955. I think a lot of supplements as well as steroids can have anabolic effects. During my many years of scientific research and coaching, I have concluded that throwing 22m is impossible without an anabolic effect; however, this anabolic effect may come from steroids or from legal supplementation. Look at the list of 22-meter throwers, nearly 80% of these throwers are linked to steroid usage.

L&S: *What is the problem with the U.S. javelin? Why have there not been as many top notch javelin throwers, outside of Greer?*

AB: The problem is similar to the hammer. There is no good technique and this is the same with discus. Max strength, max strength is what the US always thinks of. A good lifting system is completely different from a good throwing program.

L&S: *What will it take for North America to catch and compete with the top athletes in disc, hammer and javelin?*

AB: The U.S. needs to change their mind and listen. It is about special strength and technique, they should think less about maximum strength and more about explosive strength and technique. Strength is a simple idea but in practice with throwing, it creates a bigger problem. Take my friend Alexeyev for example. He had a 240k press and a massive clean and snatch and a huge full squat but he only had a 16.50m shot put; other top superheavyweights like Taranenko only threw 14 meters in the shot. In the U.S. hammer technique is also terrible with about 80-90% of the throwers in the U.S. having bad technique. The shot may be about 50% good technique; discus is nearly 70% bad and this is the same with javelin. Athletes need more full throws and special strength. Some of the athletes are ok with special strength and their technique. Improve these things and the average level of throws will improve. Another problem is that university kids watch the top U.S. hammer throwers and then they continue to throw like them. I just watched the 1988 Olympics and other videos from the late '80's on my computer and 20 years ago, the hammer throwers had better technique than they did this past year in Osaka. This is a problem. ***L&S***

Announcing The Ultimate Key To Huge Javelin Throws

Body Angles

By Byron Collier, www.throwjavelin.com

Body angle can be thought of as the angle of the javelin thrower's body relative to being vertical. Having a good awareness of body angle and learning how to perfect it can significantly improve the technique and distances thrown of all levels of javelin throwers.

In this article, we'll discuss how our brains perceive body angle, give examples of good and bad body angle and finish by outlining various tips and drills that can be used to improve a javelin thrower's body angle. Let's see what our mind's up to when it comes to body angle.

Because our brains tend to perceive the javelin as being a large object and thus, a heavier object, we often change our position during a javelin throw to accommodate this larger object. Our brains assume that a slight "leaning back" position will help us launch this large object into the air more effectively. This results in a 'slightly tipped back' body angle. Unfortunately, tipping back creates a weaker throwing position; causes breaking of momentum built up throughout the run-up, and puts the athlete at more risk for injury. On the other hand, good body angle will promote longer javelin throws and decrease the risk of injury to the thrower. That being said, the first thing we need to do is uncover whether or not the javelin thrower has poor body angle in the first place.

Here's how to check your body angle. If you watch videotape of more advanced throwers from the side, you'll note that their body angle is almost completely vertical and that they never tilt back in an attempt to launch the javelin higher or further. They may throw it upwards, but they **never** tilt back to do so.

To make sure that you're not tilting back too much, videotape yourself throwing a ball as if it were a javelin with a full run-up five times then, videotape your regular full javelin throw five times. Compare your two body angles (odds are the body angle during the ball throw will be better) during each of the sets of throws and use the pictures below as references to assess your body angle.

Here are some pictures of good and bad body angles:

Bad Body Angle:
Dotted Line - Depicts vertical.
Solid Line - Depicts actual body angle.

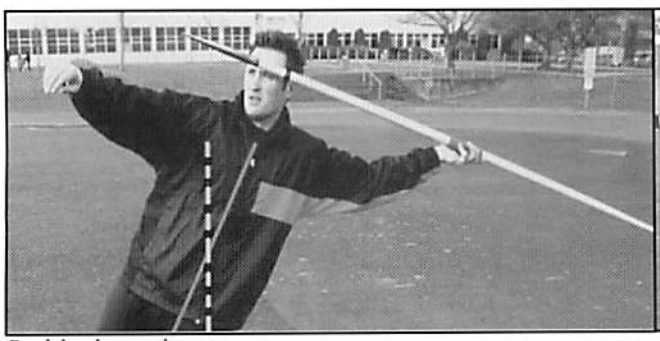
If someone were to grab the tail of the javelin in this picture, they'd probably be able to stop the throw because of the weak throwing position a.k.a. poor body angle being used.

Good Body Angle:
Dotted Line - Depicts vertical.
Solid Line - Depicts actual body angle.

If someone were to grab the tail of the javelin in this picture, they'd have a much tougher time trying to stop the throw because of the extra power good body angle creates.

If there's a discrepancy between your body angle while throwing a ball and a javelin, try some of the tips and exercises below to help improve your body angle. If there's no discrepancy, confirm that your body angle is appropriate by comparing it to that of a top javelin thrower. If all looks well after this comparison, feel free to continue your training as per usual but be sure to check your body angle from time to time just to be on the safe side. Here's what to do when your body angle needs some work.

Before we get into the drills, here's the best tip there is for improving body angle: Ensure that you force forward and along the ground, not up, with the leg that you perform your penultimate stride with. Practising powering forward, not up with your penultimate stride will help you land in a more powerful throwing position with better body angle. Practice this technique with the additional body angle drills below.



Bad body angle

Good body angle

Basic Body Angle Drills

Drill #1: Try to land the javelin flat. It's that simple. Try to make the javelin land perfectly flat at the end of every javelin throw. Doing so will force a slightly lower and more powerful trajectory which will result in better body angle and a further throw.

Drill #2: Do more ball throwing. When most throwers throw a ball, they maintain very good body angle. Try a 3-1 ratio of ball throws to javelin throws and build your awareness of your body angle and position during the ball throw then, focus on transferring those sensations to your javelin throwing.

Drill #3: Check the height of your front arm. If the front arm gets too high, it tends to drop the throwing arm. Try having your front arm parallel to the ground or slightly below parallel to the ground to help keep your body angle in check.

These tips should help correct your body angle if you use them consistently in practice. Keep in mind that body angle isn't something that's going to change overnight. Use these tips during practice for at least a month, and then reassess your body angle with the aid of your coach and some new video footage of yourself throwing.

Now that you've got some good basic body angle throwing drills, let's take a look at some more advanced body angle drills.

The following body angle drills are slightly more advanced and focus on improving the athlete's kinaesthetic awareness (awareness of their limbs and body in space). Keep in mind that you should perfect the basic body angle drills above before moving on to the more advanced ones below.

Advanced Body Angle Drills

Drill #1: (Note: As always, remember you're trying to land the javelin flat during these exercises). Take 5-10 standing javelin throws. Perform each throw beginning with your block leg slightly off the ground, then plant and deliver the throw. While you're doing this, note your body position. You'll quickly become aware that you're not leaning back to deliver the javelin at all. This should make it clear that you don't need to lean back as you deliver a full javelin throw.

Part two of this exercise is to practice 5-10 3-step throws and try to land in the same throwing stance that you've just practiced to gain a better awareness of your body angle as you deliver the javelin.

Though this first exercise may not seem more advanced than the drills above at first glance, it's actually more advanced because there's no use of the ball throws. The challenge during this exercise is to maintain good body angle during all of the javelin throws without the aid of the ball throws.

Drill #2: Find an old javelin and add weight to the center mid-front of it. Make sure the javelin's a 'Junker' because the extra weight could cause it to break over time. You should only add about 40-60 grams maximum of weight for males and 20-40g of weight maximum for females, (these are general weight guidelines; you may prefer less weight). Remember, we're just trying to create a sensation; we're not trying to cause dramatic changes in your throwing style. The weight will also change the flight of the javelin slightly. Don't worry too much about what happens after you throw the weighted javelin. Just focus on delivering it as you normally would and the weight should cause your body to re-position slightly.

Weighting the javelin can be done using lead tape which can be purchased at most sporting goods stores, especially racket stores because most tennis and squash players tend to add lead tape to their rackets.

Begin with very small standing throws (50% maximal effort) with the weighted javelin so you get comfortable with this new sensation. Once you're comfortable with the standstill throws, proceed to 5-10 reps of 3-step and 5-step throws.

You can use this type of weighted javelin for full run-ups; however, it's best not to throw the javelin at full intensity. Complete your full run-up and float the javelin out into the sector at about 60-80% maximal effort.

In closing, if body angle is a serious issue for you, try to integrate as many of the drills and concepts in this article into your javelin throwing practices and competitions. Employ them consistently and you'll reap the rewards of improving your body angle and enjoy longer, stronger and deeper javelin throws for the rest of your javelin throwing days.

Byron Collyer, a.k.a. "Chucker," is the Founder of ***www.throwjavelin.com****. Byron was regarded as one of the best athletes in his province and claimed big titles early on in his throwing career such as the Canadian Juvenile Championships at the age of 17. Byron is a published authority on training for javelin. His intense interest in training techniques such as advanced biomechanics, core training, high-performance conditioning and more have helped him develop the ability to bring about rapid improvements among the throwers he works with.* ****L&S****

Sir Lancelot: The Shining Knight of Grass Roots Javelin Coaches

Is This Guy For Real?

By Lane C. Dowell

When one first encounters the affable, low-key, passionate Lancelot "Lance""or "Lanni" Wright, they might be heard to utter, "Unbelievable...extremely dedicated."

"We need more like Coach Wright who go way beyond the call of duty to give-back to our youth."

"You've got to be kidding me. Guys like this just do not exist."

With a zeal for cause felt by few, this highly-committed champion travels the kingdom of our Pacific Northwest spreading the word from his book on chucking the spear.

At any level of FIELD and track competition, one may see Coach Wright at the javelin doing something to enhance the quality of the competition. However, unless he is attempting to lighten the mood, he may not be easy to spot, for he will make every attempt to blend in and draw no attention to himself. Ego is not a word in the lexicon of Lanni Wright. He possesses zero desire for self-aggrandizement. He sees himself as just a regular guy who really likes to give back to kids via his expertise and love for the javelin.

Allowing me to pen this piece is a rarity. Many who have worked with Lanni over the last few years tell me this is a first-time thing. Yikes, no pressure on this author. (Author's note: Thanks, Lanni, for opening up and trusting me).

A great measure of his desire for the spear is in the lengths he goes to mentor any who listen. He seeks no payback from those he instructs other than dedication.

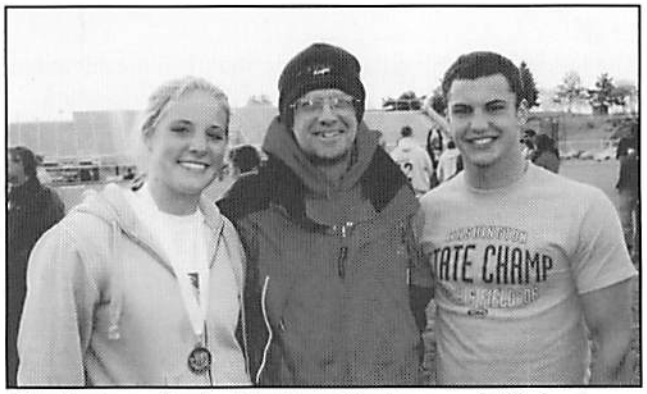
Perhaps the words of one of Washington's best prep track and field coaches, Dante Gouge of King's High School (North Seattle area), who administers a perennial state championship program and is soon to be president of the Washington State Track and Field Coaches Association, best describe Lanni:

"Wright came to the King's campus in the mid 90's because he heard we had a talented javelin thrower. He showed up and introduced himself and a few days later showed up with a brand new javelin for future school record holder, Heather Reichmann. He has been a fixture on the King's coaching roster ever since. He has brought several state javelin titles to the school and has coached both the boys and girls school-record holders (Reichmann 150' 10" and Michael Davis 212' 5")."

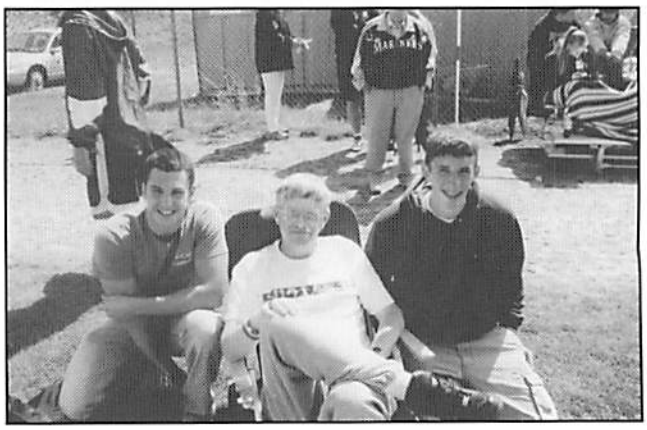
"Of the top ten in King's school history, 7 of the 10 athletes (boys and girls) were coached by Lanni. His technical expertise has allowed King's throwers to excel at top level meets and his love for the sport is passed on to each athlete he works with. When Lanni gives of himself, it is 110%. He will stay and work with an athlete until everyone else on the team has gone home. Even when Lanni is sick, or even in pain, he will coach until the last thrower has gone home."

"Lanni so loves the sport he gives all of what he has to help his athletes. He volunteers his time and will travel across the state to be with his athletes. Lanni lives in Spokane and commutes (5 hours one-way) each season to be with the King's javelin crew. Lanni has such an amazing attitude, dealing with health challenges over the last few years. Lanni has commented several times that it might be his last year coaching, but with one phone call of, "Lanni you need to see this kid throw," he is right back on the track for the first week of practice. I believe he thinks I just keep saying that so he will come back, and that might be true, but I know he can't stay away."

"As a part of the King's coaching staff Lanni, is known for showing up at meets and practices in his crazy hats and



Wright above flanked by Sara Mosiman and Michael Davis (l-r), and below by Davis and David Musson.



outfits. He showed up at the state meet in Cheney one year in all yellow (coat, hat, glasses); you could see him from the other side of the stadium, he keeps me on my toes that's for sure. With his dry, off-beat sense of humor, his unmistakable laugh, his howdy-do way of saying, "Hi" and his love for the sport of javelin, Lancelot Wright has been a God-send to King's track and field, and not just the athletes, but also the coaches."

We saw Coach Wright, who was true to character, inconspicuously serving as a javelin retriever at this past August's National Masters Track & Field Championships in Spokane. He agreed to spend some time talking about his affection for the javelin with Long & Strong.

Long & Strong: *Where did you get your passion for the javelin?*

Lance Wright: My older brother Paul. Paul is three years my elder. As a 9th-grader I was in Paul's shadow in terms of size, weight, strength and speed. Although I looked up to big brother. I could have welcomed the absence in comparison. In football, I was smashed into insignificance.

I played basketball. My first girlfriend was a cheerleader. She...umm...distracted me in my first game. I scored for the other team. I was benched forever.

Track? Slugs would leave me to fade into oblivion. Field? I could high jump my height, 5' 10" as a frosh, but when I came across a javelin that Paul had stuck in the turf, I picked it out and, "Ooooh, I like the feel." Very butch, manly.

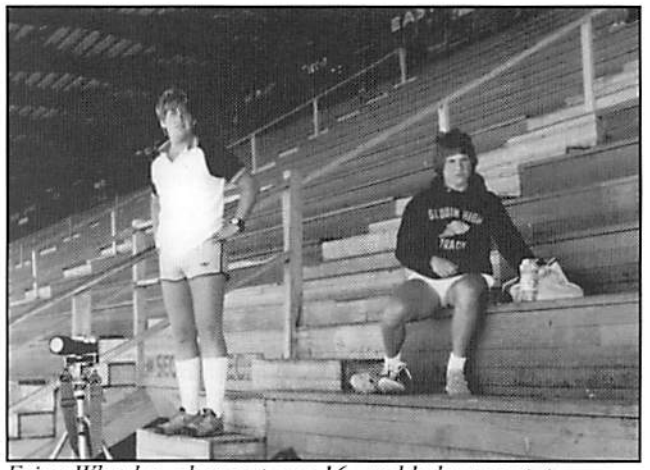
L&S: *What is the body type of the ideal javelin thrower?*

LW: I favor balance, height, weight, strength, speed, power, and especially, flexibility. Are there any standards for the ideal?

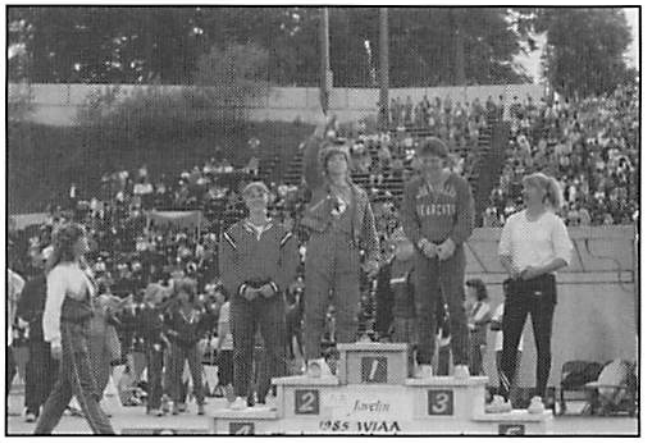
The best are flexible first! Last year, at King's High, I started the season with 27 javelinists. The first thing I did was check the range-of-motion of the shoulder and arm. Next, the central spine, focusing on the curve or "bowing". This is followed by foot-speed, leg-speed, low-energy throwing, and throwing mechanics.

Any individual, no matter weight and height, who showed balanced affect/effect was ideal to me. Being shorter did impair outcome. Increased foot-speed compensated, up to a lesser point. Being overweight? Outside of medical or family conditions, poses a problem for some to produce desirable averages.

In Scandinavia, ideal can be short, strong, and fast or tall, flexible, and slow. It depends on the individual.



Erica Wheeler, above at age 16, and below as state champion in 1985, flanked by Jill Smith (2nd) and Sabrina Earles (3rd)



L&S: *Coach, you travel all over Washington to coach the javelin. Why?*

LW: To keep throwers safe from injury! Too many injuries are due to unaware coaching and instruction. Current case in point: the Washington state record holder in the javelin is David Musson of Colville. When David was a 9th grader, he broke my thrower at King's High, Michael Davis' frosh state record.

A check of David's meet marks and averages showed David "jumped" almost 20 feet from his previous best. David's meet average was about 160'. I kept monitoring David's meet average until the State 2A Championships. There David was up against Davis. Davis placed first and David almost placed second. In study and observation, David's form/technique needed improvement. His injury risk without correction and reorientation was clearly forecasted.

Then and now, I compare everyone I look at to Michael Davis. Michael is the standard of throwing efficiency (the density of throws within a series and season average in the state of Washington). Tom Petranoff, after seeing Michael

throw at the USATF Junior Olympic National Championships in Eugene (OR) exclaimed, "PERFECT!" regarding Michael's form/technique.

Why? Michael's form/technique was based specifically on Tom's primary competitors, then-East Germany's **Detlef Michel** (the "King of Long-Range Consistency") and **Uwe Hohn,** world record-holder. The East Germans' form/technique was based on the Finland five-step transition.

Back to David. I called Colville High head coach Bill Carpenter, and was directed to David's throwing coach Bob Gumm. After discussing the situation of my study and observation of David, Coach Gumm and David came down to Spokane where I put David through simple movements, based on the Finland five-step. As Coach Gumm observed, "I was all wrong with what I had been coached."

David was approved by his coaches and parents for correction and reorientation. David would set a new standard for long-range meet-average consistency and broke Michael's state record of 211' 3" with a mark of 211' 10" (include other meet marks of 210' 9", 211' 2", 211' 9", and the current Washington State Record, 212' 7").

David later injured himself throwing a carbon-based javelin he was not ready for and ill-advisedly threw on the encouragement of a family member at the Nike High School Championships. David was brought back from injury, and was able to successfully defend his 2A State championship the following year as a senior.

It is a safety issue with the event, and direly-needed infusion of good coaching at the high school, collegiate, and open levels.

L&S: *Should a good javelin coach focus on technique and adjust strength training and conditioning to the individual?*

LW: Absolutely! Form/technique needs to be tested and selected by agreement of the thrower and coaches. Strength, power-training, and conditioning revolves, and evolves, around what the form/technique will require to be highly-efficient. The best movements in transition (the point beginning at draw-back to release) are five and seven-step (Jan Zelezny selected a 6-step).

The javelin throw demands tremendous amounts of energy generated in a very short-span of movements. Conserving energy is a PRIORITY, a MUST, in the javelin throw. Primary high-energy is available for the first three throws in competition (four throws, if, there are only four total for competition).

L&S: *What do you feel are the main form faults that may lead to serious injuries in young javelin throwers?*

LW: There are five specific injuries in the javelin throw. The elbow, shoulder, groin, knee, and ribs.

Readily, the **elbow is the most common injury.** The active use of the elbow **can be avoided** in the pulling acceleration movement. Do <u>not push the elbow forward, underneath, or outside</u> the line of movement! <u>Pull first, over, the line of movement</u>, and at the arm-strike <u>do not pitch-in</u> (like baseball) the wrist! Do this and one risks <u>jamming</u> or <u>slamming</u> the elbow joint. Think hyper-extension of the joint.

Bypassing the elbow or the "slinging" effect. I instruct my pupils to bypass their elbow at the arm strike. This creates the **"sling" effect** that generates tremendous safe velocity. By bypassing and rotating the arm/wrist palm-out, the elbow is "saved." There is no hyper-slamming of the joint, which degrades and destroys the ligaments and nerves of the throwing arm. One does not pitch the arm "inside" and "lock-into" the elbow joint. One bypasses the joint.

Dependence or fall-back to using the forearm and/or arm. This is compounded by balking and decreasing foot-speed/leg-speed during transition, especially, in the throwing stride, and follow-through (post-throw recovery).

Do not allow anything to impede momentum into the throw stride. Do not wait for the post foot/leg to begin the throw! If you wait, the throw is wasted; it is too late. **Pull <u>over</u>,** not under, the head (outside the head, side-arming) in the throwing stride. The errors are simple, yet catastrophic to flight aspect and efficiency. If everything is in-sequence and on-time, the throwing stride and follow through will be as one, all-together. One movement.

One should focus on using the posting leg for forward/vertical/forward transmission of momentum, correct angle-of-attack, orientation-alignment and velocity-expansion. The leg that posts (fulcrums) energy from behind into, over, and accelerates "transmits" power forward, must be used. Too many instructors and pupils do not use the <u>posting leg correctly</u>!

The effect of error is that energy from behind gets drilled into the feet. <u>This is catastrophic to the posting knee</u>. Study Finland's Seppo Raty's <u>use of the posting leg at the arm strike and follow-through.</u> Hungary's Ferenc Paragi used this posting movement extremely well for towering throws with correct flight orientation effect.

Also, forget about the foul line. If your rhythm and checkmarks are down, you should never consider the notion that you will ever foul. **Completely, trust yourself.**

L&S: *What tips would you pass on to novice javelin coaches?*

LW: Be patient. Listen very well.

If your athletes are youth, you must be very patient with body-development. Movements will be rushed and/or delayed, due to body-timing difficulties. As the male and female develop and age, they will balance-out to disciplined self-control. They need to be confident with what is going on inside and outside of their developing frames. They need to understand it is okay, even if something does not seem to be working according to plan or self-will.

Listen to what they are, or are trying, to say. It should be received as important, to them, for you to hear. It may not sound like sense to a coach, but it does to the youth.

Do your utmost to not yell in anger at the youth.

L&S: *What type of program do you recommend for your athletes in the off-season?*

LW: At the conclusion of the competitive season, the thrower needs to rest for a week, two or three, but no more than four weeks. They need to be themselves.

Then, they need to get on a strength-training system for three months, followed by three months of power-training. The system should be alternating days of waist-above, waist-below, waist-above, waist-below. One day should be reserved for conditioning, form/technique, and throwing. Saturday and Sunday should be rest days (they can still stretch out).

When focusing on flexibility work, have your athletes do each movement for 20-seconds x 3. Take movement to point-of-pain, move a bit farther, then, hold for 20 seconds. Do this three times. Stretching-out and down (post-lifting) should last 20 minutes.

Running should be done before weights. Slow-jog a 400, then slow-jog another 400 alternating jog forward, then cross-stepping, then jog forward, then cross-stepping.

All throwing should be low-energy with focus of arm; from behind head to pull-over the top without <u>any locking of the elbow</u>. **Sling the arm, bypass the elbow.**

An example: As a sophomore at Sequim (WA) High, **Erica Wheeler** was rock-solid in build when I first started to work with her. Erica's PR as a frosh' was 105'. After the first practice, "E" was getting an impact window of 140'-150'. She threw 142'+ at the TAC Nationals that season.

As a junior at Sequim, Erica maintained her strength-training program (now more specific and structured) and with new emphasis on balance and simplicity.

In March at beginning of track season, I had her parents set up a throwing program using "cannon-ball" fishing sinkers. This was based on the Finnish throwing program of Hannu Siitonen, who was then the world's most consistent long-range thrower beyond 90-meters (295').

The throwing days (two per week) schedule had Erica throwing about 60 minutes. At the first day of the program, Erica would throw low-energy in the throwing-stride position up into a 10' x 10' mat directly in front of her.

Half-way through the throwing-session, Erica would gradually increase the energy of the throw. She would start her throwing session using a 2-pound sinker, then shift over to a 2-and-a-half-pound sinker, and later to a 3-pound sinker. Always the same system; start off slow low-energy throwing and slowly increase the energy. **Never throwing high-energy.** This system would wean Erica off the lighter weight to a heavier weight.

Erica related what the simple throwing program was doing for her. Before the program, Erica could toss a basketball about three-quarters the length of the basketball court. **After only two days of throwing the program, "E" said she was able to send the basketball all the way to the ceiling of the far wall.**

Wheeler, who went on to be the 2003 USATF National Javelin Champion, a member of national teams for the 1996 Olympics, 2003 Pan Am Games and the 1997 World Championships, shares her thoughts on Coach Wright.

"Lance was instrumental in developing my skills and technique as a junior in high school. Lance's one-on-one coaching and advanced training programs allowed me to make huge improvements in my distance and my technique. The combination of Lance's knowledge and the time and dedication of my wonderful high school coach Gil Fellingham, all served to allow me to be very successful as a prep javelin thrower. Lance's dedication and passion for the javelin was so evident in his coaching and his life. I am thankful I had the opportunity to have worked with Lance. I wish him all the best in life!"

L&S: *Talk about some of your success stories. Why did they excel?*

LW: I may have forgotten, but I think we coached 8 girls and 11 boys who became state javelin champions/state record holders in Washington.

Erica Wheeler was always throwing her high school marks in college, and almost all her opens. Had she not been injured, she would have been unbelievable! A pity, I never got the chance to work with her foot-speed. That was next on my program.

Zelezny believed, "Foot-speed into power." Oh, how I admire that man!

Erica was heavily-favored to be state champion as a junior. Sadly, unknown to me, Erica's high school coach changed Erica's foot-speed, which altered her check-marks. Erica fouled at the state meet competition for the first time, and she was unable to correct herself. She placed 4th. Erica's impact window entering state was greater than the state record (167'-174')!

As a senior, after Erica's first practice, lasting 90 minutes, Erica was instructed to "take four" (throws) to determine her available impact window. It came in at around 187'.

Again, Erica's high school coach began countering my specific instructions to Erica and her parents. Erica's distances began to crash; 170' down to 158'. It was a no-win situation, so I left her in the hands of her high school coach and traveled down to Chehalis (WA) High to work with the state champ, **Sabrina Eames.**

Sabrina wanted a chance to get a collegiate scholarship, but her 155' best was nothing like Erica's 167' consistency and state record 170' 6". After one practice, Sabrina broke Erica's record with 170' 10".

The 2009 season: I am working with Mead (Spokane) High senior Justin Graf using a Finland five-step. Wait 'til you see this "little guy", 5-10/150 pounds, throw rotational-style! Justin should crush his competition.

Lewis and Clark (Spokane) High senior, Joey Zimmerman, and Gresham (Portland, OR area) High, junior, Sam Crouser, both were installed with Finland five-step linear-style, after their last competition. Both are 6' 3" and 200 pounds. These three should dominate competitions in Washington and Oregon.

King's High frosh Curtis Clauson, 5' 10" at 126 pounds, throwing at Cashmere Invite, produced a 174', 171', 169', 168', 167', and 162' series. Not a stitch of fat on the boy's frame!

L&S: *Coach, how did you get involved with the Crouser family?*

LW: At the Junior Olympic Region XIII Championships last summer, junior Joey Zimmerman from Lewis & Clark High placed first (203'+) over Sammy Crouser, a Gresham High sophomore who was second at 200'-plus. I was out in the field marking. A tall fellow came out to help me. I was to learn the fellow was **Dean Crouser**. I could not allow Dean to mark (conflict of interest), so he helped me by retrieving javelins.

Dean heard my name and asked if I would take a look at his son Sammy. My summation was identical to that of Dean's brother: lacks rhythm.

After competition and rest, Dean called Sammy over and asked his son if he would be receptive to study and observation on my part. Sammy was open to it. I incorporated Raty movements into Sammy's style. That boy was elated!

It was so simple and very easy, (the way it should be). Sammy's foot-speed increased big time. So did his power/energy. Tremendously long throws were performed routinely, with no strain, stress or discomfort. Only took about 5 to 10 minutes to do. It was the same as with Erica Wheeler; simple and effective. He was throwing longer, with less energy.

I told Dean if he needed any further assistance with Sammy and younger sis' Halley, to give a call. This was after Sammy was ranked #1 in Oregon 2008 with 209' 4", two weeks earlier at Oregon's Association Champs.

Sammy's difficulties were the same as Joey Zimmerman's. Over-drive steps were burning-up energy levels needed for the throwing-stride and delivery. Both lads' needed to be introduced to a simple and effective series of movements.

Sammy should unleash extremely long throws within four weeks of start-up and if wind conditions are ideal. It was so funny and encouraging watching Sammy with major confidence and happiness on his face after attaching Seppo-style into his movements. Dean nearly had to use a crowbar to extract his son from the javelin runway.

When instructing, I like to see athletes confident and having fun. Results are for the throwers. This year's high school season is looking good for Oregon and Washington's high school bests next year.

L&S: *Why has it been so long since the USA has been dominant in the javelin?*

LW: Lack of acceptance of who knows better. That is, who is or are, the best in the event and why are they? How did they do it, what do we need to do to be like them, and do, as they have done?

Say, "FINLAND, FIRST! "SOUMI, ALWAYS!" Indeed, there's a start.

Norway: Andreas Thorkildsen, straight at it.

The very best? Jan Zelezny. The purest throwing-engine. Extraordinary!

Study the best and follow their lead.

In the United States, we used to be very good in the javelin throw. What happened? We got arrogant, conceited, lazy, and very sloppy. Why else do so many high school javelin throwers end up seriously injured, possibly career-ending, during early-high school years or early-college?

Most of us coaching and instructing do not know the event. We think we do, act like we do, but we really do not know what we are doing. Our ignorance and arrogance, especially, when compared to the world's finest throwers and their coaching, and training systems, is depriving and hurting our young.

Ever been to Finland? The children bring it to the dinner table. Those are not fishing rods they sleep with. Did you know that Raty trained throwing spears out of a barn from the second floor through the rafters and into the snow?

***L&S**: Why do you feel the Scandinavian countries are so far ahead of the USA in the javelin?*

LW: It starts when they are young. Say age 5. Teachers and coaches study and observe. They select candidates for advanced instruction in movements. As the pupils advance, the instruction gets very precise and specific. They train and condition to be specific: simple and effective. Here in the United States, most of our youth are not recognized for javelin throwing until 9th grade. As such, the Scandinavians are literally, years ahead of us.

***L&S:** How do you respond to critics who say, like the hammer, the javelin is too dangerous to be contested?*

LW: In most cases any sport can be dangerous. Javelin throwing is no more dangerous than hammer throwing. Be alert, where you are, and what you and others are doing! Safety first!

Be ready for the unpredictable action, effect, and foreseeable result. I once let go with a javelin throw where a severe cross-wind carried the javelin out of the throwing sector. It ended up impaled in the trunk of a parked car by a sidewalk. Yes, I was helpless to control the situation, but I could have been better prepared. Think ahead. As it was, there was nobody about. The hole in the trunk was right next to the key slot. What to do, what to do? I pulled the javelin out and ran! I was in high school; ambitious, but fundamentally spineless to a fault. The javelin was a Dick Held and had nary a scratch: impregnable.

Author's note: Hmmm, I wonder who this guy's high school coach was?

I asked Coach Wright why he never sought a college coaching position. True to character, his rather simplistic reply was, "They never asked." In reality I think he cherished the freedom of moving about, reaching as many youngsters as he possibly could. He loved the challenge of sharing his passion with a kid and seeing the big smile that accompanied their learning.

A wise old coach once uttered, "The big time is where you make it."

So, is this guy for real? YES!!! Many others, who carry the title of coach, pale in comparison to this man. Yet his character dictates he be invisible. Except at any meet, where you know he will be near the javelin.

Lancelot Wright is truly a coach of the first order. He loves helping kids, and it matters not what colors are on their letter jackets. He can bring the X's and O's to the table and converse with the best of us. He will travel near and far at his own expense, often purchasing implements for kids who cannot afford them. He is tireless in pursuit of javelin excellence.

Lance, God knows we need more like you who give, and Give, and GIVE to our kids. You are a gift. You, more than most, are very deserving of being called COACH.
L&S

News & Notes

By Glenn Thompson (excerpted from news reports)

Belarussians Stripped (December 11, 2008)

The International Olympic Committee executive board ruled against Belarusian hammer throwers Vadim Devyatovskiy and Ivan Tsikhan who tested positive for abnormal levels of testosterone after the hammer final on Aug. 17 at the Bird's Nest stadium.

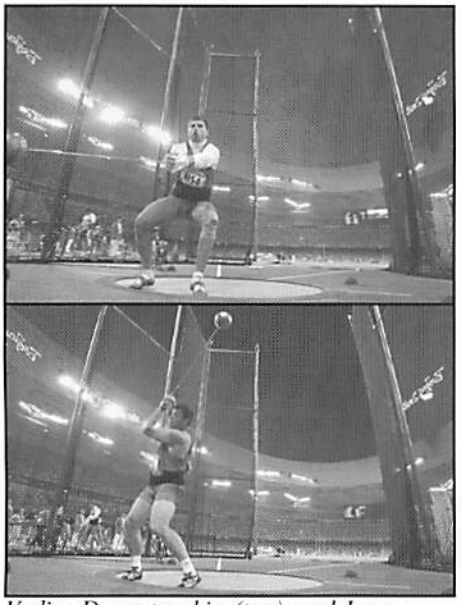
The silver will go to Krisztian Pars of Hungary and the bronze to Koji Murofushi of Japan. Primoz Kozmus of Slovenia won the gold medal.

The IOC asked the International Association of Athletics Federations to officially modify the results and ordered the Belarus national Olympic committee to return the medals.

The IOC also imposed a lifetime Olympic ban on the 31-year-old Devyatovskiy because it was his second doping offense. He served a two-year drug suspension from 2000-02.

Under IAAF rules, Devyatovskiy faces a lifetime ban from the sport for two doping violations. It was the first violation for 32-year-old Tsikhan, a three-time world champion and silver medalist at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Tsikhan, however, faces a likely two-year ban from the IAAF. Under new IOC rules, any athlete suspended for six months or more for doping is banned from the next Olympics.



Vadim Devyatovskiy (top) and Ivan Tsikhan

The Belarusians had denied drug use and appeared at a hearing before the IOC's disciplinary commission in Lausanne in September.

Once the medals are returned to the IOC, they will be sent to the Hungarian and Japanese Olympic committees to be awarded to Pars and Murofoshi.

Murofushi is benefiting for a second time from a rival's doping. Four years ago, he was upgraded to the gold medal in Athens after Adrian Annus of Hungary was stripped of first place.

Speaking at a news conference the following day, Murofushi said, "It's a real honor to get a medal in two straight Olympics."

"But it is sad that this has come about because of doping. These were buddies I competed together with, so it is incredibly disappointing," added the 34-year-old.

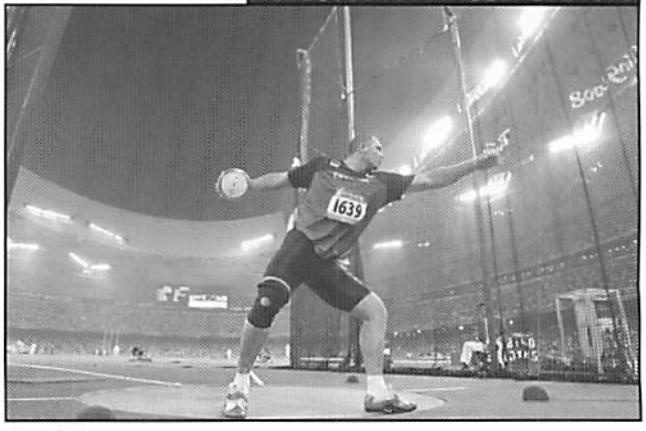
The IOC disqualified six athletes during the Aug. 8-24 Olympics — including Ukrainian heptathlete Lyudmila Blonska and Greek hurdler Fani Halkia. Blonska was stripped of her silver medal, while Kim had his silver and bronze medals revoked.

The IOC, meanwhile, has decided to retest 500 Beijing doping samples to look for previously undetectable drugs.

Estonia release postage stamp in honor of Gerd Kanter

At the end of September Estonian Post Ltd. released a postage stamp dedicated to Olympic Discus Champion Gerd Kanter.

After the release of the first Estonian

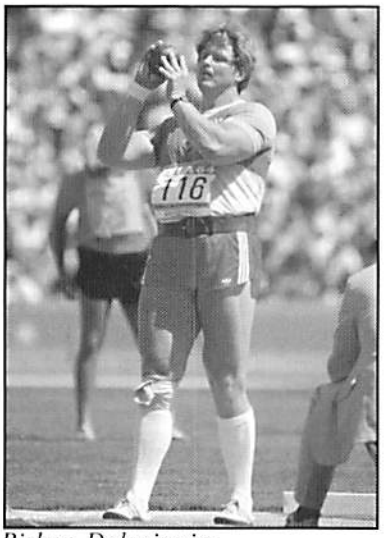


Gerd Kanter

postage stamp dedicated to the gold medal winner Erki Nool in Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, it took eight long years before having the opportunity to release another postage stamp honouring an Estonian champion of the Summer Olympics.

In the years between skiers Andrus Veerpalu and Kristina Šmigun brought glory to Estonia with their feats at the Winter Olympics. Stamps were released in their honour respectively in 2002 and 2006.

The postage stamp "Gerd Kanter - Olympic Champion" with a face value of 5.50 EEK was printed at the Vaba Maa printing house with a print-run of 300,000.



Bishop Dolegiewicz

The stamp was designed by artist Lembit Lõhmus. The presentation of the new postage stamp honouring the Olympic champion took place in the atrium of the Rotermanni trade centre on September 25 and was also attended by Kanter himself.

Bishop Dolegiewicz, 55, passes (Oct 31, 2008)

Canadian shot putter Bishop Dolegiewicz, a three-time Olympian who had a larger-than-life personality to match his mountainous physique, died in his sleep at the age of 55.

Dolegiewicz, a Toronto native who starred at Parkdale Collegiate, won two gold medals at the Pan Am Games, two silver medals at the Commonwealth Games and 13 medals at Canadian championships. He was 11th at the 1984 L.A. Olympics and fourth in 1980 in a World's Strongest Man contest.

He was later stripped of his Canadian shot put record after admitting during the Dubin Inquiry to using steroids for more than a decade.

Dolegiewicz, who had success as a coach at Southern Utah University, was suffering from cardio and circulation problems. He died in Lehi, Utah, leaving behind his wife Anna, 30, a thrower he coached.

Former Canadian discus champ Rob Gray was saddened by the news. "Whatever you say about the guy, he was a great competitor, a mountain of a man and a great athlete," said Gray. "He was a big, strong guy because he worked his butt off and showed us how hard you had to work to get to the next level. It's hard to call him a role model, but he was in some ways."

Clay And Brown Trafton Win 2008 Jesse Owens Awards

Olympic gold medallists Bryan Clay and Stephanie Brown Trafton were named winners of the 2008 Jesse Owens Award by USA Track & Field. Established in 1981, the Jesse Owens Award is USA Track & Field's highest accolade, presented annually to the outstanding U.S. male and female track and field performers.

Brown Trafton, who has never won a national title in the women's discus throw, once in Beijing, qualified for the final and took the lead with her initial throw of 64.74 metres, and became the first American woman to win the gold medal in the event since Lillian Copeland in 1932. It was the first U.S. medal of any kind in this event since Leslie Jean Deniz won silver in the boycott-afflicted 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Brown Trafton is the first ever women's thrower to be presented with the Jesse Owens Award.

"The success I have had this year has been monumental and much appreciation goes to USATF's High Performance programs and their willingness to support my event area that, before 2008, had not won any medals in two decades," said Brown Trafton. "The coaches, committee members, staff, and media team at USATF can take credit for their role in making history with me this year as well as helping to securing a bright future for the sport."

The awards were presented on Saturday, December 6 at the Jesse Owens Awards and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, held at the Silver Legacy Resort in Reno, Nevada, in conjunction with USA Track & Field's 2008 Annual Meeting. ***L&S***

Stephanie Brown-Trafton

World's Longest Throws Club - NJ

By Joe Napoli

Editor's Note: *I asked Joe Napoli, the founder and coach of the World's Longest Throws Club (NJ) to give Long & Strong a glimpse into the impressive work his youth throws club is doing. My hope is that it will inspire readers to follow in his footsteps.*

Beginnings

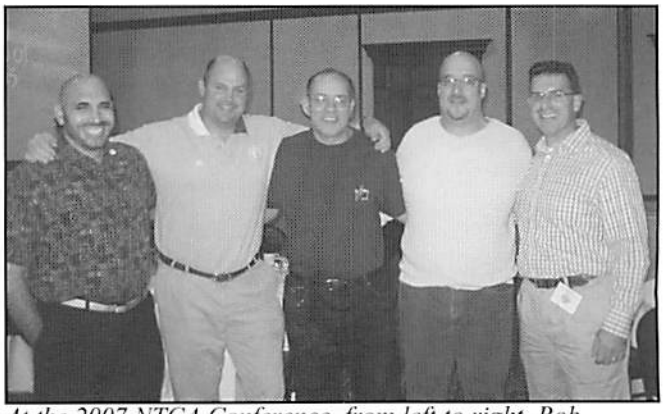
It all started back in 2004 when my daughter Brittany joined the track and field team at Howell High School. Howell, like so many other schools, had coaches that cared and wanted to succeed but did not know much about the throws. Seeing this gave me the idea that if I was going to train my daughter, I would also train her teammates as well. Upon the approval of the coach and school administration, I started to volunteer my time to help develop a throws program. As the season went on and the program started to develop, the kids began to make great progress and gain recognition throughout the state. At the school season's end, Brittany was starting to show promise in the javelin so I took her to a clinic that, long-time friend, Tom Petranoff (President of the Worlds Longest Throw Club (WLTC)), was having in Rhode Island. After spending time with Tom reminiscing, analyzing technique and talking throws, he encouraged me to take my knowledge and passion and form a club of my own and so the "Worlds Longest Throw Club-NJ" was born. In just 3 years the WLTC-NJ has grown tremendously and I have produced 1 National Scholastic shot put champion, 7 USATF All-Americans, qualified 19 for Youth National championships and I have sent many on to compete at the college level. I am proud to say that my daughter now attends the University of Tennessee and throws the javelin for Lady Vols Throws Coach John Frazier.

My Background

I attended St. Peter's Boys High School (1977-1981) which is a small Christian Brothers school located in Staten Island, a borough of New York City. After not making the school baseball team as a freshman, I decided to give the throws a whirl. I knew we had very good coaches (Ed Gorman, Dave Jakubowski and Carmine Ragucci) and that St. Peters had been a dominant force in track and field in the past. I immediately fell in love with a sport that I never knew existed; I was hooked. My success was largely due to the fact that we had coaches that cared and gave us the attention and direction needed for us to be successful. They constantly instilled in us that without hard work, dedication and mutual respect, what they taught us would be meaningless. They also gave us the exposure we needed by entering us in top competitions and sending us to the best throws clinicians (Tony Naclerio) around.

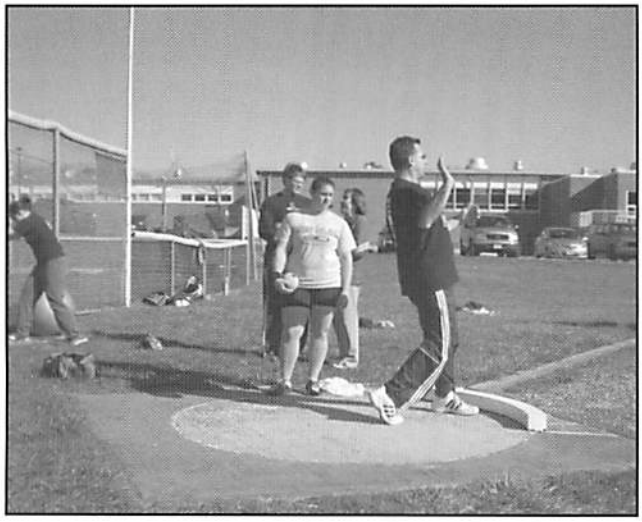
By our senior year my teammates (Sal Della Croce, Tom Salzano) and I dominated the east coast, and Sal and I were ranked nationally in both shot and discus. Della Croce (63'/175'), Napoli (60'/180'), Salzano (56'/145') - needless to say, we had very intimidating 2 and 3-man relays. We also had 3 others over 50' in the shot. Yes, it's great to win school championships, individual titles and break records, but what I will remember the most and the major factor that impacted my career from my high school days, is the stuff people do not see. The tireless training we did both before and after school, the constant technical drilling and the confidence that our coaches had in us to succeed.

I was recruited by several Division I schools offering full scholarships, but ultimately chose Kent State University to continue my throwing career. I immediately made a connection with the coaches (Orin Richburg, Al Schoterman) and knew that KSU could give me what I was looking for. Under the tutelage of throws coach Schoterman ('72 Olympian, NCAA champion in the hammer), I went on to capture 4 Mid American Conference titles (3 Discus, 1 Shot put) and had personal best throws of 57'-11"/185'-4" at KSU. Because of my athleticism, I was also called upon to help score points for the team in the hammer (185'-0"), 35lb weight (59'-10") and javelin (207'-11"). We were also very fortunate to have many top athletes come train with us, especially Kent alum Jud Logan. Jud went on to become a four-time Olympian and American Record holder in the hammer, and helped to give us a sense of what it would be like to compete at the next level. As you can see, it has become somewhat evident that I have been blessed to have had such inspirational people in my life. My program is built around all I have experienced and learned during my 30 years as a thrower. Now I can pass it on as a coach.



At the 2007 NTCA Conference, from left to right, Rob Lasorsa, Jud Logan, Al Schoterman, Kevin Akins and Joe Napoli.

Napoli shown running his crew through agility drills (above) and demonstrating a proper release.



The Club

I encourage my athletes to at least try all the events: shot, disc, javelin, hammer and weight. It really is lots of fun and it also gives them a better understanding of who they are as a thrower. Because of our conditioning program, it is much easier for them to understand different techniques and for me as a coach to get my point across. Building athleticism is key to the success in becoming an accomplished all-around thrower. As kids mature they will have a tendency to gravitate towards certain events and start to specialize. So introducing all events at a young age not only makes them more athletic but also more marketable to colleges and universities if they so choose to take it that far.

The club was designed and structured so kids could train on a regular basis and attend USATF Junior Olympic and open competitions throughout the summer months. The summer season is the heart of the club and we train from the middle of May to the end of July. With over 25 kids in the program, I want to give them as much individual attention as possible so I break up the training into smaller groups based upon event and skill level. Each group meets 2-3 times per week, and we work on conditioning for the throws as well as lots of throwing and technical drills. Each group throws training session is 3 hours long (shot/discus/javelin) and consists of throwing and technical drills both in and out of the circle and on the runway. Hammer training is always held on separate days, and only for those that are committed to the event. Conditioning training sessions are 2 hours long and we meet once per week as a team. These conditioning sessions include: 2 lap warm-up run; stretching, both static and dynamic; plyometric routine; medicine ball circuit; box and hurdle jumps; agility and body awareness drills; weighted explosion and power exercises and finally speed work. Weight lifting and strength training exercises are done on off days when their throws groups do not meet. Because of the success we've had with the summer program and the athlete's eagerness to keep learning and growing athletically, I began to have training sessions on the weekends beyond my regular summer schedule.

Most athletes I train range in age from 13-18, but I also have others at the college level, and even Masters. Although I love to train athletes of all ages I think the best time to start preparing for the throws is in junior high school. At this age we must educate our youth and start building athleticism. Body awareness and learning how their bodies work and move in motion are by far the most important factors. Fitness testing must also be an integral part of a successful training program. Athletes need to learn the importance of challenging themselves through a variety of different tests that must be preformed on a regular basis.

Examples: Standing Long Jump; Standing Vertical Jump; Standing Triple Jump; Standing 3 & 5 Hop; 30m sprint forward/backward; Medicine Ball throws; Underhand forward; Overhead backward; 2 hand chest. How can we expect young athletes to throw heavy implements when they do not even know what their bodies are capable of achieving? Once some type of athleticism is mastered,

Napoli (right) working a clinic with the founder of the World's Longest Throws Club and former world-record holder, Tom Petranoff.

technique can now be introduced and worked into the program.

The club does not receive any funding or sponsorships; however, I do charge a nominal membership fee. Club members are also responsible for their own entry fees and any travel/lodging expenses. Since the WLTC-NJ is sanctioned by USATF, all athletes must be USATF members.

The Future of Youth Throwing

The amount of inquiries I get from parents and athletes all over New Jersey and New York looking for throws clubs is amazing. If this is any indication of what athletes want, I think the outlook for our youth in this country in the throws is positive. This past summer I had 25 athletes in my summer program and had to turn down more than 30 others. It is so frustrating for me to turn down anyone, especially when they want to learn, but I am only one person and it would not be fair for those already in the program. There is a definite thirst for knowledge and good coaching in the throws, and it truly hurts me to go to high school track events and see many would-be potentially great throwers without the proper skills needed to excel. There are so many great resources out there for coaches to help athletes and the National Throws Coaches Association is one of them. The NTCA is an organization dedicated to promoting the throwing events at all levels of instruction and competition. It was founded by Rob Lasorsa in 2002 with approx 100 members and has grown to more than 6,000. The NTCA annually hosts a throws conference in which coaches and athletes come together to learn and network. It also honors those individuals who have served the throwing events in an extraordinary manner in their careers as either a coach or athlete.

WLTC-NJ shown above at the 2008 NJ Meet of Champions and the 2007 team picture.

Advice

Let me start by saying that the WLTC-NJ was designed so young throwers could experience what it's like to be part of a structured program that will challenge them mentally, physically and in all aspects of the throws. From my experiences...without structure...a program and its athletes are doomed to fail. I believe that training athletes of different athletic abilities at times has a tendency to humble the elite and excite the beginner. We must constantly remind our elite never to forget what got them to this point in their careers and for our beginners to think about what opportunities could possibly be in store for them. We must instill in our youth the infectious passion we have as throws coaches. We must let our athletes know that we will always be there for them, but it is only through their hard work, dedication and constant effort that result will come. As coaches we must never stop learning nor should we be too proud to ask others for help. We must flood our minds and gain knowledge by networking with other coaches, joining clubs and associations, subscribing to magazines and periodicals, and surfing the internet in which all this has played a major role in my coaching success. Glen Thompson, editor of this periodical, has done an outstanding job in bringing us all such valuable information and intuitive foresight.

I have been very fortunate in my life to have had so many extremely knowledgeable and caring coaches that helped mold me into the person I am today and now it's my turn to give back what was thrust upon me. Thank you all.

For more information, you can contact Joe Napoli and the Worlds Longest Throw Club-NJ via their website at: www.wltcnj.com. You can learn more abou the NTCA at: www.nationalthrowscoachesassociation.com ***LSTJ***

LONG & STRONG THROWERS CLUB

Dear Prospective Member,

The Long & Strong Throwers Club (LSTC) will once again offer extended benefits to our membership benefits for 2009.
The 2009 membership dues will remain at $50. 2009 members will receive:

1. 2009LSTC tee-shirt
2. one year subscription to the Long & Strong Throwers Journal (or 1 year extension to existing subscriptions)
3. 20% discount on throwing shoes (all major brands) from InsideTrack
4. 10% discount on M-F Athletic purchases
5. 50% discounted NTCA 2009 National Throws Coaches Association (NTCA) membership ($25)

Once you join, you'll get the details by email or post. You'll recoup your dues (and more) in no time!

Who should join? To carry the Long & Strong name, members should demonstrate (1) a sincere love for the throwing events, and (2) good sportsmanship. Kickin' butt in the circle, on the runway or behind the trig is a bonus!

For information about the club, please visit our website at http://www.longandstrong.com.

Yours in throwing,

Glenn A. Thompson
Minister of Propaganda

----------**Detach Here**----------

LONG & STRONG THROWERS CLUB

2009 Membership Application

Name_____
Street Address_____
City_____ State____ Zip Code_____
Phone Number_____
E-mail Address_____
Events_____ T-Shirt Size _____

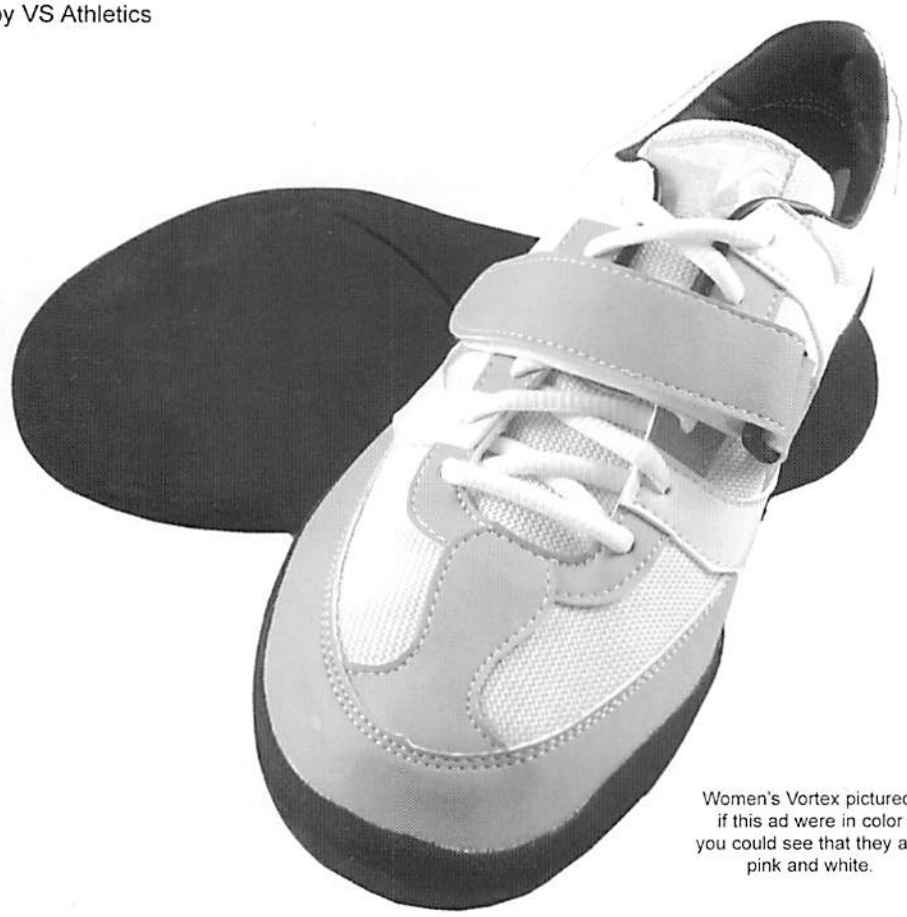
***Please enclose a check for $50 payable to:**
Long & Strong Throwers Club
c/o Warren Taylor,
315 Sylvan Retreat,
Columbia, PA 17512

Do you have any special skills or resources you can make available to the club?

_____

The Vortex

by VS Athletics



Women's Vortex pictured,
if this ad were in color
you could see that they are
pink and white.

The lightest throw shoe on the planet!
Wide forefoot for stability.
Smooth rubber sole for quickness.
Forefoot lateral strap and
"V"stabilizer saddle for support.
Spin or Glide, you'll leave the ring feeling great!

Men's Vortex,
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