

# Track and Field



*Olympic Decathlon*



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### *"World's Greatest Athlete"*

In all sports, there is no test which requires as much versatility, strength and all-around skill as the decathlon. It comprises 10 individual events, with five contested on each of two successive days.

Speed is required for races of up to a mile, muscle is essential for field events such as the shot put and discus, and agility must be applied, most particularly in the hurdles and pole vault.

None of these prerequisites will produce a champion without the other attributes, and speed, muscle and agility aren't enough without physical and mental endurance. Small wonder that the man who wins the Olympic decathlon gold medal is known for the next four years as "the world's greatest athlete."

The decathlon, which is limited to men, begins with the 100-meter dash, and continues with the long jump, shot put, high jump and 400 meters. The second day events are the 110-meter high hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1,500-meter run. Points are scored by matching the competitor's time, height or distance against predetermined stan-

dards set by the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

The maximum number of points a performer can earn in each event is 1,000 points, and to achieve this high a score it is virtually required to equal or break a world record. Bruce Jenner, who had finished 10th in the 1972 Olympics at Munich, set a world record of 8,618 points when he captured the gold four years later at Montreal.

In the decathlon, consistency weighs heavily. In 1960, for example, C. K. Yang of Taiwan defeated American Rafer Johnson in seven of the 10 events, all by narrow margins. But Johnson took the other three events in solid fashion, enabling him to beat out Yang for the gold by 53 points.

The decathlon was introduced to the Olympics in 1912, and the only double winner was American Bob Mathias, in 1948 and 1952. U.S. athletes have taken nine of the 14 decathlon championships through 1976, including: Harold Osborn, 1924; James Bausch, 1932; Glenn Morris, 1936; Milton Campbell, 1956; and Bill Toomey, 1968.