

Track and Field



The Jumps



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High, Long and Triple

As in most of the rest of the sports world, the most important factor in competing successfully in the various jumping events is timing. One can have all the brute strength in the world, and the most spring in the legs, but unless he (or she) can get all the body parts working together, only failure waits at the other end.

In high jumping (as in the others), the competitor first has to determine which should be the take-off foot. Most right-handed people are most comfortable propelling themselves off the left foot.

In recent years, high jumping has undergone a revolution. The Fosbury Flop, and its many variations, involves the high jumper going over the bar on his back; previously, the most common technique was called the Western Roll. Though the flop is currently most popular (used by such as Dwight Stones and Franklin Jacobs), many top competitors use the Western Roll, with which the renowned Valery Brumel set his world records in the early 1960s.

The long jump is measured from the point of take-off to the spot where the jumper lands. If he or she lands on

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his feet and topples backwards, then the mark in the landing pit that indicates the shortest distance becomes the official landing point. So it is essential for the long jumper to maintain good body control, or the extra oomph in the air will go for naught. The essentials for a successful long jump are speed on the runway, a precise take-off as close to the take-off board as possible without making contact; a co-ordinated body motion in the air to get the most out of the jump, and a controlled landing.

The triple jump is the least known of the jumping events, often ignored at major track meets. But it is gaining in popularity in the United States, spurred on by the gold medal performance of Arnie Robinson. Originally called the hop, step and jump, the event requires superior leg strength and co-ordination. The three components must mesh instantly to get the maximum forward, not upward push. The event consists of three parts: the jumper taking off and landing on the same foot (the hop), the jumping and landing on the opposite foot (the step), then leaping and landing on both feet (the jump).

James Butts has triple jumped 56' 5½"