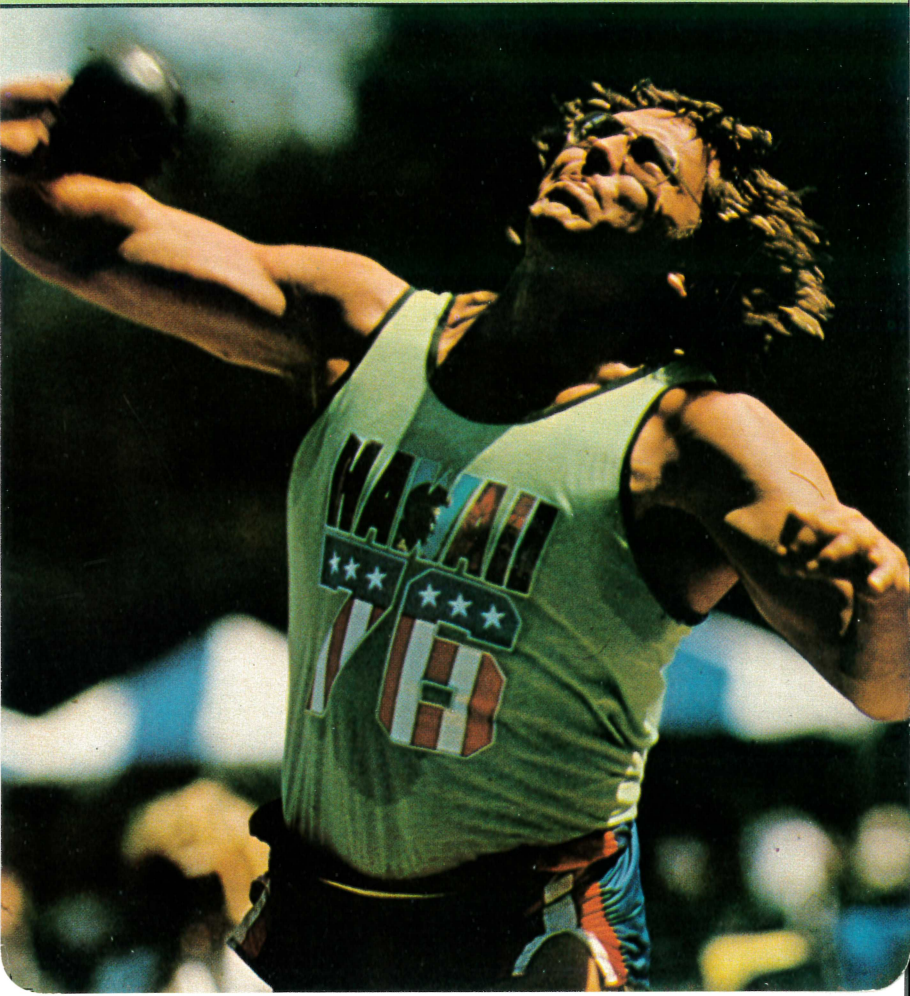


Track and Field



The Weights



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Events for Musclemen

Though almost all the competitors in the weight events are muscular and bulky, what separates the best from the rest is technique and timing, not brute strength.

In the shot put, the weight is held against the neck and shoulder as the athlete propels himself through a circle that is seven feet in diameter. (The shot itself is a solid metal ball, sometimes covered with rubber, that weighs 16 pounds in international male competition, with a diameter ranging from $4\frac{3}{8}$ " to $5\frac{1}{8}$ ".) During the actual put (not throw), the elbow remains behind the ball at all times.

The idea in any shot-putting technique (and there are many) is to get the shot moving steadily in the same direction at all times. This increases the momentum behind the ball, which, in effect, makes it lighter for the competitor. The three most popular techniques are called the standing put (involving no foot movement; the thrust comes from shifting body weight); the step and put (in which the body and shot get the extra force provided by the moving body); and the glide (in which the putter begins at the rear of the circle with his back to the landing area,

and pushes himself with as much speed as he can control across the circle to launch the iron or brass ball). The discus involves a different kind of body motion as the athlete hurls a $4\frac{1}{4}$ -pound metal platter from an $8\frac{1}{2}$ -foot circle.

The most popular technique in discus-throwing is the sprint, in which the thrower builds up arm and body motion by whirling across the ring, making a complete revolution before releasing the plate.

One common error that beginners make is throwing the discus with too high a trajectory, so that most of the force behind the throw is lost. The idea is to get the best combination of trajectory and *forward* thrust.

Also, though speed in crossing the circle is of the utmost importance, the thrower must always be in control of his body, otherwise the only result will be a foul throw.

One of the most fascinating feats in sport has been the domination by American Al Oerter in the discus; he won the event in four consecutive Olympiads, from Melbourne in 1956, all the way through to the Games at Mexico City in 1968.

The shot put is the most popular of the weight events