

Chapter Eight

Preparing for Field Events

Prepared by Dave Krell, captain of the US West track team and principal organizer of the 1990 National Corporate Championships in Boulder, Colorado.

The field events are the only events within the USCAA that allow men and women of all age

groups to compete in head-to-head competition. This is accomplished by having age-graded standards for both men and women. Scores are based on performance against the American record for that 5-year age group by gender.

Two field event categories are included on the list of USCAA official events. One category, the Team Jump, consists of the traditional high-jump and long-jump events. Participants in the Team Jump must perform both the high jump and the long jump. (Division II teams compete only in the long jump.)

The other category, the Team Throw, consists of the traditional shot-put and discus events. (The weight of each implement varies by sex and age group. See p. 36.) Participants in the team-weight event must throw both the shot and the discus.

Occasionally people will look at the field events and think that participants in these events have it easy, because they don't have to train. However, just as in the running events, the people who don't train either don't perform very well or become injured.

The focus of this chapter is not to develop a person into a winning field-event performer, but rather to provide some suggestions for how to get started in learning the field events or redeveloping some old skills that haven't been used since school days. This chapter will also provide a few tips on how to get ready for competition.

Team Jump

The Team Jump utilizes many of the same muscle groups that are required in sprinting. Both the high jump and the long jump require speed to optimize performance. Both jumps also require strength, especially in the lower body. This strength should be developed through progressive weight training. It is strength that converts speed into lift. (Lower-body weight training should be done

three times per week.)

The best way to learn the techniques of jumping is to obtain a video tape of a successful jumper. (If purchasing a tape from a sports catalog is not possible, record a televised competition, or have someone take a camcorder to a high school or college event and tape one or more jumpers from several different angles.) There are several different styles of jumping, so each person must find one that is comfortable for him or her. It would also be very helpful to find a coach or someone who is proficient in jumping to work with the jumpers and give them feedback on their style and technique. Another way to help improve jumping performance is to have someone video tape some of the practice sessions. This provides the jumper the opportunity to evaluate his or her own technique, as well as having a coach or team member to help by providing constructive feedback.

One good way to develop the body for jumping is to follow a training program that has been developed for sprinters. See the chapter on sprinting for suggestions.

Before jumping, warm up slowly by jogging for 5 minutes or so, to loosen up the lower body muscles. Next, do a series of leg stretches that loosen the hamstrings, the calves, the quads, and the other leg muscles that are critical to sprinting. Remember, the older the jumper, the more time is needed to spend on stretching before starting to jump.

After completing a workout, it is also a good idea to finish up with another series of stretches. Stretching at the end of a workout is effective for increasing the flexibility of the muscles. For the older jumper, stretching at the end of a workout is extremely important in order to stretch some of those muscles that have "shrunk" with age.

Team Throw

Contrary to many people's belief, the shot put and discus events involve much more than shoulder and arm strength. In fact, the strength of the back and legs are

Checklist for Field Events

Team Jump

- Follow a training program developed for sprinters.
- Follow a lower body weight program (three times a week)
- Get a videotape of successful jumpers.
- Get someone knowledgeable to coach the jumpers.
- Videotape some practice sessions
- Warm up and stretch muscles before jumping.
- Stretch at the end of a jumping session.
- Don't overdo. Build up the amount and intensity of your training effort gradually over time.

Team Throw

- Follow a weight-training program that develops the upper body as well as the back and legs.
- Get a videotape of successful throwers.
- Get someone knowledgeable to coach the throwers.
- Videotape some of the training sessions.
- Don't throw and lift weights on the same day.
- Don't overdo. Build up the amount and intensity of your training effort gradually over time.

critical to the performance of a successful thrower. As is the case for all other track and field events, a well-conditioned body is critical for peak performance. Both events require overall body strength, and the throwing technique is of equal importance in both events. Some people will throw well with all strength and little technique, and some will throw well with all technique and little strength. The outstanding throwers will have both strength and technique.

For developing strength, it is advisable to have

throwers obtain access to a club or gym that has a combination of free weights and machines. An overall weight program that concentrates on upper body, back, and legs will produce the best results. In addition, a program of running ten or twelve sprints of 50 yards each, three times a week, will be helpful. Standing in place and jumping up and down a dozen or so times for a series of three or four intervals with several minutes in between each interval is also helpful. These should be done three times a week also. These activities are targets that should be worked up to

Decathlon Scoring for Field Events

To score the field events, take the distance or height and convert to inches. Divide this mark by the record (converted to inches) shown in the table below, multiply by 1,000, and round up the result to the nearest integer. The result is the decathlon point score for the individual competitor.

AGE GROUP

Through 29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60-64 65+

Shot Put	Men	72'3"	66'6.5"	60'8"	54'11"	49'3.5"	54'6"	51'8"	55'4"	48'4"
	Women	62'8"	59'3"	55'10"	52'5"	49'0"	45'7"	45'2"	38'9"	35'4"
Discus	Men	228'0"	227'9"	216'3"	205'4"	193'2"	202'8"	190'0"	203'6"	185'4"
	Women	216'6"	216'3"	203'3"	191'11"	178'11"	165'3"	151'4"	137'11"	125'6"
High Jump	Men	7'8"	7'4"	6'11"	6'6"	6'2"	5'9"	5'5"	5'0"	4'8"
	Women	6'7"	6'3"	5'10"	5'6"	5'2"	4'9"	4'5"	4'0"	3'8"
Long Jump	Men	29'2"	27'6"	25'11"	24'3"	22'8"	21'0"	19'5"	17'9"	
	Women	23'0"	21'5"	19'10"	18'3"	16'9"	15'2"	13'7"	12'0"	10'5"

gradually.

There are several ways to develop technique. One way is to study an instructional video tape prepared by a top performer such as Mac Wilkins (discus) or Al Feurbach (shot put). These excellent tapes cover weight programs, training tips, and excellent throwing techniques. If purchase of such a tape is not possible, go to a high school or college track meet and videotape several of the better throwers, or record the events from a televised track meet on your VCR. If possible, find someone who can provide coaching for these events, and have them work with your throwers. It is also helpful to have someone tape the practice sessions of the throwers, so they can review their own performance.

As in all track and field events, proper warm-up and stretching is very important. Throwers should warm up by first jogging for a few minutes and then doing some stretching exercises for both the legs and the upper body. Lifting and throwing are not recommended to be done on the same day. Ideally, throw three times a week and lift weights on 3 other days of the week. Running and jumping can be done three times a week on either the throwing or lifting days.

Team Weight Throw

Two or three athletes, each throwing the shot and the discus, using the standard international weights for age and sex and decathlon-type scoring on an age- and sex-adjusted scale, with the summed score of the two best athletes in both events determining place.

Standard International Weights

	Shot	Discus
Men 49 years of age or under	16 lb	2.0 kilos
Men 50-59 years of age	12 lb	1.5 kilos
Men 60 years of age or older	8 lb	1.0 kilos
Women of all ages	4 kilos (8 lb, 13 oz)	1.0 kilos