

# A&M's Bill Newton dreams of competing in Olympics

By JERRY JOHNSON

"If he were in Europe, they'd have him in a national camp. He wouldn't be going to school or doing anything but throwing the javelin."

Those are the words of Randy Matson when asked to comment on Bill Newton, the javelin thrower for the A&M track team.

"He'd be under the guidance of a national," Matson continued. "They start their athletes over there at age six and if they show promise, they're put in a camp to work on their specialty."

Newton shows promise. He began to work with the javelin as a high school freshman. "The coach took the people interested in track out and tried us at each event. On my first throw ever with the javelin, I broke the existing school record," Newton said with a grin.

Obviously, Newton is not from Texas if he throws the javelin. "I'm from Haven, Kansas. It's one of the twenty states in the nation where they throw the javelin," Newton explained. Others include California, Oregon and Washington in the west, Arizona in the south and New Jersey in the east.

He was undefeated in high school competition as a senior. "I think I was ranked sixth or seventh in the nation. I was selected to throw at Golden West which is a big meet in California. I placed second there, three inches behind the winner."

Although the javelin is a field event, it is not a weight event. "It's not like the shot put or the discus. The javelin is a power event. To be successful, you have to transfer your speed and strength into the throw. It's similar to pitching a baseball." Newton stressed that he aims at a point in the sky and tries to throw the javelin point through there. "On a good throw, the tail will follow through the same place."

Assistant track coach Ted Nelson pointed out that Newton's "want to" is his greatest asset.

"The javelin is an individual event. Most of the work is done on your own," Nelson explained. "A thrower has to really want to improve himself. That's one of the reasons for Newt's good potential."

"Here in practice, I throw in the sticks (on the intramural fields behind Kyle Field). But in the big meets, we throw right in the middle of the track," Newton said. "We take films at the meets and at practice to see what I'm doing right or wrong."

This is Newton's second year in A&M and his second of competition in the Southwest Conference. "I finished fourth in the conference last year with a throw of 220 feet. A guy from Rice won the championship with a throw of 233 feet." Coach Nelson said Newton's best throw ever came in a dual meet last year. "He threw 232 feet against Baylor. That's just four feet short of Marc Black's school record."

In the first two outdoor meets of 1974, Newton had a first and second place finish. "At the second meet, I threw against last year's high school national champ. He's at Tulane now. That's the meet I got second in."

"At this point this season, Newt's way ahead of last year," Coach Nelson noted. "He wasn't hitting these distances until about the last of April." His first place toss this year was 217 feet against Rice.

Matson said that one reason for this was the fact that no one he's ever seen works as hard as Newton. "He'll ask me during the week if I'm going to work out on the weekend. If I do, he'll be there. With most guys, you have to get them to work out at all." Matson is also working with Newton on the fundamentals of putting the shot and throwing the discus.

Newton explained, "My major is physical education. When I graduate, I'd like to coach the weight events on the college level." Matson said that of the three top weight coaches, only one was a weight man. The other two were sprinters.

Matson commented that Newton has the dedication to work hard and perfect his fundamentals. This, he said, will make him a good coach because he will expect the same from the people he works with.

"Before that, I'd like to go to the Olympics. That's the ultimate in track," Newton said. On this, Matson, who has been there, said, "Bill could just do it because he thinks about the Olympics every-

day." The world record in the javelin is 308 feet and 8 inches by Klaus Wolferman of West Germany was set at the last ('72) Olympics.

As for this year's goals, Newton said he thinks he could throw 260 feet, without injuries and good weather withstanding. "The injuries a javelin thrower sustains are similar to the ones that happen to a pitcher. You could pull a muscle anytime or strain

your arm ligaments. It's also like throwing a football. You have to plant both feet when you throw or you could wreck your back."

The weather here is one of the reasons Newton came to A&M. "Anywhere else it would be cold now and I couldn't be throwing outside. Also, this place is pretty and the people are friendly."

Newton said that, contrary to what most people think, the point of the spear does not have to stick

for the throw to count. "In fact most of the officials don't realize that. The best throws land almost flat on the ground. In important competition, the officials will be there at the point of impact. The throw is marked where the point hits."

Some of the fundamentals Newton pointed out include no limit to his run before the throw and a toe board he has to throw from behind. In competition, the con-

testants get three throws and the winner is determined by the best throw.

The javelin has changed in some ways like any other sport. Newton explained, "Now we have Tartan runways at some meets and special javelin shoes. The javelin itself is virtually the same. It has been tapered different and the substance it's made from has changed. The best are made of Swedish steel."

Matson said he thinks the javelin is one of the toughest events in track and field to master. "To throw it, you have to have almost perfect timing. You have a fast approach and then you twist your body and hurl that light spear as far as you can. It's not a matter of action of the body and it really takes some time to master it." And Bill Newton just continues to work by himself in the sticks and think of the Olympics.

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