

High jump

ALL-TIME TRACK MEDALS

USA	307	225	181	713
USSR	71	66	77	214
G. BRITAIN	48	75	62	185
E. GERMANY	38	42	36	116



The Oregonian THURSDAY, AUG. 21, 2008 | 14TH OF 17

TODAY'S TV HIGHLIGHTS

8 a.m.: Women's soccer gold-medal match; women's beach volleyball gold-medal match (taped), Telemundo

10 a.m.: Men's open-water marathon swimming; women's water polo gold-medal match; equestrian: individual jumping final; rhythmic gymnastics (taped), NBC

2 p.m.: Men's freestyle wrestling gold-medal matches: 84kg, 96kg, 120kg (taped), CNBC

8 p.m.: Men's beach volleyball gold-medal match; track & field: men's 400m final, men's 110m hurdles final, women's 200m final (live), NBC

9 p.m.: Baseball semifinal (taped), CNBC

11 p.m.: Boxing: flyweight, featherweight, light welterweight, middleweight, heavyweight semifinals (taped), CNBC

11 p.m.: Men's basketball semifinals; men's water polo semifinals; flatwater canoe finals; track & field: 50km walk; table tennis (live), USA Network

OLYMPIC DEBUT: 1896

The high jump has been a part of the track and field competition at the modern Olympics since the original Athens games.



THE GEAR

High jumpers wear form-fitting clothes to prevent the uniform from contacting the crossbar. Jumpers often wear mismatched shoes: a cleated sole on the take-off foot and a smooth-soled running shoe on the other.

Many athletes practice on trampolines to help their dexterity when falling. With elite male athletes approaching heights of 8 feet, a graceful falling technique is important.

THE TECHNIQUE

In the long history of the high jump as an Olympic event, the technique for clearing the bar has been steadily modified and improved. One obsolete method is the "western roll," in which athletes attempted jumps face-down and nearly parallel with the crossbar. Until the late 1960s, the "scissor jump" was also popular. Jumpers would clear the bar one leg at a time, as if a high hurdle. The "Fosbury flop," popularized by American gold-medalist Dick Fosbury, has been used to set every high jump world record since 1978 and is now the standard.



Approach

Jumper accelerates along a curved path toward the crossbar.

Takeoff

Pushes off the takeoff leg, raising the body upward with the head leading the torso over the crossbar.

Clearance

Back is arched and the head is dropped, enabling hips to rise over the bar.

THE OBJECT

The high jump is a field event in which athletes try to jump over and clear a horizontal bar from a running start.

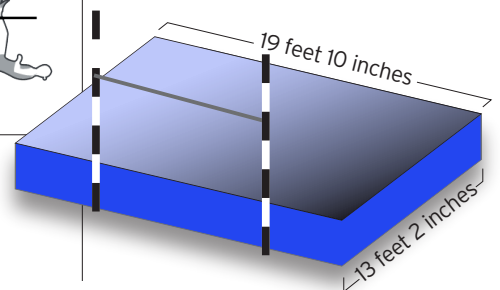
COMPETITION FORMAT

Contestants are split into two preliminary pools in which they take turns attempting to clear the bar at any height each individual chooses. If an athlete registers a clean jump, the bar is raised for her next attempt. An athlete stays in the preliminary competition until three consecutive failed attempts or they achieve an automatic qualifying height (a relative rarity). The top 12 from the preliminaries advance to the final, where they take turns attempting to clear (or choosing to pass) steadily increasing heights. An athlete is eliminated after failing three jumps in a row. The winner is the jumper to clear the highest crossbar.

Along with the individual competition, the high jump is a discipline for women competing in the heptathlon and men in the decathlon.

THE PIT

The jumping landing area, which used to be a sand trap when athletes would leap face-first over the crossbar, is now made of two pads that, stacked, are 2 feet 6 inches thick. The cross bar is 13 feet 2 inches wide and can be adjusted to various heights.



ONE TO WATCH

Russia's **Yelena Slesarenko** won women's high jump gold in Athens

U.S. HOPEFUL

Chaunte Howard was top finisher in women's high jump at Olympic trials