

Oldfield challenges 70-footers in preliminaries

By PAUL BUKER
Of the Emerald

Neil Steinbauer, the man who should know, says round one of the psychological war between America's giants in the shot goes to Brian Oldfield.

Three men—Oldfield, George Woods, and Randy Matson—battered the former Oregon great's Hayward Field record Friday to move into today's final.

His old record of 67-8 3/4 has stood since 1969. "I knew it would go the first day," Steinbauer said, after Oldfield went 68-9 3/4, Woods 68-10 3/4, and Matson 69-1/4.

Oldfield, a muscular giant from the Chicago Track Club, got his toss off on his opening throw.

But everybody in the stadium was buzzing after one practice put.

With a mighty roar, the massive Oldfield muscled a line-drive an estimated 72-7, minutes before the opening round.

And although Woods and Matson went farther, that gunshot could have a profound effect on the outcome.

"They're thinking about him," said Steinbauer. "You can be sure of that. It's bugging them."

He was talking about the awesome trio of 70-footers—Matson, Woods, and Al Feuerbach—who are supposed to dominate this event.

These three moved easily into the final confrontation which starts today at 6:30. Just about everyone else of note managed to flip the ball the required 62-4 qualifying distance.

The only exception was NCAA champion Fred DeBernardi of Texas El-Paso, who shockingly failed to make the 62-4 mark even though his best this year is 68-7 3/4.

"I kind of thought DeBernardi would be in the running," said Woods, who ranks second in the world behind Feuerbach with a top throw of 70-1 3/4.

"I thought he might be the one to push

the leaders and have a good chance to make the team."

But instead it's Oldfield, himself ninth on the world list, who appears the big challenger.

"I just wanted to qualify, really," said the giant from Chicago after the qualifying round.

"The long one felt good. I had to put fear into the hearts of the other guys. I'm coming from nowhere and I want them to know I'm around." They know.

"If he stays in the ring," nodded Matson, the world record holder at 71-5 1/2, "and doesn't foul—he could be tough."

Woods seemed surprised Oldfield would go that far in the first round. "It looked like a couple of guys out there were taking it seriously today," he said.

"I wasn't. I will tomorrow."

The challenger was on his mind. Physically, Oldfield stands out—even among behemoths like Matson and Woods.

"He's a good athlete," praised Woods. "He's got more raw explosive power than anybody I know of. The trouble is he hasn't learned to confine it yet."

With Feuerbach—the world leader with a put of 70-3 1/2—running fourth going into the final, it means somebody in the big three will be pressed.

"I wouldn't be at all surprised if the world record went," Woods smiled.

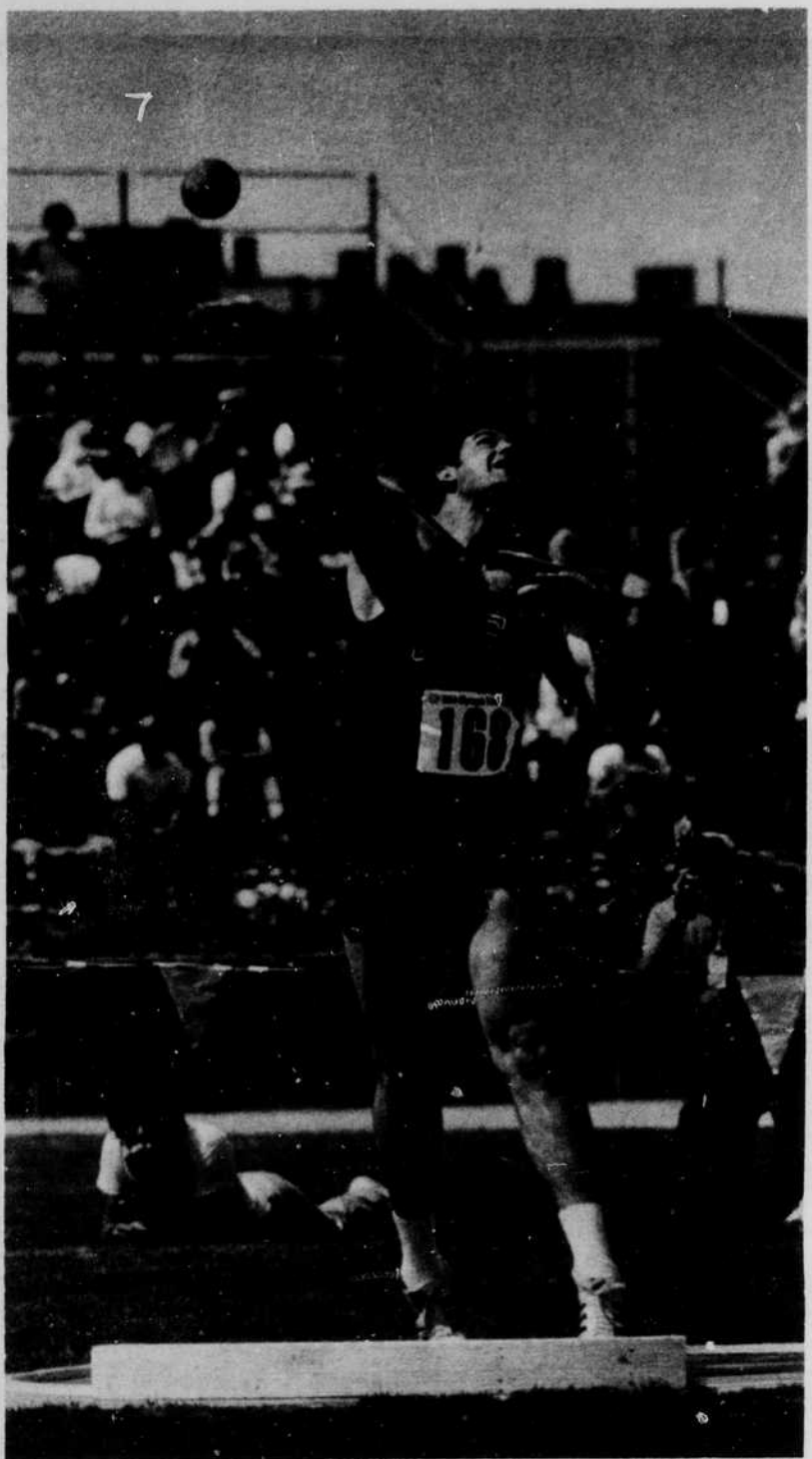
"If Oldfield gets off a high 70-footer, you're going to see three guys humping, that's for sure."

Matson—who comes off a terrible year considering his past glories, has to rank high.

His 69-footer looked ridiculously easy. And he talked like it was.

"I wanted to take an easy one at 66 or 67," said Matson. I hit it a little harder than I wanted to. I don't want to go into the finals and do poorly and say I left it all here."

If the big three are to remain intact, that's exactly what they better hope Oldfield did.



Randy Matson

Photo by Phil Waldstein

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