

# Spring Sports **RUNDOWN**

## Year makes difference for Skipper

By Ashley Conklin  
Emerald Sports Reporter

It would be difficult to measure the difference in Oregon javelin thrower Art Skipper this season.

One can look at Skipper's best throw of 246-5 this season, also the third best mark in the collegiate ranks, and say the difference is about 18 feet since the sophomore from Sandy had a best of 228-2 last season.

But the difference in Skipper this season goes far beyond feet and inches.

The biggest difference might be Skipper changing coaches.

Last year Skipper was coached by Dick Held who came to Oregon to go into business with Oregon head coach Bill Dellinger in a joint venture called Oregon Track Equipment.

This season Skipper has been

coached by Stewart Togher, who despite being known mostly as a hammer expert who got his background in Europe, coaches most of the other Duck throwers as well.

In fact, Skipper thinks the biggest change might be because of Togher.

"The coach I had last year wasn't as good as the coach I have this year," Skipper said. "Stewart is just a great coach."

Skipper had to rely mostly on older brother Scott, the former school record holder in the javelin, for training purposes last season.

Along with a change in coaching came a change in training that has benefited Skipper this season.

"In high school I was running all the time and worked out with the sprinters," he said. "I never got a chance to throw a lot and I think that actually helped."

"With Dick Held last year my arm was ready to fall off," Skipper said. "With Dick I was doing a lot of weird things like throwing a baseball and pitching. With Stewart he knows what's good."

Togher doesn't try to take a lot of credit for Skipper's success, but he knew there were certain things that needed to be changed.

"I found he needed to work and train in a system," he said. "It's truly hard to explain. I have a different way of teaching. Coming from Europe I have a different approach."

There is no doubting the formula Skipper and Togher have used for success.

It all started in the Oregon Preview when Skipper threw 238-4 to qualify for the NCAA meet and break his school record.

At a dual with Washington State on April 7, Skipper was pushed by the Cougars' Stefan Wickstrom who opened up an early lead until Skipper uncorked a throw of 243-1.

At the Pepsi Team Invitational last Saturday he broke his own school record again, this time with a toss of 246-5 despite a bothersome groin injury.

To the outside observer, it would appear that Skipper is just getting better with age. After all, he did set the national high school record of 259-10 with the old implement his senior year in high school.

But Skipper says he never would have imagined himself where he is now after what happened last season — despite setting the school record and going to the NCAA meet — and summed up last season in one word.

"Bad," he said. "I had a lot of personal problems and I was trying to get adjusted to college and at the same time I was engaged. I was doing a lot of things, but not training."

There were plenty of things Skipper had to worry about last year. There was the pressure of setting the high school national record in the javelin and being named national prep athlete of the year by *Track & Field News* and *Gatorade/Scholastic Coach*.

And then there was the engagement to his girlfriend. Although they still see each other occasionally, the engagement was broken off.

One of the things Skipper found out last season was just how much people expected of him.

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