

**Ben Stiller** **Jack Black**

Success didn't go to his head, it went to his neighbor.

A BARRY LEVINSON FILM

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DREAMWORKS PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT  
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A BALTIMORE / SPRING CREEK PICTURES PRODUCTION A BARRY LEVINSON FILM BEN STILLER JACK BLACK "ENVY" RACHEL WEISZ AMY POEHLER AND CHRISTOPHER WALKEN  
MUSIC BY ALLAN MASON MUSIC BY MARK MOTHERSBAUGH EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARY McLAGLEN  
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## VAULTER

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better than anyone else because of that."

Skipper picked up on selflessness from time spent with his older brother Art, who died in a small plane crash in 2001 at the age of 31.

Tommy grew up watching Art experience success in the javelin as a Duck. While at Oregon, Art set the school record (251-8, broken by John Stiegeler in 2001, 252-10) and was a two-time All-American. Tommy said he thinks of Art every time he competes in a meet.

"I think about him every day," Skipper said. "(It's hard) when you lose the person that inspires you to be better and to live life. He's my motivation for everything. He honestly was my best friend."

Along with a humble attitude, Art instilled a fiery desire to be the best inside Tommy, who fell in love with the pole vault in the seventh grade and has been hard at work ever since.

Despite his accolades in the pole vault, Tommy said he was anything but a natural at first.

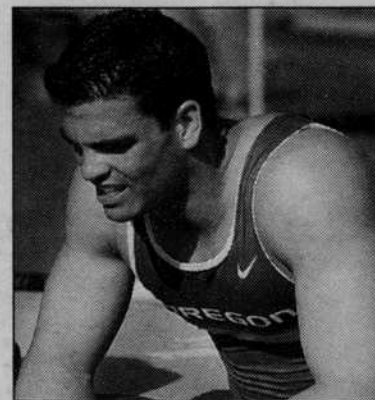
"It was something that I enjoyed so that kind of drove me to always want to pole vault every single chance that I got," Skipper said. "It didn't come naturally to me. I had to work at it every single chance I got."

Being able to stay focused and maintain a strong work ethic are reasons Skipper has gotten this far. From an athletic standpoint, it was obvious he could accomplish anything if he put his mind to it.

Along with the pole vault, Skipper also starred in the 100-meter dash, the 200, the long jump, the high jump and the javelin. Outside of track and field, he was also a talented prep football player. As a wide receiver, he could out-jump almost any defensive back in the Mt. Hood Conference. When he wasn't catching passes, he was showing off his leg as an all-state punter.

And as if Skipper's athletic résumé wasn't impressive enough, the San Diego Padres selected him in the 37th round of the 2003 Major League Baseball Amateur Draft, despite the fact Skipper had never played an inning of organized baseball in his life.

With other options available, it was Skipper's love for track and his desire to be the best that kept him



Lauren Wimer Senior Photographer

Freshman Tommy Skipper, whose brother Art attended Oregon in the early 1990s, already owns the school's pole vault record.

focused. That same competitive desire has rubbed off on his Oregon teammates in their pursuit of improvement.

"His work ethic and his demand for perfection (are motivating)," Woods said. "He almost gets too frustrated because he wants to be too perfect. The attitude that he brings about wanting to be the best is what we feed off of."

While Skipper's marks in the pole vault are congratulated by teammates, it's his friendship that is appreciated. Getting into a conversation with the freshman about his marks will likely lead to a quick change in subject matter.

"If you start talking to (Skipper) about how he did, he'd rather just talk about how you did," sophomore high jumper Jeff Lindsey said. "He's such a laid-back guy that he's fun to hang out with."

If Skipper's athleticism, attitude and contributions to the Oregon track and field program had to be summarized in one word, head coach Martin Smith prefers to use the G-word.

"The thing about Tommy you enjoy is how genuine he is," Smith said. "He's not about making himself out to be better than everyone else. He's able to bring other nice qualities to the table. He wants to do everything he can to help the team. His strengths are deep-rooted inside of him and he has a very mature ability to carry himself in a way that he's very comfortable around other people. What you see with Tommy is that he's very sincere."

Contact the sports reporter at [jonroetman@dailyemerald.com](mailto:jonroetman@dailyemerald.com).

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