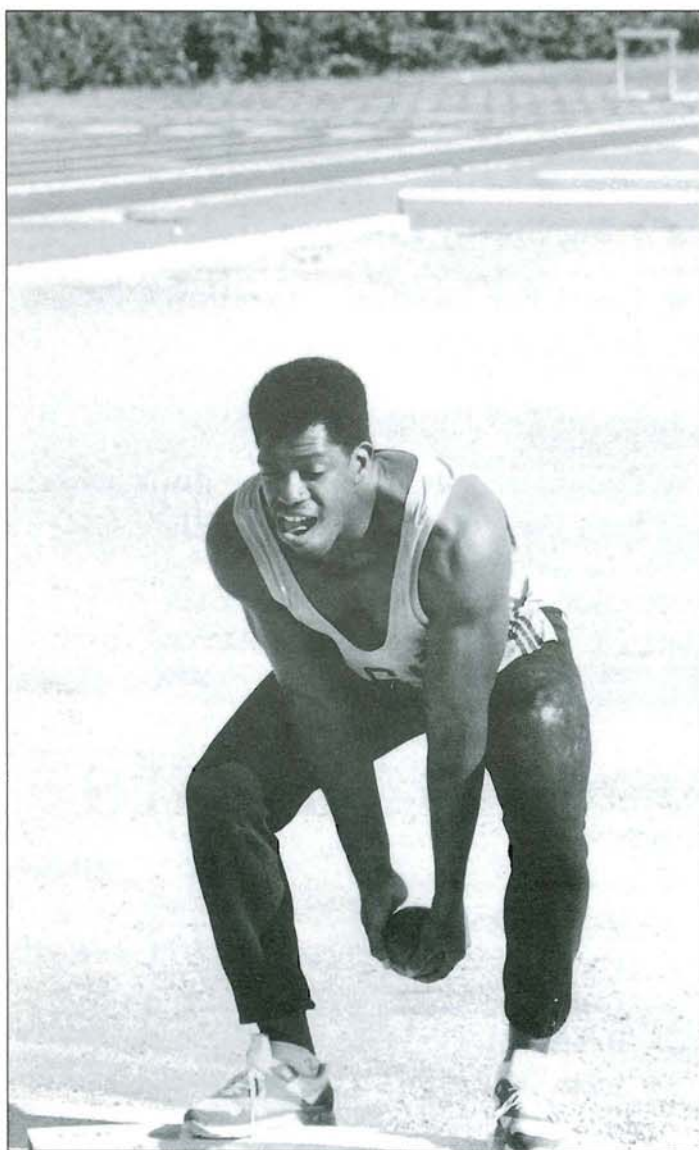


JOHN NICHOLS



John Nichols incorporates the 16 pound Overhead Back Throw in his training routine. John has thrown nearly 60 feet while at Louisiana State University.

By Dr. Greg Shepard

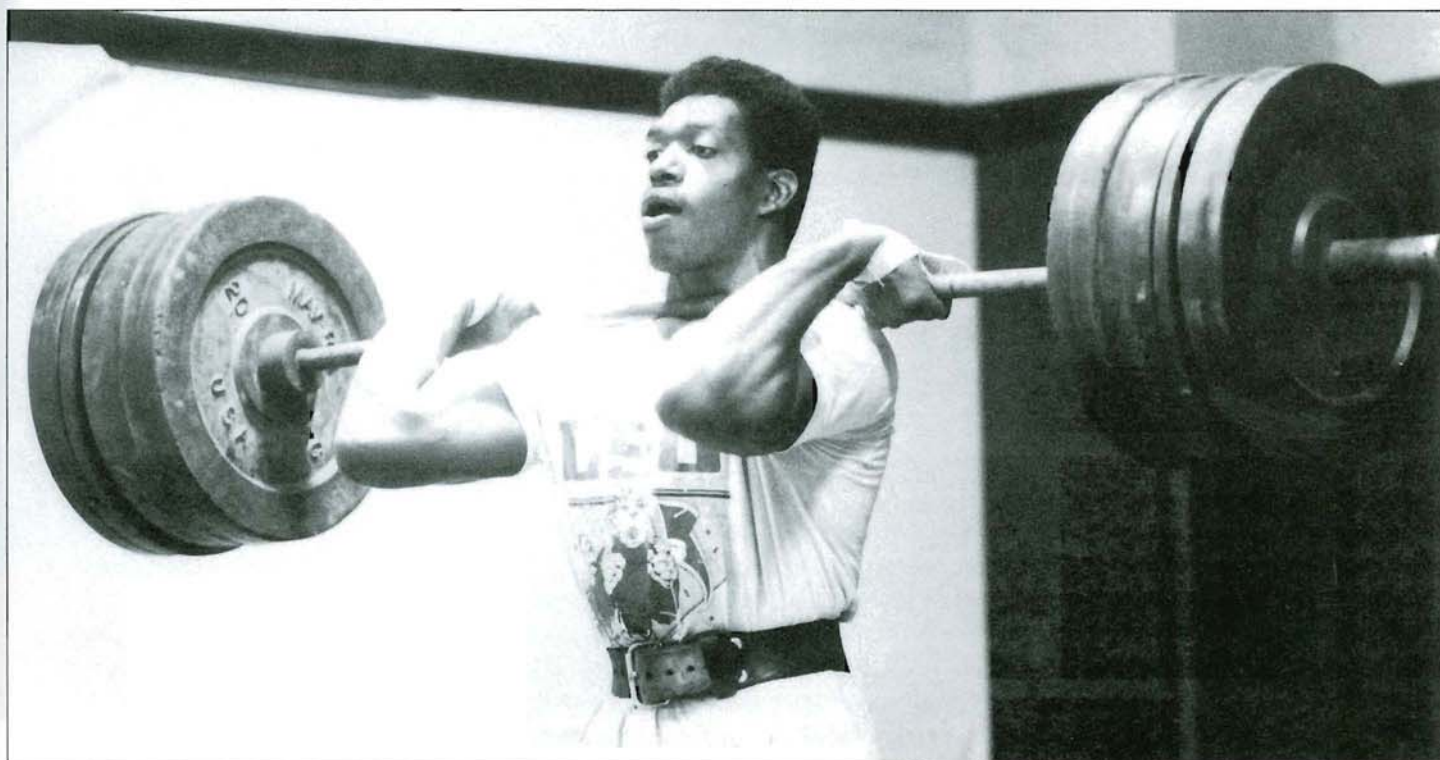
Brigham Young University hosted the NCAA Track and Field Championships this year and in addition, held a free clinic for the kids in the area. Since my 14 year old son is a thrower, I pulled him out of school and couldn't wait to attend the clinic. There were a lot of little kids but hardly any high school athletes. My son was given a free track t-shirt. They introduced about 25 high school and college coaches who would be our instructors. I couldn't keep them all straight but the list was impressive.

Matt, my son, went to the Discus first and then the Javelin. We received some great instruction by some outstanding college coaches. The Shot Put was next and

we were met by an energetic, enthusiastic coach. I thought he was a throwing coach from a local high school. I asked several people who he was but they didn't know.

We started out with softballs. The coach had a whole bag of softballs. Step-by step the group of kids went through the technique of Shot Putting with those softballs. I was totally impressed. I thought, "This guy is pretty good. He's got a great way with kids. His high school is lucky to have him. I saw a great coach and a great teacher." After throwing the softballs, we progressed to the Shot Put ring and continued the clinic. "This guy," I exclaimed, "should be coaching at a University."

NCAA DISCUS CHAMP



John has Hang Cleaned 415 pounds. Notice his head, eye, wrist and elbow position. John has racked the weight solidly on shoulders.

LSU THROWING CORPS: The Dan Pfaff Era (1985-89)

School Records

	Men	Women
Shot Put	65-7	55-9 1/4
Discus	208-1	172-10
Javelin	247-11	204-9
*Heptathlon	----	5848
*Decathlon	8126	----

SEC Champions (85-89)

Indoor and outdoors, men and women

Shot Put	7
Discus	2
Javelin	3
*Multievents	13

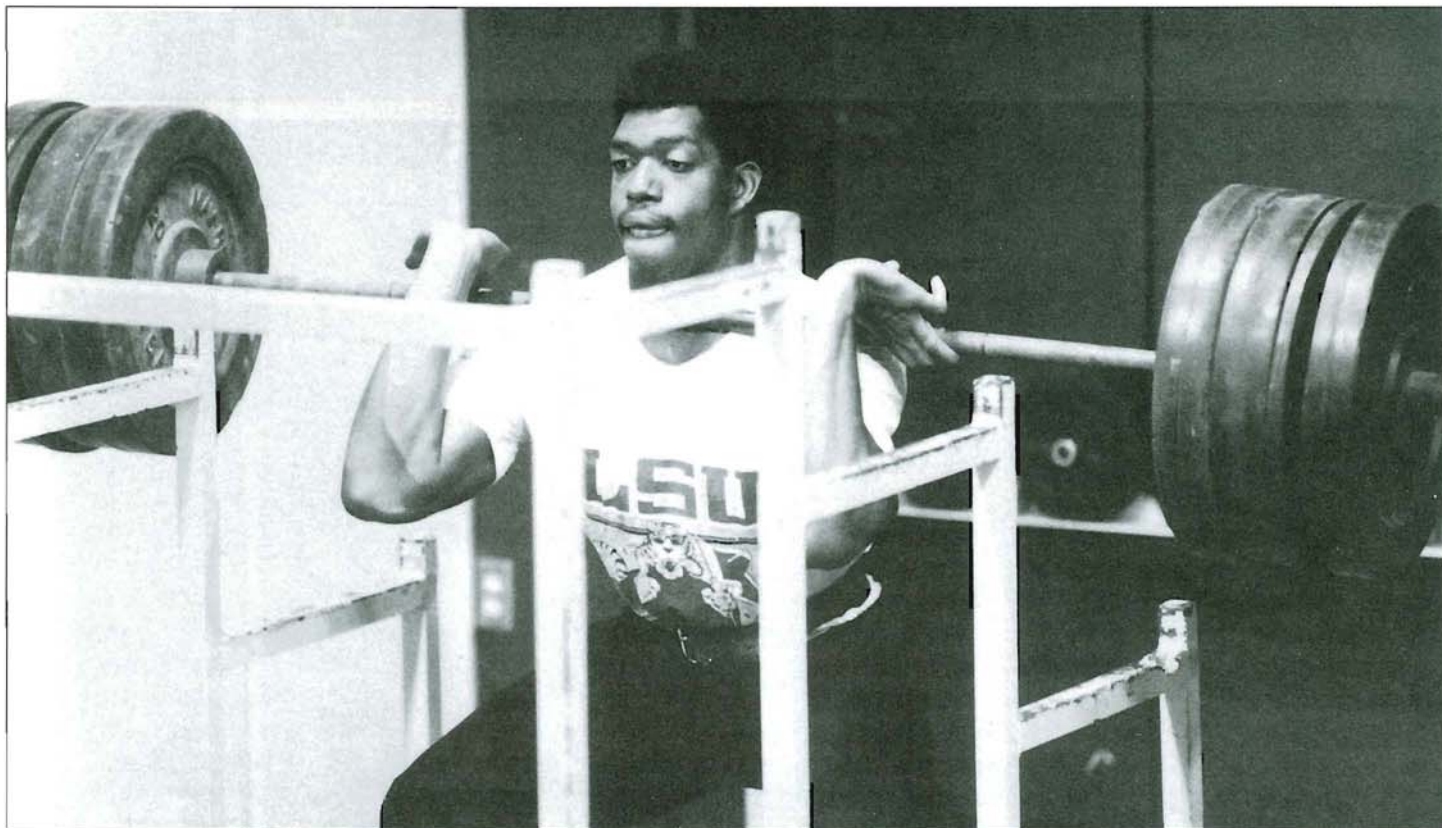
NCAA Results (85-89)

men and women	
Qualifiers	34
All-Americans	26
Champions	4
Olympians	2
World Championship	
Qualifiers	2
World Record Holders	3
TAC Champions	1

* Coach Pfaff considers multi-eventers part of our corps due to the importance of the throws to the overall score!

Continued on the next page

JOHN NICHOLS: LSU'S NCAA DISCUS CHAMP



John Front Squats with 425 pounds.

Congenital lower back problems have prevented John from training with the conventional Parallel Squat.

Later I found out that I had been mistaken. Our Shot Put instructor was Dan Pfaff, the extraordinary throwing coach for the Tigers of LSU. The next week my son set a personal record in the Shot Put by three feet.

At the NCAA meet, we bumped into Coach Pfaff again while we were watching the Discus. I thanked him again and we talked about doing an article on his throwers with emphasis of John Nichols, who was just about to become the first American Sophomore to win the NCAA Discus Championship since 1951, John popped one out 208-1 for a clear cut victory.

John Nichols attended Winnfield Senior High School in Louisiana and threw 212 feet as a senior. Under ordinary circumstances that throw would have been the best in the nation. However, Kami Keshmiri set a national record that year at 225-2. (We did a feature story on Kami two years ago) Coach Pfaff reported that John threw one for 230 feet at a summer meet in California only to have it go out of bounds. "I also watched him throw the college Discus 190 feet while in high school" remarked Coach Pfaff.

Naturally, John was highly recruited by a number of major schools but LSU has a great art school. "That made a difference," said Coach Pfaff. John was also an All-State Quarterback as a junior. I wondered why John didn't play football in college, even though a shoulder injury prevented him from playing as a senior. Coach Pfaff gave his opinion, "John marches to a different

drum. He's an artist, and I think he's in love with the artistic symmetry and creativity of motion that is provided by the Discus. I just feel he got hooked at an early age."

John began training in junior high and his high school had a nice weight room. John Bench and Squatted but didn't do much of the Olympic type lifts until going to LSU.

After a short while at LSU, John gained a solid twenty pounds because of the consistent nutrition provided at their training table. However, chronic congenital and high school injuries hampered his technique and altered his training lifts.

It was hard to Snatch because of the injury to his non-throwing shoulder. Cleans from the floor were difficult because of his congenital low back problems. Coach Pfaff decided to have John do Hang Cleans. It turned out to be a good decision. The Front Squat evolved for the same reasons. John can't do a conventional Back Squat. John used to do a lot of Leg Presses but he was soon able to do the machine's limit easily and it didn't produce very good results. Coach Pfaff acidulously declared, "Man invented machines to do his work. We had to find some way for John to work with free weights. We came up with Front Squats."

Coach Pfaff was raised on a farm near Dayton, Ohio. In high school he played football and Pole Vaulted.

Continued on page 71