Combined events

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(Questions by Jim Alford)

1. Paradoxically the combined events athlete is very much a specialist, in the sense that very few people possess the physical attributes and abilities to perform such a range of events to a high standard. Taking this into consideration, how would you go about attracting more young people to the event?

MÄKELÄ:
I think this problem – at least according to us, combined event persons – exists throughout the world. The best solution to this question would be a well organised system of competition for children and young athletes.

As we know, the practice of combined events develops children and young athletes in the best possible way. That is why, at this level, the federations should lay more emphasis on competition models in the combined events than in other event groups (sprint-hurdles, long distance, jumps, throws).

In this way, more talented children would also take part in the combined events during their early years. Normally they often start to specialise too soon in the event in which they achieve good results, even below the age of ten.

A good experience of the combined events makes it easier for them to find the right event/events at the age of 14 to 17. I think the DLV (German Athletics Federation) has done good work in this respect for many decades. This can be seen from the results achieved.

MARTINEZ:
The combined events competition has a special attraction for young people, because it answers what they naturally want to know: that is, how fast can I run, how far or how high can I jump and how far can I throw? It also allows them to compare their own performances with those of others of their age and environment. Athletics would attract more participants if competitions for the very young were conducted under the combined events format but this format would have to be flexible and include the full range of athletic specialities, with competitions on each day in a fixed number of events, 2, 3 or 4, depending on the age of the competitors.
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This type of competition, although, in my opinion, it does not guarantee more athletes for the senior combined events, should provide a good guide for identifying a real talent for them. I am sure that more young people would take up the combined events, if they were given the opportunity to participate in multiple events competitions at an early age.

To sum up, adults must pay more attention to young people; it is we, the adults, who fail, not the young people.

McSTRAVICK:
In attracting more young people to the event we must try to consider what motivates young people in athletics. In my mind, athletics must be attractive; there must be fun and enjoyment; it must be challenging (suitable competition structure is important here) and it must offer variety. A ‘multi-event’ approach, I feel, satisfies these requirements.

The key issue here is trying to persuade the coaches that a ‘multi-event’ approach is the best way for athletes to develop. All current research and empirical evidence strongly suggest that specialisation at too early an age is counter-productive to the developing athlete (13-16 years of age). If coaches are able to provide the opportunities offered by a balanced, all-round training programme, in which the training is extensive, with lots of variety and predominantly skill-based, then athletes would be versatile at a young age. From this approach would come those youngsters who are challenged by a combined event – pentathlon, octathlon, heptathlon or decathlon – although many athletes would go on to specialise in an individual event from this ‘healthy’ approach.

MONOT:
In France, for a long time, the combined events athlete was regarded as an all-round athlete who found he had no real future in any individual event and so turned to the decathlon, in which he achieved some success. Even today, some special event coaches seem to think the same but now, when they consider the high level performances of athletes like Christian Plaziat or Alain Blondel, there is a rather surprising turn-about, in that they now give their opinion that, if Plaziat were to concentrate on the long jump or hurdles, he would be a top class athlete in those events and, similarly, Blondell could have been a world class pole vaulter.

Very few of these people have really discussed this matter with the athletes, to try to understand their concept of being specialists in the combined events. Decathlon enthusiasts have seen, over at least the past 20 years, a progressive evolution of the event, which has created another category of combined event athletes, really clever men, with a wide range of physical qualities and, above all, a great spirit and mental attitude for the combined events. Sometimes I feel that a combined event specialist gets bored at working at only one event; his qualities of co-ordination and adaptation urge him to show a different sort of skillfulness. Only by this superior juggling of 10 events is he able to show his talent. He has many strong points and he will never stop working on his weak ones. I think that this demonstrates the speciality of the event and this is what attracts athletes to it.

SANDERSON:
The first step is to provide opportunity. A competitive development path is required. This should range from easily accessible modified combined event competitions for young athletes to progressively
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more demanding event configurations, leading to decathlon and heptathlon competition as the athlete nears physical maturity.

A factor that has turned many athletes with potential away from the combined events is the tendency of coaches of individual events to recognize the athlete’s talent and encourage specialization. I do not have a solution to this problem, other than to encourage combined events coaches to increase their efforts to attract talented athletes to their training group.

Another factor that is ultimately important is the profile of combined events and the existence of role models for prospective participants. As Konrad Lerch (Götzis Meet Director) pointed out in his presentation to the European Coaches Congress in February 1995, the opportunity to earn money through decathlon and heptathlon is very limited when compared to individual events. The concept of a Grand Prix of combined events has been discussed for a number of years. A Grand Prix would provide the top combined events athletes with an opportunity to enhance their incomes and would provide positive publicity for the event. This would have a positive influence in both attracting athletes to the combined events and in motivating talented athletes to continue to pursue combined events through a longer career.

It is critical that young athletes have a positive experience when they are introduced to the combined events. The events that make up the combined events for younger age groups, be it a triathlon or pentathlon, should be relatively easy to perform, so that the beginner can experience some success. The challenge of the combined events and the camaraderie that exists among combined events athletes should motivate the athlete who has a positive initial experience to continue. This, of course, depends on a programme being available that provides adequate combined event competitive opportunity with a logical development path.

SHURAVETZKY:

I run a number of combined events clinics and camps around the country and, in discussions with the athletes, my first question is ‘Why did you choose the combined events in preference to individual ones?’ I get various answers but the two most common are ‘I enjoy doing a lot of events’ and ‘I am good at it.’ I believe that this is the key to talent identification and recruitment. As a coach, I simply look for the youngsters who are good at it or enjoy doing a lot of events. The old myth that the athletes who are not good enough to make it in the individual events go to the combined events is still around and does not recognize the combined event athlete as a specialist.

Attracting more young people to the event is an educational process and rests on the shoulders of the coaches, because the combined events discipline does not make it to the front page of track and field publications and rarely appears on TV. We, the coaches, have to promote the event and convince the multi-talented youngsters, whether they are already training for track and field or just show ability while playing other sports, that they possess the unique qualities to become the special breed of athletes competing in the event which is the greatest test of human physical and mental abilities. The effort can be rewarding. As an example, a very successful Australian athlete, 1994 World Junior high jump champion, Jagan Hames, now trains for the decathlon. He recently set a new Australian junior record (7602) and is looking forward to his career in the decathlon.
2. At approximately what age have you found that boys and girls begin to show potential for the combined events and how would you proceed to develop their aptitude for the event?

MÄKELÄ:
Resulting from their earlier maturity, girls begin to show their potential for the combined events at the age of 14-15. With the boys, this phase arrives about two years later. At this age I think the skills of combined events should occupy the most important area in training. The key events for girls are the 100m hurdles, high jump and javelin. For boys it is important to ensure the right basic technique, especially in the first four events of the second day. In building the physical condition of young combined event athletes, the whole area of running, especially sprinting/speed but also anaerobic-aerobic capacity (not lactic capacity), should be given more importance than exercises of power or explosive strength.

MARTINEZ:
At the age of 16 to 17. You can discover the appropriate abilities earlier but an aptitude for the combined events implies other parameters, which take time to become apparent. Methods of developing ability for the combined events have already been described in many publications but the real job of a coach is complex and the programme must be planned according to the athlete and his or her attributes.

My own method is based on the development of the qualities of speed, speed/strength and the basic technique of the specialties, without attaching any special importance to the 400m and 1500m for men or the 800m for women, since the years of training and competition will do a better job than the coach. This is accompanied by constant and intense attention to the mental attitude of the athletes, so that they can apprehend the essence of the combined events competition, as a unity and not just a collection of several events.

MESTRAVICK:
Girls begin to show potential at an early age (12-13 years old), if they have hurdled and jumped; boys a bit later around the age of 15. But I think it is not until the age of 17, i.e. when they move into the U20 age group, that they are willing to concentrate on training for combined events. At that age, they begin to understand the concept of 'longer term development'.

MONOT:
I think that the many-sided work entailed in acquiring suitable techniques for the different events is one of the keys of success in athletics. Nothing is more pleasant than to see young athletes showing technical ease in the different athletic disciplines. The physical preparation overlaps this many-sided practice, the different physical qualities are developed in an exact rhythmic order of the different athletic specialties. As the child grows up to the age of about 16 to 17, when the pubertal phase is over, the preponderant natural physical qualities will guide his potential to one or the other event. If, by luck, excellent co-ordination is his greatest asset, then, without doubt, the combined events will be one of its future orientations. It cannot be denied that the athlete must have available the technical facilities required to develop all the disciplines and also the coach to guide his future progress.

In France, with this in mind, we try to allow the youth to follow this path. We can reach, with relative ease, all parts of France and
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allow the youngsters to develop the event they prefer and to make them understand that they can also progress in those events they do not like so much. However, in the decisive phase of selection we often encounter, in many clubs, the problem of facilities and, more often still, the lack of specialized coaches. The specialized structure of athletics in general exists. We have athletic clubs and training centres, but only a few coaches propose to specialize in the combined events.

Nevertheless, what an opportunity there is for a beginner coach to advance his education with the young ones, by experiencing the fun of having a go at all events, what a deep insight into athletics, what technical richness, what a variety of experiences within a short time!

I give this advice to the young coaches: Go ahead, be daring, try the challenge of combined events coaching!

SANDERSON:
I believe that a broad based programme that develops a wide range of abilities is important for all children. Based on this philosophy, I encourage combined event participation for all young track and field athletes. Early specialization in a single individual event should be discouraged. As previously stated, a progressive combined event programme should be in place for all beginning athletes.

It is not possible to give a chronological age at which certain events should be introduced. The rate of development of the physical, motor, socio-emotional and cognitive abilities varies considerably from child to child. If one compares an early developer and a late developer of the same chronological age, large differences can be observed. Yet there is no evidence that late developers have less potential to achieve high level results once they reach maturity.

Based on the above, it is important to introduce a wide range of activities to all young athletes. The prepubescent years are also referred to as the ‘skill hungry years’. At no time can the rough form of skills be better developed.

If such a broad based programme is in place, and if the participants have a positive experience, the coach is in a good position to recognize the potential combined events athlete and to attract the athlete to the combined events programme.

SHURAVETZKY:
Multi-talented young people show their ability at 10 to 12 years of age but I would not rush to any conclusions till after the puberty growth spurt. I believe 12-14 year old girls and 14-16 old boys are the best age groups to look for prospective combined events athletes.

For the next two or three years I would work at developing their physical qualities (speed, general endurance, strength, flexibility, agility) and the technical skills. I would observe them in action and judge their attitude towards training, rate of improvement and psychological make-up. Two to three years later I would make the final decision about the event choice.

I think we should always keep the door open for 18-21 years old talented athletes who come from other sports. Experience has shown that, in a relatively short period of time (5-6 years), they can reach international level.
3. What form of competition do you consider suitable for the younger age groups 13 to 16?

MÄKELÄ:

Three years ago we developed our forms of competition with young combined events athletes in a more exact way. At the age of 13-15, we started to use a hexathlon of two days instead of four events in one day.

At first the change led to a decrease in the number of participants but now the new forms of competition have become more and more popular.

The events of the hexathlon are:

**Girls**
- 13-14-15: 80m hurdles (12.00-8.00-12.00-76.2) - high jump - shot put - long jump - javelin (400g) - 800m.
- 16: Heptathlon with 76.2cm high hurdles and 3kg shot.

**Boys**
- 13: 80m hurdles (12.00-8.00-12.00-76.2) - long jump - javelin (600g) - pole - discus (1.0kg) - 800m.
- 14: The only exception, 84.0cm high hurdles.
- 15: The exceptions: 100m hurdles (13.00-8.50-10.50-84.0) and discus (1.5kg).
- 16: Decathlon with 5.4kg shot - 100m hurdles like above - 1.5kg discus - 600g javelin (700g from '96).

MARTINEZ:

At this age, combined events competitions may take place on one or two days - on one day at the beginning of the season and then gradually progressing to two days later on. Each competition day should include a throw, a jump and a race, with or without hurdles and the actual events should be varied from day to day. As far as races are concerned, I would never programme distances above 200 metres for boys and 150 metres for girls; long distance races are the enemy of the combined events. In the case of possible national, regional or local competitions, the events included could be chosen by lot, on the day of the competition. It should be a competition for teams of 2, 3 or 4 athletes.

McSTRAVICK:

The coach should adopt a multi-event approach to training, but competition should still be geared towards success. The key to success in combined events is to eliminate any weaknesses and yet develop the athlete's strong points. However, with the 13-16 age group, coaches should emphasise the latter point. This is because young athletes want to see the results of their efforts clearly and they should experience success in their 'good' events, which they enjoy, whilst having a go at others.

Competing in triathlons, for example, one jump, one throw and one track event, and pentathlons, allows athletes to excel in some events, while recognising the fact that they will need to spend time working on the others.

MONOT:

Three types of competitions could help to discover athletes for the combined events:

a) *The multiple event competition*, held in half a day. Unlike the combined events, the multiple event is not prescribed; each child chooses one track, one jumping and one throwing event and the scoring tables are used to give their final result. In this way the
children develop the different running, jumping and throwing abilities and begin to acquire a full athletic education.

b) The small one day combined events competition (there could be different events at each competition, for example, hurdles, pole vault and javelin on one day, sprint, hammer, triple jump and middle distance on another). Each child will go through the same group of events with his own age group. In this way he will discover the value of the scoring tables in indicating the respective worth of his individual events.

c) The traditional 2 days combined event could be adapted in regard to the selection of events for the different age groups but, in my view, this should take the form chosen by each country. In any case, it should include the key technical events, hurdles, pole vault, javelin. In France, for example, we have chosen, for the very young (13-14 years), 6 events, 3 per day. This traditional event could run without difficulty at the same time as the event for the adults and allow the young ones to have a direct contact, once or twice a year, with the 'big stars'.

SANDERSON:
As previously stated, the variations in rates of development make it impossible to determine what is best at any given chronological age. The coach must be aware of individual differences and structure training and competition to meet the needs of each individual athlete.

There are basic guidelines that give us some direction in selecting the events that are suitable. For example, prepubescent children have a high intramuscular capacity. They have the capacity to increase stride rate. Alactic training for speed, involving short runs at high cadence should be emphasized. Activities that require rapid movement of the feet and legs should be stressed. Such activities as hurdling, with the hurdles set at reduced distances that require rapid leg movement, are important.

The main goal should be to produce a wide range of co-ordination capacities and sound basic movement patterns.

With the foregoing in mind, combinations of events that make up the combined events should be varied from age to age, so that the athlete is exposed to a wide range of events.

SHURAVETZKY:
In Australia, for the age groups in question, we have the following combined events competitions.

**Pentathlon**
U14 boys: 90m hurdles (76.2), high jump, 200m, shot, 800m.
- This is a one day competition.
U14 girls: 80m hurdles (76.2), high jump, 200m, shot, 800m.
- This is a one day competition.

**Heptathlon**
U16 boys: Day 1: 100m hurdles (91.4), high jump, shot, 200m.
    Day 2: Long jump, javelin, 1500m.
U16 girls: Day 1: 90m hurdles (84.0), high jump, shot, 200m.
    Day 2: Long jump, javelin, 800m.

The boys and girls compete at state and national level and get their first experience of combined events competition. I have found this sort of competition quite suitable for the 13-16 years old age groups.
4. Do you think that there is an argument for making the scoring tables more equitable for the ‘throws’ type of athlete? In your opinion, what modifications to the tables would bring this about?

MÄKELÄ:
I think it is not necessary to make any modifications to the tables. Compared to previous decades, the decathlete-type has gone in the direction of sprints and jumps.

MARTINEZ:
The present scoring table is a good one; it does not produce ‘winners’ who would be ‘crippled’. Any scoring table could be considered discriminatory or unfair by any athlete or coach but the only real discrimination is that of genetics.

McSTRAVICK:
I think the current tables provide the correct test for the all-rounder. An athlete who comes from a speed/jumps background needs to work hard at the throws. Conversely, a jumps/throws athlete will need to work hard at speed and a throws type of athlete will need to work hard on speed and jumping! Christian Schenk, Olympic Champion in 1988, won by excelling in the high jump and discus, while having poor performances in the 100 metres, 400 metres, 110 metres hurdles and pole vault. The 1992 Olympic Champion, Robert Zmelik, comparatively under performed in the throws yet superior performances in the 100 metres, long jump and 110 metres hurdles made the difference to win.

Combined Events athletes will always score less points in the throws compared to other events. Heptathlon and decathlon training is and always will be a compromise. Spend too much time on one event or group of events and you will be sliding downhill elsewhere.

MONOT:
At the moment athletes adapt their training to the present IAAF tables, in order to gain maximum possible points. It is possible that some ‘under-estimation’, especially in the throws, has influenced the athletes’ profiles. A modification of one part of the scoring tables would immediately provoke modifications and trends in training. One could modify the throwing scores to give more points to the throwers but this is not the most important thing. Thought should soon be given to designing a really progressive table that takes into account the sum of necessary efforts to be undertaken by the same athlete to improve, for example, from 14 to 15 metres in the shot put and the time required to go from 16 to 17 metres. This should be done for each event, with the sole view of attaining a fair equivalence. Without doubt, we should then see a ‘better adjusted’ table. This is a work of long duration and the specialists in the different countries should be consulted before any final decision of this sort is made.

SANDERSON:
I am basically opposed to any change that makes comparison of scores over time more difficult. Although the scoring tables approved by the IAAF Congress in 1984 and brought into effect in 1985 do present some anomalies, the difficulty in re-scoring previous years results, so that comparison is possible, outweighs any advantages that change would produce.

With respect to the throwing events, the trends would appear to be different for men than for women. The point production for the throwing events is not greatly different from the other events for a number of the leading decathletes. On the other hand, the leading
4. Do you think that there is an argument for making the scoring tables more equitable for the 'throws' type of athlete? In your opinion, what modifications to the tables would bring this about?

Heptathletes appear to gain significantly lower points in the throws than in the other heptathlon events. It should be noted, however, that the throws can be the decisive factor in determining heptathlon outcome as was seen with Denise Lewis' 53.68m javelin at the 1994 Commonwealth Games to claim victory over Jane Flemming. It is possible that training emphasis is a cause of the lower throws points.

SHURAVETZKY:
I do not think we have to favour any one type of athlete. The nature of the event itself makes the choice. 7 running/jumping events in the decathlon and 5 in the heptathlon put the all round combined event competitor with a strong running/jumping background into a favourable position. In my view, any attempt to change the structure of the event would be artificial.

5. Now that women are allowed to compete in all the events included in the combined events, do you think that the women's combined event should become a decathlon, either with the same structure as the men's event or with modification?

MÄKELÄ:
I do agree that the women's combined events should move towards the decathlon. The role of the combined events should be to find the 'jacks of all trades' in track and field. Heptathlon does not fulfill this task in the best possible way.

A very concrete example of this was Heike Drechsler's top result in the heptathlon last autumn in Talence, after she had been absent from the event for more than a decade.

The structure of the women's decathlon should be similar to men's decathlon, but with the 4kg shot, 100m hurdles, 1kg discus and 600g javelin.

MARTINEZ:
Without any doubt, women will eventually have the decathlon as their combined events competition and the present structure is suitable for them. The problem will be how to organise events for both men and women on the same days.

McSTRAVICK:
The answer to this question in theory is yes and I think it will happen, but not for a while. Enthusiasts have argued and discussed the question 'do the events that make up the decathlon provide a true test of the all-round athlete?' I tend to think they do, with a good balance of track, jumping and throwing events. If that is the case, then logically the true test of the female all-rounder has to be the decathlon.

MONOT:
At the moment the women's combined events are at a very low ebb; on the second day the girls feel bored and the time tables are sometimes disrupted. Many of the young women think they could do more but what events and how many? We launched a little inquiry in France among the athletes and coaches. The questions asked were the following:
* Are you pro or con an evolution?
* If yes, how many and what events?

The result was rather surprising.
- The great majority voted for a change; only the very young, inexperienced girls (15-16 years) wished the event to stay as it is today.
5. Now that women are allowed to compete in all the events included in the combined events, do you think that the women’s combined event should become a decathlon, either with the same structure as the men’s event or with modification?

- Many voted for 8 or 9 events.
- Some voted outright for the Decathlon.
- The high level athletes, some of whom already train for the pole vault, opted for the decathlon.

A great number of combined event coaches also voiced their opinion on the subject. In general they are for an evolution towards the decathlon, although sometimes with a feeling that the event might suffer if it is thought to be too difficult.

I myself favour a female decathlon. Undoubtedly, the event will be difficult but women’s temperament, often very diligent and competitive, will ease the way towards this new event. Some little experience we have had in this context, especially in the school environment, seems to point to this.

Concerning the structure, obviously the decathlon could remain the same, but we think that the pole vault, a ‘risky’ discipline, should take place on the first day, while the athletes are fairly fresh. We would also wish that the order of events would allow the men’s and women’s events to take place on the same two days (but not with the same events at the same time). The structure of two jumps on the first day and one on the second should also be kept, in consideration of the energy entailed.

SANDERSON:
I am opposed to the women moving to the decathlon, for four reasons:
Firstly, the women’s combined event has changed so often since 1968 that it is difficult to compare results or observe the trends over time. The change in the scoring tables in 1985 also makes comparison more difficult. As a result there is less tradition in the women’s combined events than is desirable.

Secondly, the women’s pole vault is still very much a developing event and only time will tell what levels are possible. There was little data on javelin results by combined event athletes available when the current scoring tables were developed. As has been highlighted by the previous question, the women’s javelin scoring table probably is too demanding when compared to the tables for the other events. A similar problem would no doubt result if a pole vault scoring table was developed while the event is developing rapidly.

Thirdly, the expansion to the decathlon would make it even more difficult to attract the best potential athletes to women’s combined events. The problems of learning a unique complex event like the pole vault would deter many young women.

Fourthly, the difficulties associated with organizing a two day competition with decathlon for both men and women would likely lead to fewer combined event competitions.

SHURAVETZKY:
In the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne women competed in 4 track events (100m, 200m, 80m hurdles and the 4x100m relay) and 5 field events (long jump, high jump, shot, javelin and discus). Today they compete in the same Olympic events as the men, except for the decathlon and it is only a matter of time before that event will be accept by the IAAF. I do not believe that women would like to see any changes made to the decathlon format but I would like to propose the following modification to the order of events.
5. Now that women are allowed to compete in all the events included in the combined events, do you think that the women's combined event should become a decathlon, either with the same structure as the men's event or with modification?

Day 1: 100m hurdles, pole vault, shot, long jump, 400m metres.
Day 2: 100 metres, discus, high jump, javelin, 1500 metres.

The are two reasons for this proposal. First of all, it is going to be a nightmare for the organisers to run men's and women's high jump and pole vault competitions on the same day. Accordingly, the best thing to do is to put the vertical jumps on different days. Secondly, the proposed order of events would give women a chance to compete in highly technical events like the pole vault and the 100m hurdles at the start of the decathlon.

6. When and how would you suggest a decathlon for women should be introduced?

MÄKELÄ:
The structure of the women's decathlon should be determined as soon as possible, for example from the year 1997. The years from 2000 to 2004 could be the period during which the national federations take the women's decathlon into the programme of their national championships.

From the year 2005 the women's decathlon could be an official event in every Games (European and World Championships, Olympic Games and so on...).

MARTINEZ:
The decathlon for women should start as soon as possible. However, a period of not less than eight years, two Olympic cycles, will be necessary, in order to start creating the technical bases of the more difficult specialties, discus and pole vault. I think that the image of the 10 event woman will be a great success with the media.

In conclusion, I would like to add that the main problem in the combined events is still the lack of dedicated coaches.

McSTRAVICK:
The last time the women's event changed from the pentathlon (100m hurdles, shot put, high jump, long jump, 800m) to the modern heptathlon, it effectively added only one event to the training programme – the javelin. Training for 200 metres is similar to the running training for the 100 metres hurdles. In moving to the decathlon, three events are added – namely 400m, discus and pole vault – in which specific work is needed. That is a big jump! To suggest when the event should be introduced is difficult. Women's pole vault, hammer and triple jump attracted athletes from other events. Those attempting decathlon will be heptathletes in the main and they may not wish to compromise their heptathlon performance by spending time on training for additional events. If pressed, I would suggest the decathlon for women be introduced in the year 2001 and become a championship event in 2004.

I would maintain the heptathlon event for U20's and have decathlon for the U23's and senior women in 2001. This would be essential, since I believe we would lose many of our best combined event athletes to other events, if the decathlon became the standard event for juniors (U20). Most top junior heptathletes could hold their own at international level in hurdles and/or long jump and may choose to move in that direction rather than move on to decathlon. Those juniors who do want to go on could compete at U23 level.
6. When and how would you suggest a decathlon for women should be introduced?

MONOT:
The sooner the decision is made the better. The women's decathlon should be welcomed into the next century. Each country could also set up a strategy to prepare the younger age groups, both technically and physically.

SANDERSON:
I am opposed to ever introducing a decathlon for women.

SHURAVETZKY:
The lessons of history tell us that the women's decathlon will be accepted. It is probably up to the IAAF Women's Committee to set the dates and places but my vision of events is as follows:
1997-98  Transition period (local and continental competitions).
1999    World Championships.
2000    Olympic Games.