

HIGH SCHOOL MEN'S ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

Greg Yeldell

by Toby Cook

The question presented in our Prep Preview back in the April issue was this on the men's side: "Are there any superstars out there?"

We said not yet, but predicted that someone would emerge. According to the triple jump prowess he displayed during the year, Greg Yeldell (North Rowan, Spencer, North Carolina) answered in the affirmative.

But Yeldell didn't just answer the question—he did so emphatically, breaking the 9-year-old High School Record with a jump of 53-11¹/₄ to garner bronze at the World Junior Champs.

Yeldell's international medal was impressive enough, but he was downright awesome

on U.S. soil. Despite missing all of March with an ankle injury, Yeldell finished the season dominating his event like few others have. Domestically, he was undefeated, had the year's 8 longest jumps (and 9 of 10), with his best effort measuring a whopping 28 inches better than the next mark. Add to that 15 jumps over 51-feet and a No. 2 ranking in the long jump and it's easy to see why he was an almost unanimous choice as Athlete Of The Year.

He was the only male athlete to score the big-meet triple, winning the Golden West, National Scholastic and USATF Junior titles.

"I only jumped in 4 meets before [Golden West], but I just knew that things were going to go well for me," says Yeldell. "I put a lot more time into it this year and coach [Robert] Steele definitely had confidence in me jumping well."

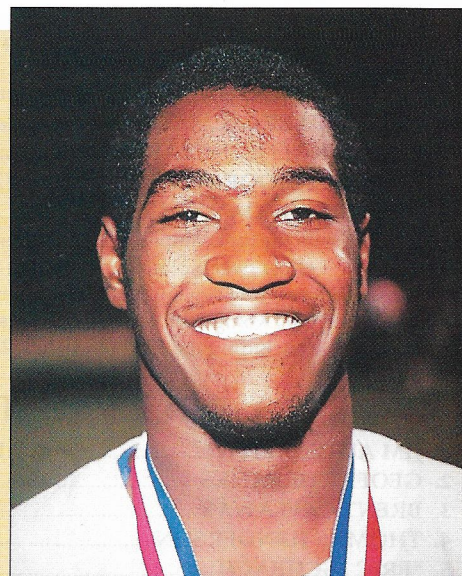
Indeed, if there is a high school jumps coach who knows when to have confidence in a triple jumper, it would be Steele. From a school in central North Carolina with an enrollment of just 600, Steele has now produced four 50-plus jumpers.

Says the coach, "Greg is a great competitor with a lot of ambition. When he came in as a freshman in '94, he saw the All-American plaque of Brian Ellis [52-10³/₄ in '91] and set a goal for himself to be better than that. And he's not just a great athlete, he's a very caring person. I believe he spent as much time with the kids in our local AAU group this summer as he did training himself."

When asked what it was that made his latest prodigy successful, Steele suggests, "I hope it's the same thing that makes our whole program special—we care an awful lot about the kids, ask that they work hard and that they set high goals. Greg has certainly done that."

Yeldell, too, credits the program for his success, saying that the tutelage of Steele made him "feel like I could be the best. He's been like a father to me."

Finding daylight from beneath the shadow



Big marks, big wins; triple jump recordsetter Yeldell did it all in '98.

of Indiana U coaching legend Sam Bell may not be easy for his replacement, Marshall Goss. However, if the longtime Hoosier assistant continues to attract recruits such as Yeldell, he may soon create a growing presence of his own.

Goss has begun the new Indiana era with a straightforward goal of finding the "best quality student-athletes that we can find."

With the image of the elite athlete appearing to be more and more that of untouchable prima donna, Goss says that he's found something of an anomaly in Yeldell: "So many guys with his type of talent and accomplishments come across as uncoachable. I don't see that in Greg. He's come in here and has carried through on everything that we've asked him to do. I truly believe that he wants to be one of the very best and will do what it takes to get there."

For the time being, however, Goss will have to wait until after football season to see the results of his recruiting. That's because this fall, Yeldell is starting on special teams and playing backup strong safety.

Says Goss, "The football staff has told me that he's our best freshman right now. I guess he's doing everything that they're asking of him, too."

Yeldell Near Perfect

Greg Yeldell came very close to racking up a perfect score in AOY balloting, capturing 22 of 24 votes for No. 1. The other two went to miler Jon Stevens, whose all-around support didn't match those votes and ended up 4th.

Note that the 2-3 placers, Cooper and Mitchell, will be back next year.

This year's 16 vote-getters:

1. Greg Yeldell (N Rowan, Spencer, NC) 238
2. Jermaine Cooper (Giddings, Tx) 190
3. Tory Mitchell (Big Spring, Tx) 168
4. Jon Stevens (Mission SJ, Fremont, Ca) 136
5. Jim Autenreith (Spring Branch, Houston) 99
6. Chris Sprague (South, Eugene, Or) 87
7. Amar Johnson (Country Day, Ft Worth) 83
8. Brian Kollar (First Colonial, Va Beach, Va) . 71
9. Ato Modibo (High Point, Beltsville, Md) 65
10. Michael Smith (Cooper, Abilene, Tx) 60
11. Jacob Freeman (Hendricks, Warwick, RI) 55; 12. Maurice English (Lake, Sumter, SC) 25; 13. DeMario Wesley (Wyatt, Ft Worth) 22; 14. Lamar Johnson (N Central, Indianapolis) 11; 15. tie, Rickey Harris (Centerville, Clifton, Va) & Tim Morse (Shorewood, Seattle) 5.

4 x 800

1. **BOYS & GIRLS** Brooklyn, New York
2. **NORTHROP** Ft. Wayne, Indiana
3. **STILLWATER** Minnesota

The NS race defined the event as the A-As finished 1-2-3 and were the only sub 7:41 teams of the season. B&G also won the important Penn Relays title, with a nation-leading 7:41.12.

SPRINT MEDLEY

1. **ROOSEVELT** Des Moines, Iowa
2. **MANCHESTER TOWNSHIP** Lakehurst, New Jersey

3. **WESTERN BRANCH** Chesapeake, Virginia
Although Roosevelt lost at State, it led the list with a 3:27.52 Drake Relays win, then captured the NS crown. Time runner-up Manchester won the East Coast Relays.

DISTANCE MEDLEY

1. **MISSION VIEJO** California
2. **WEST SPRINGFIELD #** Springfield, Virginia
3. **ARLINGTON** La Grangeville, New York
California's Mission Viejo easily had the nation's fastest time, 10:13.52 to win at Mt. SAC. Defending No. 1 West Springfield and Arlington garner the other spots for their 2-3 finishes behind an Irish team at Penn.

HIGH JUMP

1. ***LAMAR JOHNSON** (North Central, Indianapolis, Ind)
2. ***JAMES CARR** (Courtland, Spotsylvania, Va)
3. **SHAUN KOLOGINCZAK** (Oak Ridge, Conroe, Tex)
4. **QUIANDE MOORE** (Zion-Benton, Zion, Ill)
5. ***ROBERT JORDAN** (Millville, NJ)

Johnson won the best competition of the year, the NS, with a nation-leading 7-3¹/₄ effort over Kologinczak, Jordan and Carr. That was the only loss of the year for Carr, another 11th-grader, who then beat Johnson for the Junior title. Kologinczak was Mr. Consistency with a half-dozen meets over 7-1, including the GWI (2nd), NS (2nd) and USAJ (3rd).

POLE VAULT

1. **JIM AUTENREITH** (Spring Branch, Houston, Tex)
2. **GEOFF FAIRBANKS** (Tecumseh, Mich)
3. **BRENT CALLAWAY** (Odessa, Tex)
4. **THOMAS HENDERSON** (Clifton, Tex)
5. ***ERIC ESCHBACH** (Orangefield, Tex)

Autenreith bounced back from last year's broken collarbone to easily become the nation's highest (17-3) and best vaulter. He had almost a dozen 16-foot meets and four over 17 as he won the GWI and NS titles and was the top prep (3rd) at the USAJ. The rest of the contenders mingled big vaults with poor placings and/or no-heights.

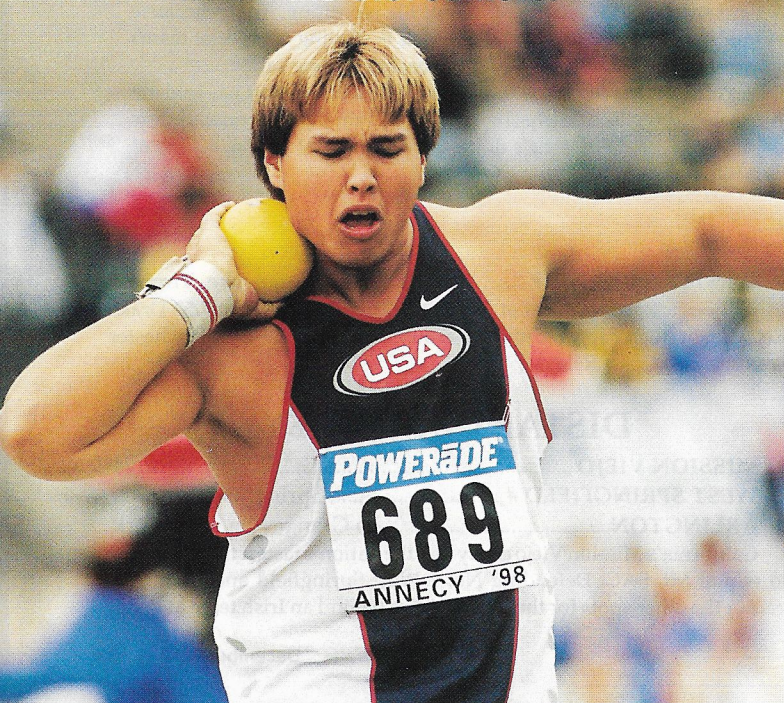
LONG JUMP

1. **MAURICE ENGLISH #** (Lakewood, Sumter, SC)
2. **GREG YELDELL** (North Rowan, Spencer, NC)
3. **WILLIAM MONTGOMERY** (Roberson, Asheville, NC)
4. **KEVIN BALL** (West, St Charles, Mo)
5. ***RICHARD SMITH** (Evangel, Shreveport, La)

English, No. 4 last year, led the nation outdoors at 25-6³/₄ with his NS win and also took the GS and GWI titles before a 3rd HS (8th) at the USAJ. Montgomery and Yeldell went 2-3 at NS, the best of the post-season competitions, but Yeldell gets higher ranking off his top HS (4th) at USAJ as well. The event's overall quality was the lowest in years.

CHAI von der LAAGE/THE SPORTING IMAGE

Good with the prep shot, Sprague was even better with the international version, PRing at 58-1³/₄ to win the U.S. Juniors.



TRIPLE JUMP

1. **GREG YELDELL #** (North Rowan, Spencer, NC)
2. **QUIANDE MOORE** (Zion-Benton, Zion, Ill)
3. ***JASON WARD** (Tilghman, Paducah, Ky)
4. **JERRIOD MACK** (St Marys, Berkeley, Calif)
5. **BENSON JONES** (Clayton Valley, Concord, Calif)

Athlete Of The Year Yeldell was *dominant* (see p. 13) as he became the first Tar Heeler to lead this event since Greg Artis in '77. The GWI was the best competition, with the versatile Moore the runner-up there. Moore became the first ever to earn A-A status in both the high and triple jumps. The late-blooming Ward emerged as the No. 2 prep (4th) at USAJ.

SHOT

1. **CHRIS SPRAGUE #** (South, Eugene, Ore)
2. **VAN MOUNTS #** (Bakersfield, Calif)
3. **KEVIN DIGIORGIO #** (Bayonne, NJ)
4. **BRIAN HALLETT** (Norton, Akron, Oh)
5. **TAYLOR WHITLEY** (Sudan, Tex)

Sprague rated behind both Mounts and DiGiorgio last year, but came on to be undefeated and win the GWI and USAJ titles, PRing with both sizes of shot in the process, his 58-1³/₄ leading the 16lb list. Mounts had the year's farthest 12lb throw (69-3¹/₂) and was the Arcadia, Mt. SAC, Cal State and NS champ, the last by an inch over DiGiorgio.

DISCUS

1. ***TERRANCE GLOVER** (West, Hamilton, NJ)
2. **REEDUS THURMOND** (Serra, Gardena, Calif)
3. ***LUCAIS MACKAY** (Hughson, Calif)
4. **TYLER GARRETT** (Southport, Indianapolis, Ind)
5. **CHRIS SPRAGUE** (South, Eugene, Ore)

Things were settled at National Scholastic, where the undefeated Glover topped national leader Thurmond. Thurmond, with a seasonal best of 209-0, went on to be top prep (4th) at USAJ. He was 2-1 over Mackay, the GWI champ. The prolific Garrett had 11 meets over 190 and was undefeated prior to his 3rd at NS.

HAMMER

1. ***JACOB FREEMAN** (Hendricken, Warwick, RI)
2. ***NICK WELIHOZKIY** (West, Springfield, Va)
3. **VINNY TORTORELLA #** (Classical, Providence, RI)

Freeman (226-8) and Welihozkiy (222-11) took turns breaking the junior-class record. Freeman topped Welihozkiy and Tortorella at the NS and was 3-2 overall against the Virginian.

JAVELIN

1. **BRIAN KOLLAR #** (First Colonial, Virginia Beach, Va)
2. **CHRIS LUTZ** (Eureka, Kans)
3. **RYAN SMITH** (Bountiful, Ut)
4. **JOE OBLOSHNY** (Lakeland, Jermyn, Pa)
5. **RUSS MILAM** (Belgrade, Mont)

Kollar, last year's No. 3, took top honors despite hailing from a state which does not contest the spear. He won the Penn, GWI, NS, USATF Youth and AAU JO titles and was top prep (2nd) at USAJ. Second to Kollar at GWI, Lutz led the list at 233-0.

DECATHLON

1. ****TIM MORSE** (Shorewood, Seattle, Wash)
2. ***JASON GOFF** (Cascade, Turner, Ore)
3. **JAKE BOONE** (Bellville, Tex)

List leader Morse set national soph-class and age-16 records at 6591 points and also won the USATF JO 15-16 title. With HS implements, Goff topped 7000 (7029) for the USATF JO title and was USATF Youth champ.