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# HIGH VAULTAGE™

Texas' #1 Pole Vault Magazine

## 15 Things You Don't Want to Leave at Home

A meet check off list, **p. 12**

**Bubba Sparks,**  
5 time All American, 3 time  
National Champion, **p. 18**

## Start Booking Plane Tickets!

A tentative list of meets this summer  
from the novice to the elite level, **p. 21**

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# HIGH VAULTAGE

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# Meet The Author



I am Texas born and raised. I was born in the Conroe Hospital just north of Houston and resided in Willis until the age of 12. When we moved to Spring my interests completely changed. While we lived in Willis I took dance and ended up taking dance for about 10 years before I gave it up six months after we moved. When I decided to never dance again I remembered what my elementary P.E. coaches, Coach Gary Jonika and Coach Dana Fossmo, had got me hooked on, and that was running. Running was where my interests in pole vault came about.

At the end of sixth grade my friend, Kirsty, and I were running around the track in P.E. talking about what classes we were taking and what sports we were going to join the next year. I wanted to run cross country but I didn't want to run by myself and Kirsty mentioned that she had seen pole vaulting on TV and wanted to try it. At the time I'm not even sure if I really knew what pole vaulting was. So we made a deal that if she ran cross country with me in the Fall I would pole vault with her in the Spring. The ironic thing is that today she has turned

into the "runner" and I'm now the "pole vaulter". It was a decision that I didn't know then, that would impact my life so much today.

I'm now ending out my sophomore year at Klein Oak High School and I have just completed my fourth track season as a pole vaulter. I love the sport and am almost at the point of obsession, but aren't we all? I have an amazing coach, Coach Duckworth. I have been working hard with him for four years now and I believe he has been the only one to see my potential as a pole vaulter from the very beginning. I almost know for a fact my junior high coaches would have never believed I have made it as far as I have today. When I was younger, and still today, I was never the best at anything. I was never the fastest nor the strongest, and there were very rare instances that I received a medal. I think this is what gave me my hard work ethic, determination, and never the disappointment of not doing very well at a meet compared to the other girls, but only compared to myself, and we all know that in pole vault the competition is the cross bar not the other vaulters.

My current personal record is 10' 6". As a freshman I was the District Champ with a height of 10' and at Region I cleared the same height as the girl that went to State but fell short because of misses. As a sophomore I placed 1st in most of the meets I competed in including the Klein Relays, one of the toughest meets I have ever jumped at and I was ranked 3rd in the Houston Area. As my Junior year approaches I'm looking forward at jumping a height of at least 11'6, going back to Region and giving it my all for a shot at going to State.

They say it takes 10 years to successfully master the sport of pole vaulting but everyone I have talked to has said they learn something new almost everyday. There are only a handful of people that have a great deal of knowledge about the sport, and there are probably only five or six handfuls that are interested in learning more and working harder to make sure their athletes come out on top, luckily most of the people and coaches I have worked with are in those few handfuls. This is why I decided to choose the topic of pole vaulting along with the other reasons above for this magazine. I have learned so much from them already, but I know I still have so much more to learn. I am looking forward to exploring and learning from the other 90% of the pole vault world that has yet to come to me.

*Rachel Demny*

1. Every time you see an overpass sign on the road "LOW CLEARANCE 12'4"" or "OVERPASS 14'2"" , you can't stop yourself from thinking things like "Boy I can vault that high!" or "I sure hope that I can vault that high some day."
2. You go to study for your final exams and you look back over your notes and on every page is a diagram of a little stick figure completing vaults with your goals next to it.
3. Neo vault is your homepage.
4. When driving down the road and you see a truck with poles all over it and you think it may be a vaulter when in all actuality it's just a plumber.
5. You fall asleep in a pole vaulting position, drive knee up.
6. Somebody asks you if you run track and you say, no I ' m a pole vaulter.
7. You own all 3 Neo Vault DVD ' s.
8. You spend hundreds of dollars going to camps every summer.
9. Your friends start to worry whether you have a life besides pole vaulting.
10. What gets you through the school day is knowing that you get to vault after school.
11. You take more time out of your day to find a way to a meet to jump then it takes to do your homework.
12. You bring a pole to the cabin at the lake, just so you can vault off the dock and into the lake!
13. You are compelled to check Pole Vault Power at least once a night despite what time it is or when you have to get up the next morning.
14. You think of school in terms of how many vault seasons/summers you have left.
15. You wouldn't think of missing a practice for something like a dance.
16. You plan time to eat and sleep to optimize performance for meets and practices.
17. You practice your plant during class, pretending you were " stretching " .
18. At restaurants, you use the plastic straws as poles and crossbars and use the straw wrappers as little "vaulters."
19. When it is raining, after you have put the pit cover on, and you turn the covered pole vault pit into a giant slip n' slide!
20. You ' re a member of Pole Vault Power.
21. You visualize your vaults as your going to sleep every night!
22. You're skilled at using your fingers to represent legs when explaining form.
23. You made a soundtrack to the great pole vault DVD's C'mon! and Bring It.
24. Your coaches have to physically make you stop vaulting when you know you have on more left

## 50 Ways to tell You're Obsessed with Pole Vault

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## Obsessed, continued...

- in you.
25. Your family room has a height chart as a wall hanging.
  26. You're walking around your school campus, and you face the direction of the pit, so you know what the wind will be like at practice 3 hours later.
  27. You buy a car with a roof rack simply because you can put your poles on it. If it don't have a rack I'm not buying it!
  28. After a particularly good or bad day vaulting, you can't sleep at night because that especially good/bad vault keeps running through your head.
  29. You've watched the Neo Vault DVD's so many times that you can repeat the interview with Bubka from The Reckoning verbatim.
  30. When working at a homeless shelter you take a PVC pipe and start to try and do takeoffs with it.
  31. You try to ignore lightning as long as you can so you can keep vaulting. Rain doesn't even phase you.
  32. You're on a ride in a car when you randomly look out the window and realize that the lane on the shoulder of the road, or bike lanes, make you think of a really long runway that goes on forever.
  33. You own about a bazillion pairs of spandex...but no jean shorts.
  34. You're pretty sure you could max out a credit card at Nike Town/Sports Authority/etc..
  35. When people say "Ugh, we HAVE to go to practice today?" You're baffled because you hate when you have to miss!
  36. Your parents ask you to put your math homework down and get some sleep, but you are actually performing pole vault calculations.
  37. You write your college admissions essay about Bubka.
  38. You would drive cross country or pay any amount of money for a plane ticket just to go to a meet.
  39. You plan your summer around pole vaulting and work outs.
  40. When watching someone vault, just as the moment they plant and start take off, your right leg (if you vault right handed) involuntarily starts lifting up and you find yourself leaning your shoulders back.
  41. You pole vault in any kind of weather condition.
  42. If you have hurt something (that's not too serious) you wait until after the season to see a doctor.
  43. You draw a pole vault flip book on every binder and text book corner.
  44. Your car is COVERED with pole vault stickers and you forced pole vault stickers on your loved ones cars.
  45. You go to other coaches vault sessions to practice even more.
  46. Your New Year's resolution is to jump higher.
  47. You can translate metric to imperial (and vice-versa).
  48. Almost every project you turn in has something to do with pole vault.
  49. You can turn any random thing into something relating to pole vaulting: drills, equipment, ect.
  50. You have dreams about Stacy Dragila or Derek Miles and it only involves pole vaulting.



"To take off or not to take off" That is the question that runs through so many pole vaulters' minds before they reach the box. This question stumps the vaulters almost every time. The importance of the taking off in pole vaulting is very similar to the importance of the take off of an airplane. If the plane doesn't take off at just the right spot in direct alignment with the right amount of speed and force then things could seriously go wrong. The same is true in the

pole vault. If the vaulter does not take off in direct alignment, at just the right spot, with the right amount of speed and force then serious things could happen leading to destruction of equipment, injury and in the worst possible case scenario, death. But if the plane's take off is right on with lots of speed and force then the plane shoots into the sky to its destination with a successful take off. When the vaulter's take off is right on with enormous amounts of speed and force, then it also leads the vaulter to new heights, literally.

The pole vault has been around since the time of the ancient Greeks and Cretans; "they used it for jumping over bulls" (petr-spacek.com). Way back in the very old days, in Europe, poles were used as "practical ways to cross natural obstacles like rivers and marshes" (en.wikipedia.org) and then some not so natural obstacles like moats to attack a castle. In the late 1700s it became a vertical jump in German gymnastics. But it wasn't until the 1850s that it was placed in competitions. The pole jumper would run and jump with the pole but instead of turning his body up side down he would climb up the pole with his hands to clear the bar. Towards the end of the Nineteenth century, the Americans banned the idea of climbing up the pole with your hands and introduced the technique of inverting the body, clearing the crossbar with the stomach towards the bar. Since

# The Importance of a good Take Off

## Do we really need helmets and preferred landing zones?

By: Rachel Demny

then, other countries around the world picked up this concept but the "right" technique is still being debated.

In the pole vault there are 7 main stages; the run, plant, take off, swing, rock back, extension (becoming inverted), and the turn and fly-away. The completion of the last six of these phases takes relatively 12.4 seconds (Beginner, Lander). To make sure that everything goes right and you have a high clearance, you must first get off the ground and secondly you need to get off the ground correctly. That is why the take off is the foundation of the pole vault.

Like with anything, a house, make up, college, etc. a good foundation is always needed. You can't build a house on mud or make it through college without first going to elementary and secondary school. Have you ever put on blush before the base? These things would not be successful with out a good foundation. For a vault to be successful, you need to get off the ground and that's what the take off is; the foundation of the pole vault.

The first key part of the take off is having a good take off mark. If you ever go to a track meet and see people

placing their foot near the box after the pole vaulter has left the ground then they are looking for the take off mark. This mark is so important that some meets might actually have a person assigned to catch poles and mark take offs, coaches will assign an athlete to do it and a lot of the times vaulters will be "catching marks" for their team mates and their competition (which are most likely friends they've made throughout their years of vaulting). The take off mark can be determined by standing with the pole planted in the box and his top arm reached towards the sky with the pole in it.

It should make a straight line from the top of his hand to his heel. The number that his toe is directly behind is the take off mark. Most of the time, with excellent vaulters, the mark might be a little outside of that. "The further ahead the takeoff foot is of the top hand at take off the greater velocity losses will be." (Pre-Jump, Gormley). In "The Pre-Jump and Takeoff in the Pole Vault Revisited" it is stated the velocity losses of being under at take off can be as much as 3.5m/s. If the pole vaulter is "under", the pole will not receive as much bend, plus their hips will be sucked in. Pole vault is also very much about timing, so when the vault is "under", there will be less amount of time and as the hips are sucked in they will immediately try to become inverted shorting the drive and pendulum time which will reduce the amount of energy that is put into the pole (Beginner, Lander). However when the take off is "out", the pole vaulter is lucky if they even land in the pit. It's like standing on a rock trying to jump to a rope 8 feet away from you. It's almost impossible to make it. This is because the vaulter is purely long jumping into the pit and with a huge pole you must come in with full speed to penetrate the pole so it reaches the pit



penetrate the pole so it reaches the pit or face rejection.

Penetration leads to another key part of the take off. If the pole is not penetrated at take off the vaulter will most likely be rejected. Rejection is when the vaulter does not fully reach the pit and normally lands on the side pads, in the box or completely off the mat and on the ground. These landing can all lead to sprained and twisted ankles and knees that can end an athlete's season. A good example of this comes from the newest Neo Vault Video, *The Reckoning*. Pole vaulter, Anthony Curran, was asked to do a few vaults for a couple of commercials and a movie. In the movie he had to jump over a 13 foot wall which is really no problem for an excellent pole vaulter. It was just the thought of running full speed towards a solid structure. The producer was safe about the vault though so the wall would collapse if he hit it. The first time he attempted to clear the wall he landed right on top of it because he didn't get enough penetration in the pole at take off to get him far enough over the wall. Then the same vaulter was asked to do a commercial. In the commercial he was asked to pole vault onto a neon sign. His first attempt he didn't penetrate the pole enough at take off and landed on the sign, bounced off, hit the sign again and ended up with a broken arm. This injury caused him to be out for 6 weeks before he could actually pick up a pole again, much less return to pole vaulting as high as he had before the incident.

The third key part to a good take off is a big bend. All pole vaulters know that to clear high bars you need to be able to put a big bend in a big pole. Before the fiberglass poles there were numerous other types, among the last of the types of poles used where steel, aluminum, and bamboo. You could bend none of these poles so it was much more difficult to pole vault and most vaulters only made it to the 13 feet range and the few extraordinary athletes could jump a foot to two feet higher. The vaulters had to find a way with speed and strength to place force inside the pole so that

they would be able to get upside down and get the pole closer to the bar. They did this by focusing mainly on the take off. "The take off would be very powerful with a high plant and an awesome drive knee" (Beginner, Launder). When fiberglass poles were invented, vaulters forgot about this idea and started focusing on getting a bigger bend by using solely strength and speed. "The emphasis switched almost immediately from driving the pole up and forwards at take off to bending the pole" (Beginner, Launder). What most vaulters don't know though is that "the initial pole bend should be a **result** of the take off" (Beginner, Launder) instead of **trying** to bend the pole at take off, two very different concepts. As a young beginning vaulter you do learn to bend the pole at take off but as you become a more accomplished and experienced vaulter it eventually comes as a result of a good take off. Having the pole bend as a result of the take off is very important because when the pole bends it will eventually uncoil, releasing the energy that was put into it and when it uncoils, that energy will shoot the vaulter upward, feet first, like a rocket, to clear the bar. For a good vaulter, that should be about a foot and a half to anywhere around 3 feet above his or her hand hold.

The final key aspect to a good take off is being in control and in direct alignment. When watching the pole vault from the back of the box it should be like looking at a piece of paper turned sideways. The pole, and the arms, head, swing leg and drive knee should all be aligned. This should also keep the vaulter in control of the vault so there aren't any unexpected or erratic landings leading to injury or destruction of equipment. When the body is aligned and in control at take off, it allows for a smoother vault. More bend will also come with direct alignment. The objective of landing is landing in the center of the pit on the back. This is accomplished when the vault is in direct alignment and in control at take off. When the vaulter is not in direct alignment at take off, depending on what was not in alignment and to which direction

it was shooting, the vaulter could land on the sides of the pit or even off the pit and possibly land running into the standards (equipment that holds the bar up). This all leads to a big controversy that coaches and officials have been debating about for years. There is only one word to describe it: helmets. Many coaches and I believe if the vaulter is in control and direct alignment at take off and they have been coached and taught right then they should land in the center of the pit on their backs in which there would be no need for helmets.

Foundation, foundation, foundation that is what a take off is. With out a good foundation you have nothing. If the take off would be treated as the one of the most important aspects of the vault there would most likely be less injury and less controversy over making helmets or preferred landing zones mandatory.

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# 15 Things YOU DON'T Want to Forget @ HOME

- Poles
- Spikes
- Hand towel
- Bungee Cords
- Cross Bar Lifters
- Chalk (or another run marker)
- Extra spikes and spike
- Extra Cross Bar
- Standard Extensions
- Camera
- English - Metric Conversion Chart
- Extra Socks
- Hand towel
- Sharpe (or other marker/pen)
- Paperwork ( Birth Certificate, USATF membership card, Insurance)







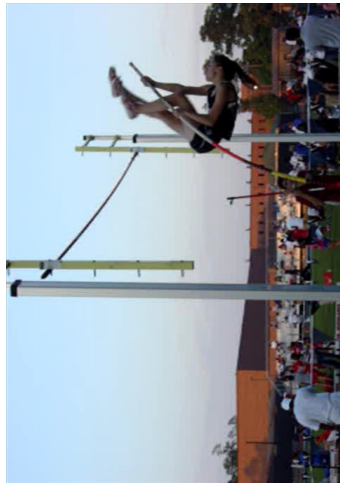
**TAKE OFF**



**PLANT**



**RUN**



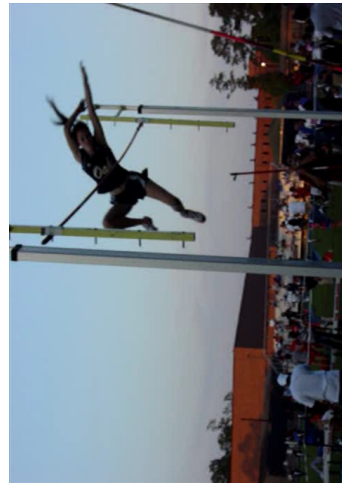
**ROCK BACK**



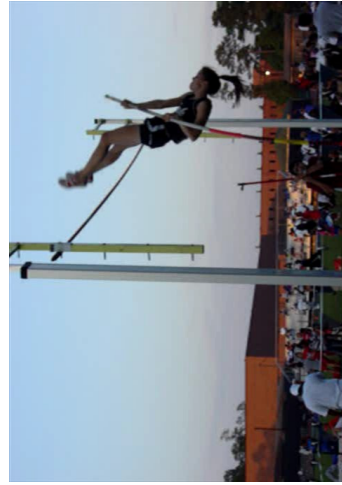
**PENDULUM**



**SWING**



**TURN AND FLY-AWAY**



**EXTENSION**

# **Stages of the Pole Vault**

**Demonstrated by: Rachel Demmy**

# A Mile High

By: Rachel Demny

The crowd stood up and cheered. Her coach shot off the ground and she just stood there in amazement gazing up in the sky. Nobody had expected her to ever go this far, she didn't even expect to get this far, especially after the last six months she had had.

Now who is she? She was Natalie, a local high school pole vaulter. She was an underdog. Nobody would have ever thought she would become this good much less end her high school career in Austin standing on a pole vault mat gazing at a cross bar 13 feet in the air as the new 2007 State Champion. All through junior high and high school she was an average athlete. She was never the cream of the crop but also never on bottom. This is what drove her. This is what fueled her determination and hard work. She wanted to show everyone that she could do it, she could be the best and she wasn't afraid.

Natalie started her senior year anxiously waiting for track season. Her junior year ended with a silver medal at state and this year she knew she could seize the gold. A few days before Christmas break Natalie was seen laughing, enjoying life, and talking to her coach about the practice plans

they were scheduling for Christmas Break. A few days after Christmas Break were another story.

Every year since she had been a little girl, her family had gone snow skiing either on Christmas or Spring Break. When she and her twin brother reached high

school Natalie's family saw that it would be easier if they went skiing Christmas every year. That Christmas was a wonderful one. Natalie and her family received the few things they wanted from Santa and then left Christmas Evening for Colorado. They arrived in Colorado the next day and spent the week in a winter wonderland of skiing, snow ball fights, sledding, and relaxation. It all came to a horrifying end the day they left.

There was a huge snow storm brewing out side but her father was stubborn and wanted to at least make back to Texas before the day was

over. This was a huge mistake. But they crammed the car with all their goods and headed out any way. They made it down the mountain and over the pass to New Mexico in time for lunch. They stopped and ate at a local dinner and then proceed to the border. Only this time the storm was picking up and the

radio suggested it was heading straight for the Texas Panhandle right about the time they would reach the border and that was exactly what happened.

Just as their car crossed the border everything in Natalie's head became a blur. The snow was thick and blowing everywhere at speeds up to 45 miles per hour. Her dad hit an ice patch and slammed on the breaks. The car went spinning out of control down the abandoned highway and came to a stop when it hit a 5 foot tall snow bank. The snow almost covered the car completely. If it wouldn't have been for the cooler attached to the back of the car, they might not have been found.

The blur came to an end when she woke up in a hospital bed with her grandparents hovering over her. "Where am I? What happened? Why am I in a hospital bed?" Natalie asked in a daze. They explained to her gently, "Sweetie your dad had lost control of the car in the storm pretty close to the boarder. He ran into a snow bank. Somebody finally found ya'll an hour later." They told her that they had all been unconscious and

**"Just as their car crossed the border everything in Natalie's head became a blur."**

had been rushed to the hospital in Amarillo. They also comforted her by telling her that her parents and brother were all okay and were in the rooms next to hers. Natalie had been in surgery repairing the damage to her right

leg. When the doctor came he explained to her what the surgery was for,



"You broke your leg in four places, the tendons and ligaments were sprained, one was torn, and we're still not sure if any of your nerves have been damaged." The first thing that immediately darted out of her mouth was, "When will I be able to pole vault again?" He just shook

**"He didn't have the heart to tell her."**

his head, shocked at such a question and could only reply, "A long time, a very long time." The long time he had told her turned out to be meant as possibly never with the fact that she might not walk again but he didn't have the heart to tell her.

Her hard work and determination kicked in again. She had talked the doctor into letting her do as much physical therapy as possible in the hopes of at least having a senior track season even though everybody knew it would be far from her best. By the time the season rolled around in mid February she had completed 7 weeks of physical therapy and the doctors were shocked to see her walking by week one much less beginning to jog by the 5<sup>th</sup> week. Even with all the progress the doctor only allowed her to do a few plants and pop ups each day in practice with the continuation of physical therapy. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of track she had talked him into letting her pole vault from at least a short run. Her vaults weren't pretty and not near as high as she would have hoped for her senior year but she was making progress considering her circumstances. When the district meet came around she made it to region with at 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish. Then at region she moved her step back by herself and got on a bigger pole with out even her coach knowing and just barely cleared the bar sending her to

state. Her coach and her parents noticed her sneaky moves at region and forced her to go see her doctor again to get approval of a full release. He refused though. He said that her leg was still healing and she needed to back off,

although she could vault at state if she only had 30 to 45 minute practices and stayed at a short run. She followed the first rule. But when state came she was ready to feel the pain and she was at a long run for the first time since the state competition the last year. She told her coach she wanted to come in at 11 feet. Her coach was shocked she would even mention a height that high since she had only cleared 9 feet the whole season. But this was her senior year so he just went with it. 11 feet came and she cleared it then 11'6, then a new PR of 12, and 12'6. Her parents and coach sat there in amazement wondering where that came from. They were confused and when they saw her clear the lucky number 13 foot cross bar to win the state title they almost fell out of their chairs. The crowd stood up and cheered. Her coach shot off the ground and she just stood there in amazement gazing up in the sky.



# 2007 Outdo

## American Men's Outdoor Rankings

(as of April 19, 2007) [www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org)

Rank/Name Team	Height	Date/Place
1. Brad Walker Nike	5.95m (19' 6¼")	3/10 Brisbane
2. Russ Buller Asics	5.73m (18' 9½")	4/15 Walnut
3. John Takahashi Sheffield Elite	5.65m (18' 6½")	3/17 San Diego
4. Toby Stevenson Nike	5.61m (18' 4¾")	2/23 Perth
5. Brad Gebauer McNeese State	5.51m (18' 1")	4/14 El Paso
6. Adam Keul Unat.	5.50m (18' 0½")	3/24 Nacogdoches
7. Spencer McCorkel ArHS	5.36m (17' 7")	3/31 Black Springs
8. Mike Landers UCLA	5.35m (17' 6½")	3/3 Westwood
9. Michael Hogue Tennessee	5.30m(17' 4½")	3/25 Tuscanloosa
Nick Hysong Nike	5.30m(17' 4½")	4/14 Tempe
Derek MackelUnat.	5.30m(17' 4½")	4/14 El Paso

## American High School Outdoor Boy's Rankings

2007, [www.dyestat.com](http://www.dyestat.com)

Rank/Name	School/State	Year	Height	Meet
1. Spencer McCorkel	Bryant, AR	2007	17' 7"	Spring Break AVC
2. Maston Wallace	Clear Brook, TX	2007	17' 1"	District 24-5A
3. Casey Roche	St. Francis, CA	2007	16' 8"	Mt SAC
4. Joseph Farley	Aledo, TX	2007	16' 6"	Texas Relays
Travis Matthews	Magnolia, TX	2007	16' 6"	District 15-5A
Hunter Hall	Homestead, IN	2007	16' 6"	Homestead Tri
7. Cameron Kroll	Reno, NV	2007	16' 4¾"	Glen Poole
8. Blaine Bassler	West	2008	16' 4"	Texas Region 2-3A Meet
9. Chris Roy	Breaux Bridge, LA	2007	16' 3"	Oil City
10. Nico Weiler	Los Gatos, CA	2008	16' 1"	Arcadia

## Texas High School Boy's Outdoor Rankings

2007, [www.dyestat.com](http://www.dyestat.com) / [www.texasrtrack.com](http://www.texasrtrack.com)

Rank/Name	School	Year	Height	Meet
1. Maston Wallace	Clear Brook	2007	17' 1"	District 24-5A
2. Joseph Farley	Aledo	2007	16' 6"	Texas Relays
Travis Matthews	Magnolia	2007	16' 6"	District 15-5A
4. Blaine Bassler	West	2008	16' 4"	Region 2-3A Meet
5. Kenny Greaves	Coppell	2007	16' 0"	Texas Relay
6. Logan Cunningham	Smithson Valley	15' 9"		Seguin Relays
Bryan Brown	Kingwood	2007	15' 9"	5A Texas State Meet
8. Derek Schutz	Houston St. Thomas	2007	15' 8"	
9. David McKenzie	Katy Taylor	2008	15' 7"	Brenham Regional Qua.



# or Rankings

## American Women's Outdoor Rankings

(as of April 19, 2007) [www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org)

Rank/Name	Team	Height	Date/Place
1. Andree Pickens	Bell Athletics	4.40m (14' 5¼")	3/24 Tuscaloosa
2. Tori Anthony	CaHS	4.22m (13' 10")	4/13 Walnut
3. April Kubishta	Arizona State	4.20m (13' 9¼")	3/17 Tempe
4. Tamera Diles	Unat.	4.15m (13' 7¼")	4/15 Walnut
Erin Asay	Sheffield Elite	4.15m (13' 7¼")	4/15 Walnut
6. Shade Weygandt	TxHS	4.06m (13' 7")	5/ Austin
6. Leila Ben-Youssef	Vasby SF	4.11m (13' 5¾")	3/31 Stanford
7. Elouise Rudy	Montana State	4.10m (13' 5¼")	4/7 Pocatello
8. Rachel Laurent	LaHS	4.06m (13' 3¾")	4/6 Austin
Jackie Nguyen	UCLA	4.06m (13' 3¾")	4/14 Westwood

## American High School Outdoor Girl's Rankings

2007, [www.dyestat.com](http://www.dyestat.com)

Rank/Name	School/State	Year	Height	Meet
1. Tori Anthony	Castilleja, CA	2007	13' 10"	Mt. SAC
2. Shade Weygandt	Mansfield, TX	2009	13' 7"	5A Texas State Meet
3. Rachel Laurent	Vandebilt Catholic, LA	2008	13' 4"	Texas Relays
4. Hanna Cooper	Excelsior Springs, MO	2008	13' 3"	Mineral Water
5. Allison Stokke	Newport Harbor, CA	2007	13' 1½"	Mt. SAC
6. Callie Griffin	Tyler Lee, TX	2007	13' 0"	Palestine
7. Daisy Glasser	Episcopal, FL	2007	12' 9"	Bolles Mini
Jessica Doyle	Hays, TX	2008	12' 9"	Hays Shelton
9. Stephanie Foreman	Lake Hamilton, AR	2008	12' 8"	Lake Hamilton
10. Natasha Barthel	St. Francis, CA	2007	12' 7½"	Arcadia

## Texas High School Outdoor Girl's Rankings

2007, [www.dyestat.com](http://www.dyestat.com) / [www.texasrtrack.com](http://www.texasrtrack.com)

Rank/Name	School	Year	Height	Meet
1. Shade Weygandt	Mansfield	2009	13' 7"	5A Texas State Meet
2. Callie Griffin	Tyler Lee	2007	13' 0"	Palestine
3. Jessica Doyle	Hays	2008	12' 9"	4A Texas State meet
4. Shelby Kennard	Rockwall	2009	12' 7"	Allen Eagle Relays
5. Jessie Gibbs	Tuscalo		12' 3"	2A Texas State Meet
Aly Dailey	Lockhart	2008	12' 3"	4A Texas State meet
6. Morgan Toone	Belton	2009	12' 0"	Baylor Reg. Qua.
Alicia Scott	Hays	2007	12' 0"	Canyon Reg. Qua.
Ariana Ince	Gonzales	2007	12' 0"	3A Texas State Meet
Michelle Ruiz	San Age LV		12' 0"	4A Texas State Meet
Laura Asimakis	Friendswood	2007	12' 0"	4A Texas State Meet

# Bubba Sparks

## 53 and still Clearin' Bars.



Bubba Sparks was born and raised in Houston, Texas. His first interest in pole-vaulting came at the age of 12. He saw the event on TV and thought he might like to try it. He went into his garage and started looking for sticks and that's where it all began. His interest in pole vaulting followed him to Houston Scarborough High School (on the northwest side), Class of '72, where he cleared a height of 14'6". That height enabled him to go on after high school and vault in college. In college he became a five time All American and a three time National Champion clearing a bar of 17' 3/4". After College he cleared a lifetime personal record of 18' 1". He currently resides in The Woodlands, Texas. He still pole vaults today and currently holds a personal record of 12' 6"

### **What is your favorite place to vault?**

Recently it was the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. I got 3rd there for National Masters in 2005. We had a tailwind so big you could hear the metal buckles slamming on the side of the pit from 50+ yards away. Another REALLY good place is Caldwell High School outside of College Station.

### **Where are all the places that you have vaulted ?**

As an elite vaulter I traveled and vaulted all of the world including, Europe, South America and South Africa.

### **What are your goals and accomplishments as a vaulter now?**

I started back in 2005 after a three year layoff from injuries/surgeries. In 2005 and 2006 I won the Texas Senior Games in Austin and was 3rd at USA Track & Field National Masters Championships (2005-Honolulu, 2006-Charlotte, NC) Before that I jumped 15' at age 44 (1997), won

USATF Masters Nationals and got 3rd in the Masters World Championships in South Africa. I hope to return to that level by the time I'm 55 next year.

### **What kind of work out schedule did you have as a vaulter in high school and college and what is your work out schedule now?**

I've always trained very hard and long hours so that I improve technically as well as physically. Since I've started back in 2005 I've lifted over 4 million pounds of weights and done over 2,500 bar drills with weights. Here's my current training - <http://www.bubbapv.com/Pages/CurrentTraining.htm>

### **When you are coaching a beginner where do you start?**

Walking plants and bars. The biggest reason vaulters progress and then get stuck is no lower ab strength and quickness. So basically you've got to work on things before you have the skill to use them. Obviously you do have that ability but many get to a

point close to you and can't progress. From a walking plant they can go through a whole series progressing to the pit. Your coach is also excellent at this stuff.

### **What kind of drills do you and your athletes do?**

We progress very much like you do from two steps, four steps and six steps - <http://www.bubbapv.com/Pages/BasicDrills.htm> We always use a crossbar (no bungees) and we get three attempts at each height before we have to move to another run or up a pole. If you get hip height twice the bar goes up. For example, Austin Smith has jumped 15' but sees 16' every day and is having some close jumps. One of our juniors, Ryan Hodges makes 14' 6" nearly every day and is so close to 15' but his meet best is 14' 2". They just haven't had great meet conditions yet. You learn more by constantly trying heights that are just out of your reach.



### **When you are coaching what do you see that high school vaulters have the most problem with?**

Probably run position and posture that makes their plant out of whack. The next thing is driving the bottom rather than jumping up and swinging. All of our guys and all of you guys have good runs and swings. As a result you have the most potential for improvement.

### **What kind of injuries do you see most?**

Hamstrings - almost entirely from trying to run too fast. Athletic power is about going from totally relaxed to totally contracted in the shortest period of time. So if your already tight when running you can't apply as much force as if you were relaxed before a maximum contraction. Also, when you run tight your feet come down sooner so you cover less ground with more effort and less efficiency.

### **Which part of the pole vault do you feel is most important to make it a good vault?**

People always say the run and plant and I'm sure that's true, but for me I try to focus on rhythmic running and snappy motions as I leave the ground. It's more of a "feel" thing but it makes your body work with physics rather than against them. If I'm going to a bigger pole I'll back my run off 5-7% and try to hit 10% better positions with more snap to quicken my swing.

### **Do you feel that technique or strength and speed or both is more important and why?**

The just retired head of USATF

PV Development, Bob Fraley says that once you know how to vault that your improvement is 70% based on increase in speed and strength, so you had better always be working those components. BUT, a fast average vaulter can jump higher than a slow good vaulter. I work everything but you can never have enough speed.

### **Do you hold any records anywhere?**

In 1978 I set the stadium record of 17' 6 1/2" at the Antonian High School in San Antonio for a San Antonio All Comers Record. I think that's the only one left.

### **What is something you have learned from pole vaulting?**

Things continue to mean different things as you progress. For example, jumping up at the take off feels and looks different as you improve your step and the ability to push up with the arms as you jump. So I have a different focus to accomplish what I used to think I knew. You're always learning in this sport.

### **What is the best thing or things that you have gotten out of vaulting?**

Being one of the coaches selected to spend five weeks with the Olympic vaulters in Atlanta for the 1996 Centennial Games was awesome. You just hang out with Bubka, etc., their coaches and the rest of them every day.

### **What is one of your most memorable experiences?**

Winning Nationals for the first time in college. I went in ranked 10th and kept making bars and others kept going out. By the time there were three of us left I was the only one over on the first jump. I was clueless that I was even in the running as I was just

paying attention to my business. On the other end, I went to Nationals my freshman year as this stud young kid that won most of our college meets and I no heighted - didn't jump well so I failed the opening height. I found out that day that 40+ guys were much better than me and I set out to close the gap. I then won both my junior and senior years.

### **What is the most important life lesson and/or skill you have learned from your experiences as a pole vaulter?**

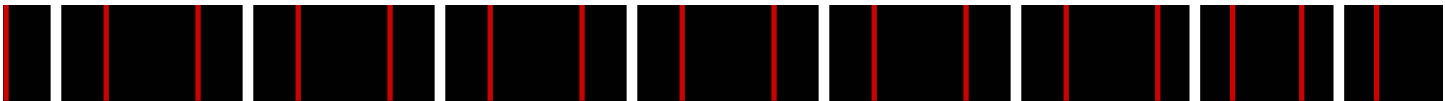
My worst times, when I was the most frustrated or disappointed, led to my biggest breakthroughs. I've had a few times in my career that I just wanted to quit, but in a couple of days I saw that I wasn't really that far away from getting to the next level if I was willing to do the work. I may not be the most talented but I would outwork anyone and that really helps me in my business life too. In college I won my first six meets and went to Nationals and never got close to making the final. I realized how outclassed I was by 40+ vaulters yet I was very good at home - BIG DEAL!! That was 1973. I won in 1975 and 1976. Measuring yourself at a high level is the best thing you could possibly do. In Boston at Indoor Masters Nationals this past March I got 4th because I was too conservative on my 13' poles. I came back and spent a month on 13' 7" poles and in the past two weeks I'm getting very close to 13' using only 14' poles. My disappointment was fixable but I would have been stuck where I was had I not gone to the big meet and blown it. It sucks big time when it's happening but it is always a blessing

"Bend it like Bubka" "Grip It and Rip It" "Exceed all Standards"

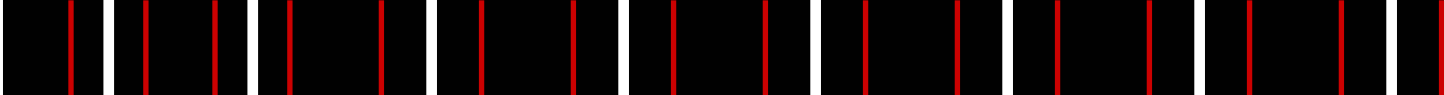
"Citius, Fortius, Altius" "Your problem is you compete against me and I compete against the crossbar."

"Pole vaulters know how to get off on top." "Go High or Go Home!!"

"Pole vaulters don't believe in the Laws of Gravity." "The only sport where a guy named Yoo Suk doesn't."



# Pole Vault Quotes and Sayings



"Rock 'n Row" "After you go out, will you catch my step on my run-through?" "Good my jump will be done" – Bubka

"Grip it, rip it, swing it, turn it, pull it, push it, clear it, finish! Repeat!" "DARTH VAULTER"

"Warning, High Vaultage"

"How high you go depends on how hard you try." "Some girls like fashion runways, I prefer the kind with pole vault mats at the end." "Track spikes \$100, Uniform \$75, Pole Vault Poles \$1200. ....Winning a State Title Priceless"



# 2007 Summer Meets

## Pole Vault Meets Around the **Nation**

Date	Meet	Location
5/19	Vault Stock	Jonesborough, AR
5/19	2007 Crawfish Festival Street Vault	Columbia, SC
6/16	Gill Athletics Factory Vault	Champaign, IL
6/29	Moon Vault	Grand Rapids, MI
6/30	Hot Springs Street Vault	Hot Springs, AR
7/4	Freedom Fair PV Competition	Tacoma, WA
7/13-15	Grand Haven Beach Vault	Grand Haven, MI
7/14	Mari Gras Pole Vault Festival	New Orleans, LA
7/21	Three Rivers Festival Street Vault	Ft. Wayne, IN
8/16	IN State Fair Vault	Indianapolis, IN
8/25	CO State Fair Street Vault	Pueblo, CO

## Pole Vault Meets in **Texas**

Date	Meet	Location
5/22	The Woodlands All-Comers	TWHS
5/29	The Woodlands All-Comers	TWHS
6/2	San Marcos River Vault	Texas State
6/5	The Woodlands All-Comers	TWHS
6/8-16	USATF Association Qua.	Depends on Association
6/12	The Woodlands All-Comers	TWHS
6/22-23	USATF Association Championships	Depends on Association
6/25	The Woodlands All-Comers	TWHS
7/10-14	USATF Region 12 Championships	Odessa

## **Awesome Pole Vault Sites**

[www.polevaultpower.com](http://www.polevaultpower.com)

[www.oakduck.com](http://www.oakduck.com)

[www.bubbapv.com](http://www.bubbapv.com)

[www.polevaultworld.com](http://www.polevaultworld.com)

[www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org)

[www.elitesportz.com](http://www.elitesportz.com)

[www.peiv.com](http://www.peiv.com)

[www.bellathletics.com](http://www.bellathletics.com)

[www.texastrack.com](http://www.texastrack.com)

[www.dyestat.com](http://www.dyestat.com)

[www.polevaultunlimited.com/pv\\_circuit](http://www.polevaultunlimited.com/pv_circuit)

[www.petrspacek.com](http://www.petrspacek.com)

[www.iaaf.org](http://www.iaaf.org)

(info and pictures found through out this magazine were found on sites above)