



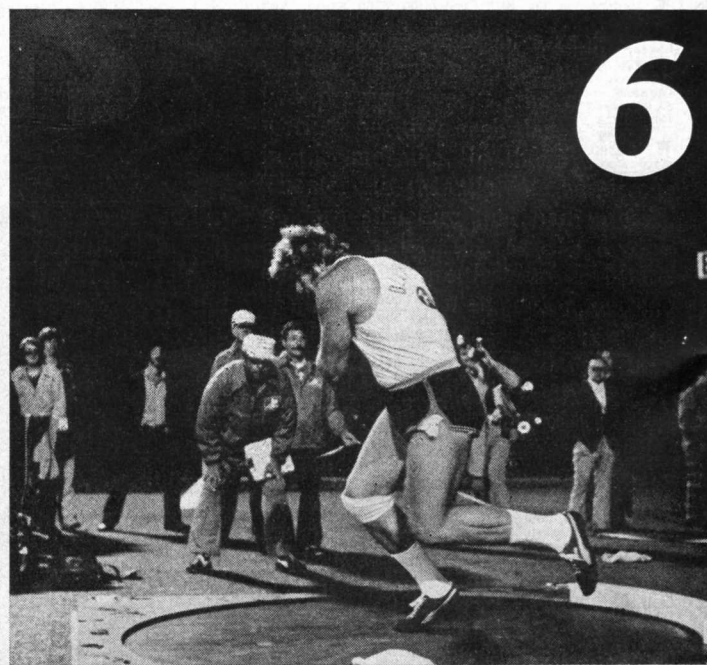
Brian Oldfield Does Everything His Own Way

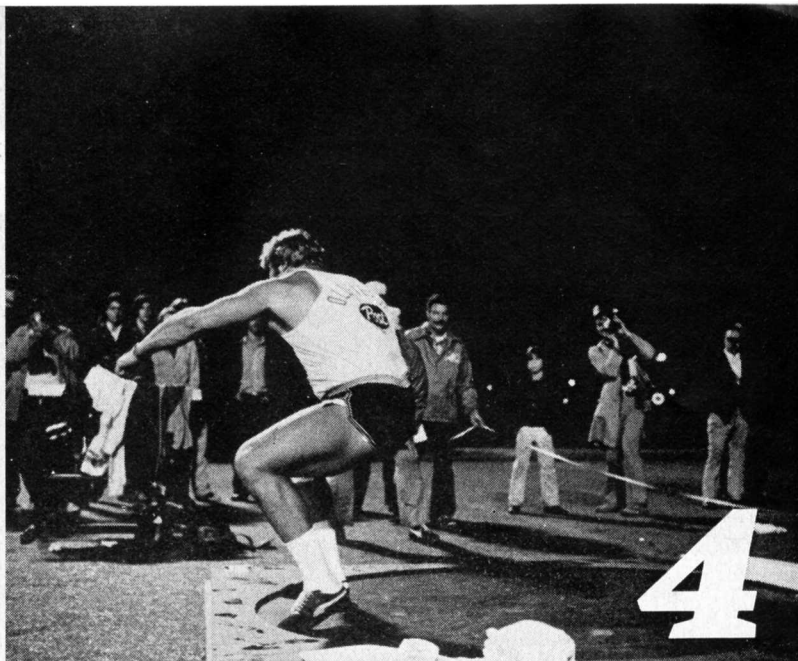
BY BILL MADDEN

Brian Oldfield, the shotputter, is six-foot-five and 275 pounds, with an appropriately sizeable regard for himself. "I am," he says, "the Babe Ruth of professional track." Not only is he unequalled at

his own event, says Oldfield, "but I could probably break ten flat for the 100-yard dash right now." And while that would be, in his view, "the most incredible feat in the world for a 275-pound man," Oldfield's ego also

remains alert for lesser challenges. For example: "I could easily play fullback in the pros with my size and quickness. If the Dolphins are still looking for a replacement for Csonka, I'm their man."





Brian Oldfield has always been known for his colorful, unorthodox style. For years, it was a style characterized by idiosyncracies outside the shotput ring, by a training regimen, for example, that included cigarettes, whisky and long absences in the company of women. But now Oldfield has become better known for doing things his own way *inside* the ring. Not only has he revolutionized the method of putting the shot, but he has used his new technique to break the listed world record by a full three feet. "I am enjoying a great deal of pride," he says, "at being the world's best."

Although he did not invent it, the new style of shotputting is already known as the "Oldfield spin." Oldfield starts out with both his feet facing in the same direction—like a

discus thrower's. Then, instead of half-spinning off one foot, as in the old method, he pivots with his right foot over his left, spins 360 degrees and, in one dizzying maze of motion, lets loose his throw from the standard position at the front of the circle. The emphasis is on speed and thrust.

"I first saw it in 1968 at the Olympics in Mexico City," says Oldfield. "A guy from UCLA was using it. I later began experimenting with it in practice at the '72 Olympics. The first time I ever used it, I threw seventy-one feet. People started to come out and watch me practicing and I began to try all kinds of different things even though I really didn't know what I was doing. I'm kind of a show-off, you know."

By the spring of 1975 Oldfield was using the spin regularly. At a

professional track meet in San Francisco, he threw the 16-pound shot 72 feet, six inches, almost a foot farther than amateur Al Feuerbach's world outdoor record of 71-7. Then, on May 10th in El Paso, he threw 75 feet, surpassing Feuerbach's record by more than three feet. But since international track officials honor only those standards set in amateur competition, Oldfield has never been acknowledged as the official world-record holder.

"The world-record recognizers are an amateur body associated with amateur people who get paid for setting amateur records," says Oldfield. "These people know that the officials who judged my record were competent. It would be nice if they would recognize my record, but if they won't, who cares? Feuerbach can go around saying, 'I hold the



