

Pole Vault

Reading for Details

Directions: Read the following information and answer the questions.

Pole vault is a track and field event in which a person uses a long, flexible pole as an aid to jump over a bar. In the 1700's, poles were used as a practical means of passing over swampy areas or canals in the Netherlands. To cross these obstacles without getting wet, while avoiding tiresome roundabout journeys over bridges, a stack of jumping poles was kept at every house and used for vaulting. Soon pole vaulting distance competitions were held annually in the lowlands around the North Sea. Modern competition began around 1850 in Germany, when pole vaulting was added to exercises at the Turner gymnastic clubs. Initially, vaulting poles were made from rigid materials, such as bamboo or aluminum. The introduction of flexible vaulting poles in the early 1950's, made from composites such as fiberglass or carbon fiber, allowed vaulters to achieve greater height.



A successful pole vault requires several steps. In the “approach”, the pole vaulter sprints down the runway, achieving maximum speed and correct position to initiate takeoff. Experienced vaulters use approaches with 18 to 22 strides. In the “plant and take-off” stage, the goal is to transfer motion energy from the approach into potential energy stored by the elasticity of the pole, and to gain as much height as possible by jumping off the ground. The “swing-up” stage simply consists of the vaulter swinging the lower leg forward and rowing the pole. This action gives the vaulter the best position possible to eject off the pole. The “extension” step refers to the extension of the hips upward with outstretched legs as the shoulders drive down, positioning the vaulter upside down. The next phase is called the “turn”, where the vaulter clears the bar and spins into a landing position. In the final step, called “fly-away”, vaulters push-off the pole, releasing it so it falls away from the bar and mats, as they hit the cushioned mat.

As of 2017, the world pole vault record was 20 ft. 2 in.

Source: *Wikipedia.org*

Questions:

1. Describe how the author has organized the article into two sections. (2 sentences)

The article starts with a brief history of the sport and its origins. The second section explains steps needed for a successful pole vault.

2. Discuss the history of pole vault. (≥2 sentences)

An early form of pole vaulting started in the Netherlands during the 1700's. It was a direct means for people to cross canals or wet areas without having to find a bridge.

3. Citing the text, list the steps needed for a successful pole vault. (≥3 sentences)

A successful vault needs a fast approach and a good plant and take-off to achieve initial height. From there, the swing-up and extension gets the vaulter into position to clear the bar. Finally, the turn and fly-away gets the vaulter over the bar and in safe position for falling onto the mat.

4. In your opinion, which pole vault step is the most critical for success? (1 sentence, use “because”)

Answers will vary. Running speed is perhaps the most important because without speed there is no height.

5. Describe three types of people, besides pole vaulters, who would enjoy this article. (≥2 sentences)

People who are thinking about trying the sport may be interested in article. Readers of a fitness or gymnastics magazine may also be interested learning how vaulting works.

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