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Original article

THE EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD AND NATIONAL RECORD IN MEN'S TRIPLE JUMP

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Abstract

Objective. The aim of this study is to present the evolution of the world and national records in the men's triple jump as well as the history of this event since the beginning of the modern Olympic Games. The triple jump, sometimes referred to as the hop, step and jump, is a track and field event, similar to long jump, they are referred to as the "horizontal jumps". The athlete runs down the track and performs a hop, a bound and then a jump into the sand pit. The triple jump has been a modern Olympics Games event since the Games' inception in 1896. As a matter of fact, during its evolution, the world records in men's triple jump went through long stagnation periods (1936-1950, 1975-1985 and 1995-present). The most disputed contest in the history of athletics was at the Olympics Games 1968, where 5 world records were established. This paper presents also the national record progression for men's triple jump, details about the most successful men's triple jump both worldwide and nationally, and last but not least the history of this event at international and national level.

Conclusions. The history of the world and national records in the men's triple jump did not have an unpredictable evolution, being always on an ascending line. Specialists in this event and former world record holders believe that training in the current modern conditions can produce a jump that can surpass Edwards' world record, which is over a quarter of a century old.

Key words: history, world and national record, triple jump, progression.

Introduction

„A time to jump" is a biography, the extraordinary story of one of Britain's sporting heroes, his name, *Jonathan Edwards*, who combined his spiritual beliefs with outstanding talent to become a world-renowned athlete, respectively the current holder of the world record in men's triple jump, a record that will be 26 years old on 07.08.2021. Edwards' world record, **18.29m**, established in 1995 at the World Seniors Championship in Goteborg/Sweden exceeded in longevity the legendary long jump record set by Bob Beamon at Olympics Games in 1968 and broken in 1991 by Mike Powell. Subsequently, Jonathan was stronger and faster in the following seasons, but failed to combine the technique and to translate it into similar distances or even greater ones (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Time-Jump-Authorised-Biography-Jonathan/dp/0002740311>).

The current generation of jumpers have come the closest to reaching or dethroning this record. The closest result of the current world record is 18.21m by the World and Olympic champion, Christian Taylor. The American jumper Will Claye recorded a jump of 18.14 m in 2019. The Portuguese Pedro Pablo Pichardo

is the fifth triple jumper on the list of all times (18.08m) and the youngest of this trio.

"Who knows?" Edwards says when asked if his record is in serious threat. „These three athletes are good and maybe the competition they offer each other could push them to break that record. But it's nice they gave me 25 years!", (<https://www.bbc.com/sport/athletics/53661335>)

History of the men's triple jump at international level

At the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin, at the first Congress of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which took place between 18-23.07.1894 in Paris, (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comitetul_Olimpic_Interna%C8%9Bionalit) was decided that the city of Athens in Greece will host the Olympic Games in 1896, being the first edition of modern Olympics Games which were resumed from the times of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I banned them in 393.

Historical sources of the ancient Olympic Games occasionally mention jumps of 15 meters or more. This

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has led historians to conclude that these must have been a series of jumps, thus providing the basis of triple jump. However, there is no evidence that the triple jump was included in the ancient Olympic Games and it is possible that the extraordinary distances recorded were due to the artistic license of the authors of the victory poems, rather than attempts to report exact results (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_jump).

The first champion in the history of modern Olympics Games was the American James Brendan Bennet Connolly, winner of *triple jump*. Connolly, who was born in Boston to an Irish family with 12 children, was 28 years old in 1896. He was a student at Harvard at the time, having previously worked for an insurance company and completed his military service in the city of Savannah, where he started playing football, cycling and athletics. Finding out about the reinvention of the Olympics Games, Connolly asked the university's management to be excused during the semester of the competition in Athens. "It simply came to our notice then. Maybe you'll show up next year," replied the rector, who obviously didn't know anything about the Olympics. "I'm leaving Harvard today. Have a good day!" the athlete answered firmly, according to his memoirs. His application to resign as a student, approved on March 19, 1896, still exists today in the Harvard archives. Connolly embarked from New York for Athens with the other American athletes, immediately afterwards, on March 20. During the voyage he had at his disposal only the corridors and stairs of the ship for training. In Naples, where a stopover was made, Connolly was left without a wallet and, implicitly, without documents. Eventually, he managed to recover his ticket to Athens, after a crazy race through the city, following in the footsteps of the thief. He arrived in Athens on the day of the official opening ceremonies. He immediately entered the competition, winning the triple jump final (13.71 m), becoming the first Olympic champion. In Athens he won a second place (high jump) and a third place (long jump) and at the next edition of the Olympics Games in 1900, he won a second place, also in the triple jump final (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Brendan_Connolly)

Athletics events from the inaugural *Olympics Games* in 1896 took place between 06 - 10.04.1896, on the Panathinaikos stadium in Athens/Greece, attended by 64 athletes from 9 countries, competing in 12 events. The triple jump was won as mentioned above by the American James Connolly with a performance of 13.71m, in second place was the Frenchman Alexandros Touferis with 12.70m, and in third place was the Greek Ioannis Persakis with the performance of 12.52m. The triple jump technique consisted of two

hops (stepping on the same leg) and long jump, all performed with a runway (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atletism_la_Jocurile_Olimpice_de_var%C4%83_din_1896).

The *1900 Olympics Games*, Paris/France, the athletics discipline took place between 14 - 22.07.1900, the games taking place with 23 athletic events. At this edition, there was a *triple jump without runway* and a *triple jump with runway*. The triple jump without runway was won by the American Ray Ewry (10.58m), an athlete who won two more gold medals (in the long jump without runway and high jump without runway). The triple jump with runway was won by his compatriot, Myer Prinstein (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atletism_la_Jocurile_Olimpice_de_var%C4%83_din_1900)

At Francis Field Stadium in St. Louis, Missouri/USA, the athletics events at the *1904 Olympics Games* took place between 29.09-03.09.1904,. There were 25 events, competing with 233 men from 10 countries. The Americans Myer Prinstein and Ray Ewry won in the triple jump and triple jump without runway.

The *1908 Olympics Games*, took place between 13 - 25.07.1908, at the White City stadium in London/ Great Britain, 446 men from 20 countries competing in 26 athletics events. Since this edition, the triple jump without runway has not been held, although the long jump and high jump without runway remained as Olympic events, including at the *1912 Olympics Games*. The winner of the event was the Englishman Timothy Ahearne, *the current technique* - hop, step and jump, being present for the first time at these games. (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atletism_la_Jocurile_Olimpice_de_var%C4%83_din_1908).

Progression of the world record in the men's triple jump

The first world record for men's triple jump was officially ratified by World Athletics (WA, the new name of the International Federation of Amateur Athletics-IAAF) in 1912, the year in which this international forum was established. The inaugural world record was the performance of Dan Ahearn's 15.52 m in 1911. As of June 21, 2009 (the date of the last world record), 27 world records have been ratified by the WA (IAAF).

Daniel Ahearn emigrated from Ireland, and his last name was originally Ahearne, "e" being abandoned when he passed through Ellis Island. He was the brother of Tim Ahearne, the 1908 Olympic champion in triple jump for the GBR / IRL.

(<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~aherns/danahern.htm>)



Dan Ahern-Triple jump-15.52-the first World Record reconized by the World Athletics

(<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~aherns/danahern.htm>)

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Brendan_Connolly)



The first olympic champion from Olympics Games in 1896, the American James Brendan Connolly in men's triple jump-13.71m



Ray Ewry – Triple Jump without runway – First place at Olympics Games in 1908



Chuhei Nambu – Gold Medal at Olympics Games in 1936 and holder of the world record in men's Triple Jump

(<https://www.liveabout.com/illustrated-history-of-the-triple-jump-3259322>)

The first jump of over 18.00m is American **Mike Conley's** jump at the 1992 Olympics Games. His performance, 18.17m, does not appear as regular because the wind was higher than 2m/sec. (2.1m / s) and as such was not recognized as a world and olympic record. But the first 18m jump in Olympic history was a significant achievement, record or not!

(<https://trackandfieldnews.com/olympic-results/history-of-olympic-results-triple-jump-men/>).

The most titrated athletes of all time in the men's triple jump are:

- Russian jumper Viktor Saneyev (PB-17.44m), won three consecutive Olympic titles from 1968 to 1976 and the silver medal at the 1980 Olympics Games,
- American Christian Taylor (PB-18.21m), is the triple jumper who has won two Olympic titles (2012 and 2016) and four world titles (2011, 2015, 2017 and 2019),
- the world record-holder of the event, the Englishman Jonathan Edwards (PB-18.29m), won two Olympic titles (1996 and 2000) and two world titles (1995 and 2001).

(<https://sportshistorychronicle.wordpress.com/2016/03/07/the-greatest-triple-jumpers-of-all-time-viktor-saneyev-and-tatyana-lebedeva>)

The best world performances in the men's triple jump, who have performances achieved in the numerical range 17.90m-18.29m are:

- **Jonathan Edwards** , 18.29m (1995), 18.16m (1995), 18.01m (1998), 18.00m (1995), 17.99m (1998), 17.98m (1995) and 17.92m (2001).
- **Christian Taylor** , 18.21m (2015), 18.11m (2017), 18.06m (2015), 18.04m (2015), 17.96m (2011) and 17.92m (2019).
- **Will Claye** , 18.14m (2019), 18.06m (2019) and 17.91m (2011).
- **Kenny Harrison**, 18.09m (1996).
- **Pedro Pablo Pichardo** , 18.08m (2015), 18.06m (2015), 17.99m (2015), 17.96m (2015), 17.95m (2018) and 17.94m (2015).
- **Teddy Tamgho** , 18.04m (2013), 17.98m (2010), 17.92m (2 × 2011i), 17.91m (2011i, 2011) and 17.90m (2010i).

Evolution of the world record in the men's triple jump (Table no. 1)

(https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triple_jump_world_record_progression)

Performance	Wind	First Name and Last Name / Country	Date	Venue of the competition
15.52 m		<u>Dan Ahearn</u> (USA)	30.05. 1911	<u>New York City , US</u>
15.52 m		<u>Nick Winter</u> (AUS)	12.07. 1924	<u>Paris , France</u>
15.58 m		<u>Mikio Oda</u> (JPN)	27.10.1931	<u>Tokyo, Japan</u>
15.72 m		<u>Chuhei Nambu</u> (JPN)	14.08.1932	<u>Los Angeles , US</u>
15.78 m		<u>Jack Metcalfe</u> (AUS)	14.12.1935	<u>Sydney, Australia</u>
16.00 m	0.6	<u>Naoto Tajima</u> (JPN)	06.08.1936	<u>Berlin, Germany</u>
16.00 m	1.6	<u>Adhemar da Silva</u> (BRA)	03.12.1950	<u>São Paulo , Brazil</u>
16.01 m	1.2	Adhemar da Silva (BRA)	30.09.1951	<u>Rio de Janeiro , Brazil</u>
16.12 m		Adhemar da Silva (BRA)	23.07.1952	<u>Helsinki, Finland</u>
16.22 m		Adhemar da Silva (BRA)	23.07.1952	Helsinki, Finland
16.23 m	1.5	<u>Leonid Shcherbakov</u> (URS)	19.07.1953	<u>Moscow , Soviet Union</u>
16.56 m	0.2	<u>Adhemar da Silva</u> (BRA)	16.03.1955	<u>Mexico City, Mexico</u>

16.59 m	1.0	<u>Oleg Ryakhovskiy</u> (URS)	28.07.1958	<u>Moscow , Soviet Union</u>
16.70 m	0.0	<u>Oleg Fyodoseyev</u> (URS)	03.05.1959	<u>Nalchik , Soviet Union</u>
17.03 m	1.0	<u>Józef Szmidt</u> (POL)	05.08.1960	<u>Olsztyn , Poland</u>
17.10 m	0.0	<u>Giuseppe Gentile</u> (ITA)	16.10.1968	<u>Mexico City , Mexico</u>
17.22 m	0.0	Giuseppe Gentile (ITA)	17.10.1968	Mexico City, Mexico
17.23 m	2.0	<u>Viktor Sanyeyev</u> (URS)	17.10.1968	Mexico City, Mexico
17.27 m	2.0	<u>Nelson Prudêncio</u> (BRA)	17.10.1968	Mexico City, Mexico
17.39 m	2.0	<u>Viktor Sanyeyev</u> (URS)	17.10.1968	Mexico City, Mexico
17.40 m	0.4	<u>Pedro Pérez</u> (CUB)	05.08.1971	<u>Cali, Colombia</u>
17.44 m	-0.5	<u>Viktor Sanyeyev</u> (URS)	17.10.1972	<u>Sukhumi , Soviet Union</u>
17.89 m	0.0	<u>João Carlos de Oliveira</u> (BRA)	15.10.1975	<u>Mexico City, Mexico</u>
17.97 m	1.5	<u>Willie Banks</u> (USA)	16.06.1985	<u>Indianapolis , US</u>
17.98 m	1.8	<u>Jonathan Edwards</u> (GBR)	18.07.1995	<u>Salamanca, Spain</u>
18.16 m	1.3	Jonathan Edwards (GBR)	07.08.1995	<u>Gothenburg , Sweden</u>
18.29 m	1.3	Jonathan Edwards (GBR)	07.08.1995	<u>Gothenburg , Sweden</u>

The chronology of the men's triple jump at national level

The major contribution to the resumption of the Olympic traditions of the Romanian Evanghelie Zappa

When we talk about the re-establishment of the Olympics, we always remember the French baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863 - 1937), who on November 25, 1892, in the amphitheater of the famous Sorbonne University, launched the idea of resuming the Olympics from the old Greece.

However, few people still remember the one who first launched the idea of the rebirth of modern Olympism, Evanghelie Zappa (1860 - 1865), Aromanian landowner, merchant and entrepreneur, famous in the middle of the 19th century both in Romania and in Greece. Born in Lampobo in the Ottoman province of Epirus, now in Albania, Zappa emigrated to Wallachia in 1831, leaving Greece due to dissatisfaction with the country's new military organization.

In Wallachia he dealt with the grain trade and agriculture, soon becoming a famous and respected landowner. He was friends with the rulers Gheorghe Bibescu and Alexandru Ioan Cuza and is one of those who financed the establishment of the Romanian Academy, but also the printing of the first edition of the "Dictionary of the Romanian language" and the

"Grammar of the Romanian language" (https://adevarul.ro/news/sport/serial-fabuloasa-istorie-jocurilor-olimpice-1896-anul-spiridon-carausul-apa-tena-1_5697e6a337115986c67e8ed0/index.html)

In 1856, he began an extensive campaign to resume the Olympics Games. There was an intense correspondence between the Greek authorities of that time and Evanghelie Zappa, after which the nobleman promised to donate half of his fortune for organizing sports competitions. So, Zappa donated to the Greek state more than 70,000 gold coins and 400 shares he held in the Hellenic Ship Society. Two years later, in 1858, in Athens, the king of Greece signed a decree ordering the creation of the "Olympic Foundation" in Athens. Also from Zappa's donation, the "Zappeion" was built - a forerunner of today's Olympic parks, inaugurated on October 20, 1888.

Evanghelie Zappa also brought the Olympic spirit to Bucharest, so that with 2,500 gold coins, he founded, according to the historian Ioan Man, in 1860, the Romanian Olympic Society. Before he died, in 1865, he was able to see the first pre-Olympic or pan-Elenic Games, held in November 1859 in Athens, over 300 competitors participated. On the list of winners were also the Aromanians Dimitrie Atanasiu, in the 200 meters and Constantin Cristu, in throws.

In men's athletics history, Romania has 2 athletes medalists at the Olympics Games: *Gheorghe*

Megelea, bronze in javelin (Montreal 1976) and *Marian Oprea*, silver in triple jump (Athens 2004).

The history of the national record in the men's triple jump of the last 50 years.

The jumps of Marian Oprea, who is the current holder of the national record in the triple jump, both indoors and outdoors with the performance of 17.74m (2006), respectively 17.81m (2005), seem detached from the world of the unreal, they have been surviving for 16 years and I think they will last a long, long time.

Previous to the two national outdoor records of Marian Oprea (2003 corrected the old record national with 36 cm, taking him from 17.27m to 17.63m), **Bedros Bedrosian** was the record holder in this event, from 1984 to 2003, with a performance of 17.27m (9 years). (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bedros_Bedrosian)

Carol Corbu, another legend of the men's triple jump, was the first athlete who jump over the 17m border, setting a remarkable 17.11m in Turin 1971, and holding the supremacy of the national record until 1984 (13 years). European Indoor Champion and three other silver medals at the European Indoor Championships, as well as a silver and a bronze at the European Outdoor Championships, are medals that are part of Carol Corbu's record. We mention that only in 1983 was the first edition of the World Athletics Championships (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_Corbu).

The long career in performance of **Marian Oprea** started in 1999 when he won his first major medal, bronze at the European Junior Championships in Riga (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marian_Oprea). In 2000 he won the gold medal at the World Junior Championship in Santiago de Chile. In 2001 he won the first medal for the senior category, at the Universiade in China, with a performance of 17.11m. It begins a period of hegemony of 14 years, a period in which jumps over 17m are a child's play. In 2002, he won a silver medal at the European Championship (17.22m). He qualified for 2004 Olympics Games and won the silver medal with a jump of 17.55 m. A year later he broke his own national record with a fabulous jump of 17.81 m, at the meeting from Laussane, competing in the company of the best jumpers of that moment. In the same year, he won the bronze medal at the World Championships in Helsinki (17.40m), and at the 2006 European Championships he won the bronze medal (17.18m). At the Olympics Games in China/2008, he ranked the 5th place (17.22m). In 2009 he underwent surgery for patellar tendinitis in his left knee. A year later he became silver medalist in European Championships (17.51m), and in the European Indoor Championships 2011 he won the bronze medal (17.62 m). In 2015 he won a bronze medal at the European Indoor Championships and the 6th place at World Championships held in Beijing with a jump of 17.06m, at the age of 33years old, after 16 years of great performance.

Marian Oprea retired from sports in 2020, when he decided to move to the coaching profession.

Progression of the national record in the men's triple jump (Table no.2)

(Boriga, A., Mărășescu, N., Vladu, C., 2012)

Nr.	Performance	Name and surname	Date	The place of the competition
1	11.37m	Zorilă Pop	04.07.1920	Bucharest
2	11.60m	Ion Tamas	12.09.1920	Cluj-Napoca
3	11.78m	Otto Storzbach	16.09.1921	Bucharest
4	11.83m	Ladislau Peter	15.07.1921	Cluj-Napoca
5	12.18m	Ladislau Peter	31.07.1921	Cluj-Napoca
6	12.87m	Otto Storzbach	14.05.1922	Bucharest
7	13.02m	Otto Storzbach	03.06.1923	Bucharest
8	13.09m	Otto Storzbach	27.07.1923	Brașov
9	13.27m	Adalbert Panaioth	01.08.1926	Timisoara
10	13.59m	Adalbert Panaioth	08.09.1929	Bucharest
11	13.66m	Ferdinand Calistrat	13.08.1936	Predeal
12	13.91m	Ferdinand Calistrat	13.09.1936	Bucharest
13	13.97m	Ferdinand Calistrat	15.08.1937	Predeal

14	13.99m	Reinhold Kreisel	28.08.1938	Bucharest
15	14.06m	Pompiliu Stoichițescu	28.08.1938	Bucharest
16	14.20m	Ferdinand Calistrat	18.10.1938	Bucharest
17	14.27m	Ferdinand Calistrat	21.05.1939	Bucharest
18	14.39m	Ferdinand Calistrat	24.06.1939	Bucharest
19	14.40m	Ferdinand Calistrat	27.08.1939	Predeal
20	14.42m	Ferdinand Calistrat	06.09.1947	Bucharest
21	14.67m	Traian Chitul	18.06.1953	Bucharest
22	15.07m	Sorin Ioan	08.08.1954	Budapest / Hungary
2. 3	15.08m	Virgil Zăvădescu	08.08.1954	Bucharest
24	15.09m	Virgil Zăvădescu	27.09.1954	Bucharest
25	15.27m	Sorin Ioan	03.08.1955	Warsaw / Poland
26	15.39m	Sorin Ioan	22.07.1956	Belgrade / Yugoslavia
27	15.47m	Sorin Ioan	25.06.1959	Bucharest
28	15.55m	Sorin Ioan	25.05.1960	Cluj-Napoca
29	15.70m	Sorin Ioan	28.08.1960	Poiana Brașov
30	15.93m	Sorin Ioan	03.09.1961	Sofia / Bulgaria
31	16.13m	Serban Ciochina	29.06.1963	Sofia / Bulgaria
32	16.16m	Serban Ciochina	29.04. 1964	Bucharest
33	16.16m	Serban Ciochina	21.05.1964	Athens / Greece
34	16.23m	Serban Ciochina	07.06.1964	Sofia / Bulgaria
35	16.25m	Serban Ciochina	10.08.1964	Poiana Brașov
36	16.28m	Serban Ciochina	19.08.1964	Bucharest
37	16.42m	Serban Ciochina	03.09.1964	Budapest / Hungary
38	16.46m	Serban Ciochina	20.10.1966	Mexico City
39	16.59m	Serban Ciochina	04.06.1967	Sofia / Bulgaria
40	16.76m	Carol Corbu	14.06.1970	Athens / Greece
41	17.12m	Carol Corbu	13.06.1971	Turin / Italy
42	17.27m	Bedros Bedrosian	9.06.1984	Bucharest
43	17.63m	Marian Oprea	07.06.2003	Bucharest
44	17.81m	Marian Oprea	05.07.2005	Lausanne / Switzerland

Conclusions

The history of the world and national records in the men's triple jump did not have an unpredictable evolution, being always on an ascending line. There have been long years of stagnation and moments of valuable jumps. Nowadays, worldwide, the 18.30 m performance does not seem untouchable. Instead, Marian Oprea's national record, 17.83m, is fantastic and unbeatable for many years from now.

Specialists in this event and former holders of the world record believe that training in the current modern conditions can produce a jump that can surpass Edwards' world record. Currently, worldwide, three of the most titrated athletes in the men's triple jump, are convinced that they will break this old record of more than a quarter of a century.

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