

# CARL LEWIS

by David Gleason



It wasn't enough, it seems, for Carl Lewis to begin 1980 as one of the most exciting long jump prospects in the world.

The slender Houston frosh surprised many this year by emerging as a top sprinter as well, with a long string of quick and competitive 100 and 200 performances.

Carl's rise on the long jump scene had been meteoric, as the high school senior erupted in 1979 with the maturity and poise of a seasoned veteran to rank No. 5 in the world.

But few realized that the New Jersey native had the sprinting ability which emerged so suddenly this year. Beginning in May, Lewis showed the same maturity on the track that had made him a phenomenon on the runway. He raced to 4th at the Trials, thus earning a spot on the relay team that competed in Europe. Once overseas, he continued to sprint extensively, lowering his PR to 10.21 and further establishing himself as a consistent world-class sprinter.

It's rare for a long jumper to possess the kind of sprint ability that Lewis demonstrated this year. He will be World Ranked in both the 100 and the long jump, a feat achieved in recent history only by all-time great Andy Stanfield (1950-51).

One may have to go back to Jesse Owens to find another athlete who combined the talents that Carl has in such abundance. His fluid stride is a thing of beauty.

Carl's talent has been developed from an early age in an athletics-oriented family, with parents Bill and Evelyn instrumental in the Willingboro TC. As Evelyn Lawler, Carl's mother was a hurdler on the 1951 Pan-Am team. His sister Carol is a 3-time high school women's long jump leader.

To find out more about this intriguing new talent, we contacted Carl at the University of Houston, where he was in the middle of his fall studies.

**T&FN:** *How are things at Houston?*

Lewis: Well, right now, I'm training my best ever. School's coming along—everything's coming along well right now.

**T&FN:** *So you've gotten over the freshman year orientation and so on?*

Lewis: Yes, that's really true. I feel right now that everything will really broaden out, as far as life and everything is concerned. I'm trying to get more specifically into my jumping and running and school work this year.

The freshman year, everything is so erratic, everyone is running around. After the long last year, I've really cut my fall down to just school; school work and training.

This year, I just want to settle down, slow myself down and get used to being a college student/athlete. And that's pretty much of what I've done.

**T&FN:** *Can you tell me what you've learned from Coach Tellez?*

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Lewis: Well, I have to say, when I first came down here, it was kinda tough for me out of high school—jumping as far as I had—to just want to stop and change almost all of the things I was doing in high school.

I have a knee problem and it's on my jumping leg, and I've always had that problem. Coach and I just looked around and tried different jumping techniques that would be best for the knee, and we came up with the double hitch.

I was a single-hitch jumper and a hang jumper in high school; we came up with the double-hitch kick. We do it slightly different from most people, because of my extra speed. It really helps the knee.

I think my confidence in Coach Tellez in making the transition was the main thing. When I got here, we knew there was no way that I could keep jumping the way I was, and stay healthy.

T&FN: *Why exactly was that?*

Lewis: What happened was that I injured the knee about 7 years ago. I fell down one time and it injured a tendon. A small part of the muscle was hurt, and the scar tissue just stayed in there.

Then last spring, right after my high school senior year, I was jumping on a wet board with no spikes, and I reinjured it. The scar tissue right now is between the joints, and pressure causes the problem.

A lot of times, I can long jump in a meet pretty well, but I can't do much more than that. I can run sprints all day, but once I start jumping, it starts bothering me.

Before, if I long jumped, it was really hurting the rest of the day. Now, with the new technique, I can jump and do other events. It may get a little sore later on that night, but it's 100% better, and it's healing much better.

T&FN: *So you really had to revamp your whole technique.*

Lewis: Right. I had to stop, pretty much forget what I had learned and start over.

T&FN: *Was that hard?*

Lewis: That was very hard. Throughout most of the year, through most of my meets, I was trying to learn.

So I didn't compete in very many long jumps this year. I worked on my sprinting and I worked on technique.

T&FN: *Well, you won 2 NCAA titles and made the "Olympic Team."*

Lewis: Right, that was the main thing. At both NCAA meets I jumped well; jumped my best of the year. I concentrated on what I had to do at both meets. Coach Tellez was there both times, and I jumped well. Especially that outdoor meet; that was a very, very good jump.

T&FN: *Yes, a barely windy 27-4¾. Were you disappointed that you didn't get an official 27-foot jump?*

Lewis: At first I was kind of disappointed, but at the time, I was really excited. I said, "I know I can jump that far again this summer." That was the main

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thing on my mind; I just really wanted to win the NCAA title.

Larry Doubledy and I have [laughs] a bubbling rivalry, I guess I could say.

T&FN: *Is that right? Why is that?*

Lewis: It really started just after the indoor season. We talked a couple of times, and we get along very well, but we have a good little rivalry going.

T&FN: *You turned more to sprinting this season partly to take it easy on that knee. Was that the only reason?*

Lewis: Oh, I like sprinting. I've always liked sprinting. Really, what I like is the relays.

T&FN: *You've said that before. Why is that?*

Lewis: I don't know, I just like the competitiveness of the relays. The relay and the long jump are my favorite things and then sprinting comes third. The long jump is first. I really like the team concept, I guess, of the relays.

T&FN: *Do you think there is a conflict between the long jump and sprinting, or do they complement each other?*

Lewis: Well, for a person like myself, that is to say, in college, I think they complement each other all the way up until you get to the big meets, like the Olympic Trials. I think that once you get to that meet you should go to one event.

I tried the 100m and the long jump at the Olympic Trials, and the weather wasn't really that good, and I wasn't really into it like I wanted to be.

T&FN: *Was that just because of the weather?*

Lewis: The weather, and having to run the 100—everything just added up.

I think that next year, I'll probably do just as much sprinting during the season, but when the big meets like the TAC come, then I'll specialize more, like I did at the NCAA meet.

T&FN: *You ran the 100 and 200 quite a bit. Did you like that, running all those races?*

Lewis: I enjoyed that; my first year in Europe was a real experience. What happened was that in July I was set up to do a lot of sprinting; to try and rest for the August meets as far as long jumping.

I came back to Philadelphia for the Liberty Bell meet and I hyperextended my other knee in the long jump pit. The doctor said I was through for the season.

But I came back. I have a chiropractor down here and I went to him 6 times in 8 days, and I saw another doctor 3 times, and I was running in the swimming pool and I was working out with weights and everything else, and I got my legs back to where I could do sprinting.

I went over to Europe just 3 weeks after that injury, and I ran 10.23, 10.25 and then I ran 2 more good races, and then decided to call it quits, because I didn't want to put any strain on the leg. But it was awfully pleasing to get back and run. I

had my set of problems this year.

T&FN: *You seemed to hold up really well under the long season. You then plan to run that much again next year?*

Lewis: Yes, pretty much. I plan on doing a lot of sprinting early, but in the European season my sprinting will probably be cut way down, to maybe one or two races. But during the season I'll do a lot of sprinting for the school, and some invitationals like I did last year.

T&FN: *You made the national team in '79, right out of high school. You went to the Pan-Am Games, jumped well there, and the Spartakiad, and jumped well there. Was that a big turning point in your life?*

Lewis: Well, at the International Prep my bad knee really cut right into the meet. I'm a right-footed jumper, and at the sectionals, the State Meet and everything leading up to that meet, I jumped off my left foot so I could preserve my right leg. I won the State Meet and everything else off my left foot!

Then when I went to the IPI meet, I didn't know what I would jump. But I jumped 26-6 and was invited to the TAC. That really made a turning point. Then I went to the TAC and surprisingly, made the team. And when I made the team, that was the biggest meet to me, still to this day; making the Pan-Am team.

I was on the team most of the way, and then I got behind, and came back down. That was probably the biggest thrill, that last jump at the TAC in '79.

T&FN: *Do you know how much longer you'll continue to compete?*

Lewis: Well, right now, as I foresee it, I plan to compete about 8 more years. Until I'm about 26-27; then I want to call it quits.

T&FN: *Can you tell me what you're looking forward to in the future? Do you have a particular goal?*

Lewis: Right now, in the near future, my goal is to jump far. . . very far. [laughs] I don't like to give out distances, but I'd like to say farther than anyone has.

I think I'm capable of it, and I think it will be in the next few years. Especially if I can stay here, and do well at the University of Houston, and work with Coach Tellez. He's an excellent coach and I can do nothing but praise him.

If we stay together and I can stay on the same schedule, I think I can jump farther than anyone has. □

Frederick Carlton Lewis was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on July 1, 1961, and measures 6-2/160. Coached by Andy Dudek and Paul Minore in high school, where he set High School Records of 26-6 and 26-8 and won the Pan-Am bronze medal. Now coached by Tom Tellez at Houston, where he won the 1980 NCAA indoor and outdoor titles. On the all-time World Junior list he rates No. 8 in the 100, No. 4 in the LJ.

Year	age	class	school	100	200	LJ
1974	12/13	7	Levitt Jr.			18-1
1975	13/14	8	"			19-11
1976	14/15	Fr	"			22-9
1977	15/16	So	Willingsboro, NJ			23-10
1978	16/17	Jr	"	9.3y		25-9
1979	17/18	Sr	"	9.5y	20.9	26-8
1980	18/19	Fr	Houston	10.21	20.66	26-7¾