

# Scottish Highland Games

## A Description of the Scottish Heavy Events



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## A Description of the Events:

### *Throwing the Weights*

The competition consists of two separate events. Both are derived from ancient tests of military skills. The weight used for distanced throwing is reminiscent of a mace. The weight used for throwing for height resembles a grappling hook once used to scale fortifications.

The “weight for distance” contest uses a weight consisting of a ball and chain. There are three standard weight divisions: 14&28 lbs for women, 28&56 lbs for men, and 28&42 lbs for the Masters.



Each weight must be thrown with one hand. With a combination of balance, rhythm and power, this is often considered a graceful athletic event.

The second event, the “Weight Over the Bar”, uses a 56 lb. (men), 28 lb. (women), or 42 lb. (masters) weight usually with a ring attached. Each athlete is allowed three attempts to clear a marked height before the bar is raised. The victor is the sole thrower who can clear the highest bar.



### *Putting the Stone*

This popular contest is derived from an ancient clan ritual. Each chieftain’s “stone of strength” was situated at the entrance of his castle. Before entry was granted, every

visiting clansman was obligated to test his strength by throwing it for distance this was perhaps to insure that certain guests would be capable of the castle’s defense. If besieged, the successful stone putter would be posted on the battlements, hurling large boulders down upon the attackers.



The Stone Throw at many Games follow the “Braemar” style. In Braemar competition, a stone, weighing 20 to 26 lbs., is thrown from a stationary position. A second “Open Stone, weighing 16 to 20 lbs, is thrown with an approach similar to the Olympic shot put.

### *Hammer Throwing*

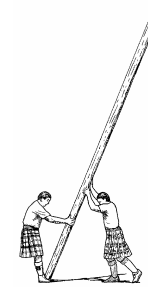
The history of this event is much debated. Some suggest that, like throwing the weight, the hammer is analogous to the ancient mace. Other have claimed it derives from a simple contest between village smithies. Whether of military or agrarian origins, it has grown into an internationally recognized Olympic event.



Not to be confused with its all-metal counterpart used in the Olympics, the Scots’ hammer has a shaft made of cane or PVC pipe, an overall length of 50 inches and comes in two weights: “Light” 16 lbs. and “Heavy” 22 lbs. Both are thrown standing-style, would several times around

the head, and released straight behind the thrower.

### *The Caber Toss*



Historically, a felled tree trunk or caber was used to bridge deep, swiftly-running rivers. Less inclined to wash out when laid at a right angle to the river, accuracy of placement was both a highly developed skill and a dire

necessity if one’s men were to cross the swift rapids.

Today’s athletic competition is still judged on the accuracy rather than the distance of the throw. At 100 lbs., or more, and often 17 to 20 feet long, the caber is held by the narrower end, while its thicker, more unwieldy end points skyward. Once lifted by the athlete, the caber must be run forward, stopped dead and then heaved end over end. If the perfect “twelve o’clock” toss is made, the tree trunk will have landed dead straight ahead with its narrow end pointing away from the athlete.

