

## Highland Games from page C1

"Consistency is the way you win. You want to stay in the top three in each event. It becomes a game of who makes mistakes. If you come in fourth or fifth in any event, you're not going to win."

"It's like the decathlon; you have to be good at everything." Pauli, who stands 6-foot-2 and weighs 255 pounds, is actually on the small side as Highland Games athletes go, he said. The average weight for an athlete is 285 pounds.

"I haven't been this big all the time," Pauli said. "I was pretty skinny when I graduated from high school."

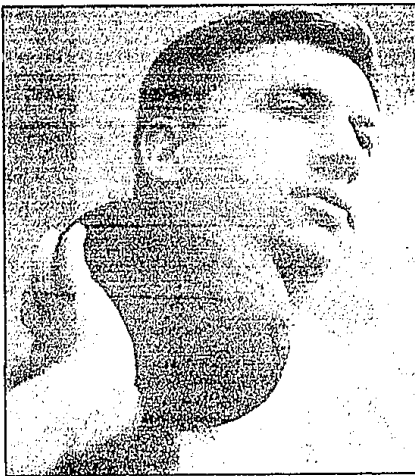
"My body metabolism slowed down (in his early 20s), and I was able to put on weight that I was never able to. I gained weight specifically for this. The implements being what they are, the athletes have to be bigger to control them."

Pauli's training regimen consists mainly of weight lifting in a neighborhood buddy's garage, mostly in the off season.

"Right now I just did my third (of seven) games in a row," he said. "During that time, I'm basically resting a lot."

"I do a little lifting and throwing during the week, one day of each, and I'm competing every weekend. In the winter and spring, I generally do a lot of weight lifting to stay in shape."

**JUST THE FACTS:** Kurt Pauli, 27, has lived in Farmington Hills for five years. He grew up in Pennsylvania and attend



**Weighty matter:** Kurt Pauli gets ready to launch the stone put, a traditional Scottish sporting event.

ed the University of Pittsburgh. His job as an electrical engineer for GSE Scale Systems brought him to Michigan.

Gates open at 8:30 a.m. Saturday at Greenmead. The athletic competition

starts at 9 a.m. The daylong event concludes at 6 p.m. Admission is \$10 at the gate. Children under 12 are admitted free of charge with an adult.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME:** You don't have

to be Scottish to participate in the Highland Games, but Pauli does have some Scottish roots on his mother's side. Her maiden name was MacQueen.

"It seems everybody, if they look far enough back, will find some (Scottish ancestry) in their background," Pauli said. "That's why the games are so popular. If you get in the right area with Scottish and Irish, you get a lot of people."

**THE CABER TOSSE:** Most people are familiar with the caber, a Gaelic word meaning tree trunk, according to Pauli. It can be 17 to 22 feet long and weigh 120 to 180 pounds. One end of the tree is naturally smaller than the other.

The athlete picks up the smaller end, interlaces his fingers and rests the caber against his shoulder. He makes a short run, stops and pulls upward. Momentum takes the caber forward, and the bottom end flips over.

"It's an accuracy event," Pauli said. "The goal is to flip the caber end over end, so the end you're holding lands directly facing away from you in a 12 o'clock position. If you don't put an even amount of power on it, the caber will go up and fall off to one side."

**A HEAVY WEIGHT:** The stone put requires the athlete to throw an actual stone, usually weighing 23 pounds at the Detroit Games. The 28-pound stone is a round, steel ball attached to a handle by a chain link.

The hammer toss involves a 16-pound, Scottish hammer, which Pauli describes as a shot put, on the end of a wooden handle. The 56-pound weight has to be thrown one-handed (same as the 28-pound weight) over a bar like a pole vault standard.

Pauli's personal bests are 42 feet in the stone put, 75 feet in the 28-pound weight throw, 135 feet in the hammer toss and a height of 16 feet, six inches

in the 56-pound weight throw. It's hard to gauge a personal best in the caber toss, because the length and width of the caber always differs.

**A LITTLE HISTORY:** Of the Celtic peoples living in the British Isles 2,000 years ago, the tribe known as the Gaels came to dominate Ireland. Hence, the reference to Gaelic language and culture as the historic underpinnings of Irish society.

Around 500 A.D. another Celtic tribe called the Scotti crossed from the north of Ireland into the western islands and highlands of the land the Romans called Caledonia.

The Scotti brought with them their Gaelic language and culture, as well as Christianity. Though smaller in number, the Scotti and their ways prevailed over the Picts, another group of Celtic people indigenous to the land.

The Scotti eventually gave their name to the nation we know as Scotland, which was later made a part of the United Kingdom (Great Britain) through union with England in 1707.

Following the Reformation, the lowland Scots, having more in common with their Anglo-Norman neighbors and favoring closer ties with Protestant England, came to dominate Scottish society in the Enlightenment period and into the industrial age.

The hopes for an independent and Celtic Scotland were dashed by the defeat of a Highland army at the battle of Culloden Moor in 1746.

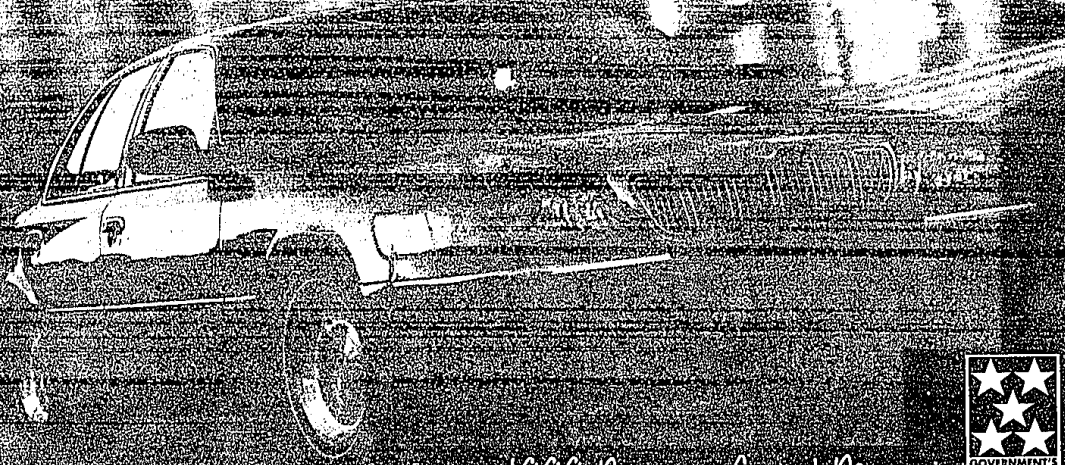
That was followed by the infamous Highland Clearings (highlanders were cleared off the land) of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Ironically, it's the Highland Scots and their ancient traditions that today are most commonly associated with historic Scotland, and the Highland Games preserve and celebrate that legacy.

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