Vaulting Taught Here

By STUART GLASS, Thresher Sports Editor

The round gold medal which is one of his prized possessions explains rather boldly that Fred Hanszen is the best pole vaulter in the world. Maybe even the best that ever lived.

But if he has anything to do with it, all his records will be wiped out within a year or so. For Hansen is one of the few athletes who understands why he is great.

This may take some explaining. Picture the Great Athlete: big, muscular, clean living, hard working. Etc. Ask him why he is great. He looks down, kicks a clod of dirt, and brushes the forelock of hair from his eyes. He speaks. "I live clean and work hard. Etc."

Ask Fred Hansen the same question. He looks down, kicks a clod of dirt, and produces a pamphlet called "Compound Pendular Mechanics of Vaulting." Which he wrote. In it is explained, in some rather complex mathematical terms, the principle of converting horizontal momentum into vertical momentum, which is a way of saying that if you run up and bend the fiberglass pole just right, it will shove you way up into the air, and if you are good enough at gymnastics, you can push yourself over to the other side of that bar without dragging it down with you.

The whole thing is a result of a full year's research and physical exertion to acquire the gymnastic skill necessary to take advantage of the glass pole's extra thrust. But think how much easier vaulting will be for the next guy.

We're trying to get a copy of the pamphlet. Those gold medals are awfully impressive. Maybe skinny little us might garner a few. Who knows, with a plug like that working for us?