

Fling-Spearing



Early in their career, long before life's little vagaries turned them into a popular singing act, the Fabulous McGillicuddy Sisters competed on the semi-professional level in the sport of fling-spearing. That was the athletic field event in which contestants tossed a 2½-meter long metal spear for distance. They were good, really good. At one match, the three of them combined to average 55.45 meters. While that was well off the mark of Olympic athletes, it was a good enough score to trounce the competition. Then in 1970, the McGillicuddies participated in a meet in Tucson, Arizona that entirely changed the complexion of the game. Midway through the contest, hundreds of javalinas, migrating across the desert, swarmed onto the field. Javalinas are wild pigs with sharp tusks native to the desert Southwest that prey upon orphans and nuclear reactor administrators. They immediately turned on the spectators, culling from the crowd all the crumb-snatchers and anyone who emitted a radioactive aura. Most of the athletes were too stunned to move, but the McGillicuddies sprang into action, flinging spear after spear at the ghastly little creatures. Soon the air was filled with the shrieks of mortally wounded javalinas, and this prompted the other fling-spearers to join in, too. By the time the animals retreated to the desert, their rancorous ranks had been nearly halved. And the aim of the athletes was so good that a mere fourteen spectators suffered puncture wounds, none of which was life-threatening. When everyone had calmed down, there was unanimous agreement that impaling a creepy javalina was way more exciting than just heaving a spear. So the rules of the sport were modified to entail tossing a spear for distance *at* a javalina target. Simultaneously, the name of the sport changed to its more familiar appellation: the javelin.