

300 Hurdles: Building the Plane While Flying It

2026: Nike Track Clinic

Portland, OR

Coaching Education:

- ▶ Washington State University
 - ▶ Student Athlete & Volunteer Assistant
- ▶ USATF Level 2: Sprints/Hurdles & Combined Events
- ▶ USTFCCCA Level 2: Jumps, Combined Events
- ▶ USTFCCCA Level 3: Master's Endorsement in the Hurdles
- ▶ ALTIS: High Jump, High Hurdles, Horizontal Jumps
- ▶ Countless Mentors, Friends, Athletes

Must Establish a Culture of Trust:

- ▶ Athletes (humans) do not always respond well to change
- ▶ Athletes must trust you that the change is worth it (and doable) and you must be able to articulate that change
 - ▶ MUST HAVE A PLAN
- ▶ Over the course of the season, it is likely that an athlete's blocks should change AT LEAST once as they develop more power, speed, rhythm, and improve technique
 - ▶ Athletes hate changing blocks!
- ▶ Almost all athletes must be able to utilize both legs effectively
 - ▶ Most athletes hate alternating!
- ▶ WILL THEY/YOU BE READY TO CHANGE?



Preparing for Takeoff

- ▶ We are going to assume athletes know how to hurdle and use blocks
- ▶ We are assuming you selected an athlete that you think can be successful in the event (or they selected)

Takeoff to the First Hurdle

- ▶ Single most important stretch of the race
 - ▶ Nearly 1/3 of the race is complete by successfully managing ONE HURDLE
 - ▶ Invest a lot of time here to ensure it is flawless
 - ▶ Creates immense confidence
- ▶ For most athletes, the number of steps to the first hurdle **MUST** change throughout the season! *Will you be prepared to help?*
 - ▶ Men: 19-23 (to run 13/14/15)
 - ▶ Women: 22-26 (to run 15/16/17)

Takeoff to the First Hurdle

- ▶ Start by **SPRINTING** to the first hurdle (Race is only 300M)
 - ▶ See how they navigate initially (video, count)
 - ▶ Switch blocks as needed (again, they hate it!)
- ▶ Script the whole thing for them as needed
 - ▶ A cone where each foot must go (take away any thinking)*
 - ▶ Gradually remove cones (you will know in first 5 steps if they are going to be on or not)
- ▶ You will never know what their stride pattern between hurdles should be until they hit that first hurdle great - **PRIORITIZE THIS.**

Takeoff to the First Hurdle

- ▶ And then be prepared to change!
 - ▶ Worst time to find out you need to change?
 - ▶ Racing World Record Holder
- ▶ Best time to be prepared to change?
 - ▶ State Championships
- ▶ How to Prepare:
 - ▶ Anticipate wind and weather
 - ▶ Know your lane assignment and track configuration
 - ▶ Be ready to use either leg out of the blocks (and over hurdles)

Takeoff to the First Hurdle

- ▶ Like the high hurdles, first few steps out of the blocks are crucial for consistency and establishing horizontal force
 - ▶ I will begrudgingly shorten distance to first hurdle or move blocks up
- ▶ Takeoff distance also equally important and often farther than in high hurdles
 - ▶ Err on the side of more exaggerated in practice if needed and trust adrenaline to execute in a race
 - ▶ Fine line between promoting aggressiveness and building bad habits
- ▶ Sprinting at the first hurdle can be scary for all athletes, sometimes scarier for your fastest athletes

Takeoff to the First Hurdle: Warholm

**WORLD
RECORD**



Establishing a Stride Pattern

Strides between Hurdles:

- ▶ Men: 13-17+
- ▶ Women: 15-19+
- ▶ In practice, we discount hurdles about 3' typically (starting with the 2nd hurdle)

Establishing a Stride Pattern

- ▶ A Stride Pattern Gives You a Blueprint for Momentum (Which maximizes speed)
 - ▶ Long Jump? Triple Jump? High Jump?
 - ▶ Rewards smart kids
 - ▶ Establishes an understanding of the event
- ▶ It doesn't have to be a science
 - ▶ You had to bound to get to Hurdle 3 on your RIGHT, anticipate going over 4 with your LEFT
 - ▶ Increase turnover
 - ▶ You might not need to know how many steps but you might know R, R, R, L, R...

Establishing a Stride Pattern

- Meat & Potatoes (We practice the thing we want to do)
 - Start with 2 hurdles and figure out the # of steps
 - Can we do it twice in a row?
 - Can we start in blocks and do it to 3?
 - We got to 3 but had to reach, can we be ready to alternate when we get to 4?
- We outsmart ourselves in a lot of events, copy every drill on Instagram, and you know who gets the best on our team? The kids that run over 5 hurdles at race pace the most often...

Establishing a Stride Pattern

- ▶ Video is essential (let them see themselves)
- ▶ A huge challenge for athletes to be ready enough, early enough in the season, to rehearse their best in practice.
- ▶ Might not be able to rehearse it exactly
- ▶ Need to make a plan for an athlete that does not exist yet, but you know will exist by May 1st
 - ▶ Bring hurdles closer, challenge stride length, take a risk, use dual meets to experiment

Establishing a Stride Pattern

Shoreline Inv. @ Shoreline HS April 28		All-City Meet @ Sparks Stadium May 2		SPSL Championships @ Sumner May 12		WCD Championships @ Kent-Meridian May 19	
R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
(L) 22	6.45	(L) - 15	6.6	(L) - 15	6.3	(L) - 15	6.5
(L) 15	4.5	(L) - 15	4.5	(L) - 15	4.2	(L) - 15	4.3
(L) 15	4.5	(L) - 15	4.7	(L) - 15	4.4	(L) - 15	4.4
(L) 15		(L) - 15	4.7	(L) - 15	4.6	(L) - 15	4.7
(L) 15		(L) - 15	4.7	(L) - 15	4.7	(R) - 16	4.9
(R) 16	5.1	(L) - 15	4.9	(R) - 16	5.0	(L) - 16	5.1
(L) 16	5.2	(R) - 16	5.3	(L) - 16	5.2	(L) - 17	5.4
(L) 17	5.4	(L) - 16	5.3	(R) - 16	5.5	(L) - 17	5.6
Time:	42.45	Time:	42.39	Time:	41.76	Time:	42.56
50 Cold, Rainy		70 Warm Little backstretch headwind		75 Degrees Swirling Wind 1,2,3 in stride		75 Deg. Hot, Humid Calm	

Athlete Reflection Sheet

- ▶ Have athletes self-assess
- ▶ Document steps (starting with blocks)
- ▶ Document hurdle leg

- ▶ Reflect: How did you feel during your race?
- ▶ Reflect: What stood out to you after watching your race?
- ▶ Reflect: Where did you lose momentum?
- ▶ Reflect: What might we anticipate in the next race?
- ▶ Reflect: What was the best segment of the race?

Shoreline Inv. @ Shoreline HS April 28	All-City Meet @ Sparks Stadium May 2	SPSL Championships @ Sumner May 12	WCD Championships @ Kent-Meridian May 19
R (L) 22 (L) 15 (L) 15 (L) 15 (L) 15 (L) 15 (R) 16 (L) 16 (L) 17	R 6.45 (L) - 15 (L) - 15 (L) - 15 (L) - 15 (L) - 15 (L) - 15 (L) - 15 5.1 5.2 5.4	6.6 4.5 4.5 4.7 4.7 4.7 (L) - 15 4.9 5.3 5.3	6.3 4.2 4.4 4.6 4.7 4.9 (R) - 16 5.0 5.2 5.5 5.6
Time: 42.45	Time: 42.39	Time: 41.76	Time: 42.56
50 Cold, Rainy	70 Warm Little backstretch headwind	75 Degrees Swirling Wind 1,2,3 in stride	75 Deg. Hot, Humid Calm

Almost Every Hurdle Workout Predicated on Mimicking Race Conditions

Speed is Essential BUT Stride Length/Pattern Predetermined

- ▶ It is not how fast you can run 35 meters; it is how fast you can run 35 meters off one hurdle and into the other.
- ▶ Everyone can do it (to varying success), HOW FAST CAN YOU DO IT?!?!
- ▶ Once you determine your pattern, it is about figuring out the balance of how fast you can run that pattern successfully.
 - ▶ Just because you CAN DO IT, does not mean it will deliver the best outcome.
 - ▶ Ex: Bounding to 16s, troubles alternating, cannot finish well

21	6.1
14	4
14	4.2
15	4.2
15	4.6
15	4.6
15	4.8
15	4.85

(L) - 15	6.3
(L) - 15	4.2
(L) - 15	4.4
(L) - 15	4.6
(L) - 15	4.7
(R) - 16	5.0
(L) - 16	5.2
(R) - 16	5.5
Time:	41.76

Miscellaneous:

- ▶ Learning to Run the 110H/100H on Opposite Leg
- ▶ Running 110H/100H Speed w/ 4-Stepping (Great Spacing)
- ▶ Will they ever get to run the race fresh? (Making decisions for the athlete)
- ▶ How do we balance other events?
- ▶ Being a “hurdler” does not mean you should/can do both hurdle events.
- ▶ As your athletes get better, find the best RACES for them.
 - ▶ 300H & 400 often have HUGE talent gaps from best athletes to next-best
- ▶ Find 4-stepping/5-stepping/6-stepping distances that are competitive among athletes (blending genders, talent levels, etc.)
- ▶ Walk-Back Dual w/ Surprise Lead Leg
- ▶ Sidewalk Cracks (Steering)
- ▶ Using Both Sides of Your Brain
 - ▶ Brush Your Teeth Left-Handed; Cut Your Meat Left-Handed

Early Season Workout Ideas

- ▶ A lot of running in first couple weeks without hurdling (depending on athlete)
 - ▶ Hip Flexors/Legs Tired Anyway
- ▶ Broken 400/300H
 - ▶ Run 200 (32/36); rest 90; run 200 over hurdles (2-3)
 - ▶ Not sharp, not pretty... but must be ready on Day 12
- ▶ 3 x (3 x 150 w/ Hurdles)
 - ▶ Run 150 w/ Hurdles; Jog Halfway Back/Walk Halfway Back on Infield; Repeat 150m; Full Recovery Between Sets
- ▶ 300/200 w/ SOME Hurdles
 - ▶ Use 1st and 2nd Hurdle (Just 1st or None); Empty Around Corner; Random Hurdles Along Finish
 - ▶ Using Both Legs, Being Aggressive, Hurdling Fatigued
- ▶ Never too early to start thinking about the first hurdle.

Competitive Season Workout Ideas

Emphasis on Quality Repetitions (Race Modeling Drives the Bus)

- ▶ 4 x 5 Hurdles (Or 1 x 5, 1 x 4, 1 x 3, 1 x 2) (OR other direction)
 - ▶ 3ft in from normal spacing
- ▶ 1-2 x 300m w/ Some Hurdling
 - ▶ First 3 Hurdles, (Skip 2 Hurdles), Last 3 Hurdles (Cruise Between? Sprint Between)
 - ▶ Open 175, Last 4 Hurdles
 - ▶ Open 75, Last 4 Hurdles
- ▶ Every Meet is a Workout Opportunity (Speed Endurance: 4x200, 4x400)

Post-Season

- ▶ Do not get greedy! Less is More!
- ▶ Identify what the athlete needs to feel confident: Comes with Trust.
- ▶ 3 x First 3 Hurdles (Monday?)
- ▶ 2-3 x Starts to First Hurdle (Tuesday?)



No Two
Athletes are
the Same

Questions?

Contact Me:

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- ▶ Washington Track & Field Academy (watfacademy.com)