

Developing High Hurdlers: Building Strong Habits and Foundations



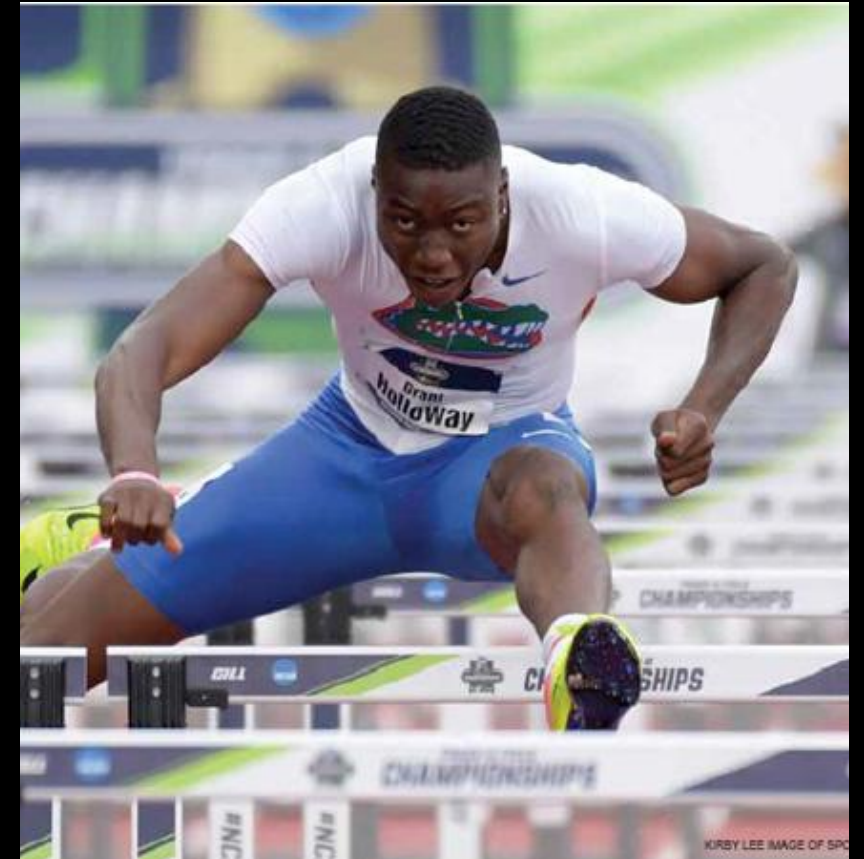
Coaching Education

- ▶ 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



Big Picture Philosophies

- ▶ Meat & Potatoes
 - ▶ Nothing better for hurdling than hurdling.
- ▶ Hurdles are their own event, not an add-on.
 - ▶ Unique Rhythms, Timing, Stride Patterns, Mechanics
 - ▶ Cannot sprint alone, do hurdle drills, and magically combine the two



The Game is How Fast Can you Run...

...But First, You Need to be Able to Run the Event!

- ▶ Must be able to navigate 10 Hurdles
- ▶ Run 100/110 meters
- ▶ Use blocks
- ▶ Take a defined amount of steps

...And maybe be able to do this 12 days into practice?!?!?!?!?



Where We Start:

- ▶ We use just enough drills to teach them how to hurdle
- ▶ AND we get them over hurdles sooner than later
 - ▶ On grass, plyo hurdles, padding, whatever it takes
- ▶ Get them to NEARLY competitive spacing sooner than later
 - ▶ Over-drilling can hurt development



Drill #1:

▶ Single Hurdle Walk-Over: Lead Leg

- ▶ Aggressive, Knee Drive, Foot Underneath COM, Pushing Forward, Hips Driving
- ▶ Great posture, lean with posture, use lead arm/forearm, elevate hips
- ▶ LEAD WITH KNEE, NOT FOOT
- ▶ Dorsiflexed lead foot
- ▶ Bring knee to upper-body, not upper-body to knee
- ▶ Drive foot down to the ground (might catch a cheek on hurdle)
- ▶ Use a fence to fall into □ promotes horizontal energy

(We have nearly abandoned multiple hurdle walk-overs)



Drill #2:

- ▶ Single Hurdle Walk-Over: Trail Leg
 - ▶ Patient, Full Climb
 - ▶ Keeping trail knee above ankle as you climb
 - ▶ Great posture, lean with posture, elevate hips
 - ▶ LEAD WITH KNEE, NOT FOOT
 - ▶ Dorsiflexed trail foot
 - ▶ Bring knee to upper-body, not upper-body to knee
 - ▶ HOLD TRAIL LEG IN FINISHED POSITION AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE (Feel glute extension)
 - ▶ Drive foot down to the ground ONLY after leg is in position
 - ▶ Use a fence to fall into □ promotes horizontal energy



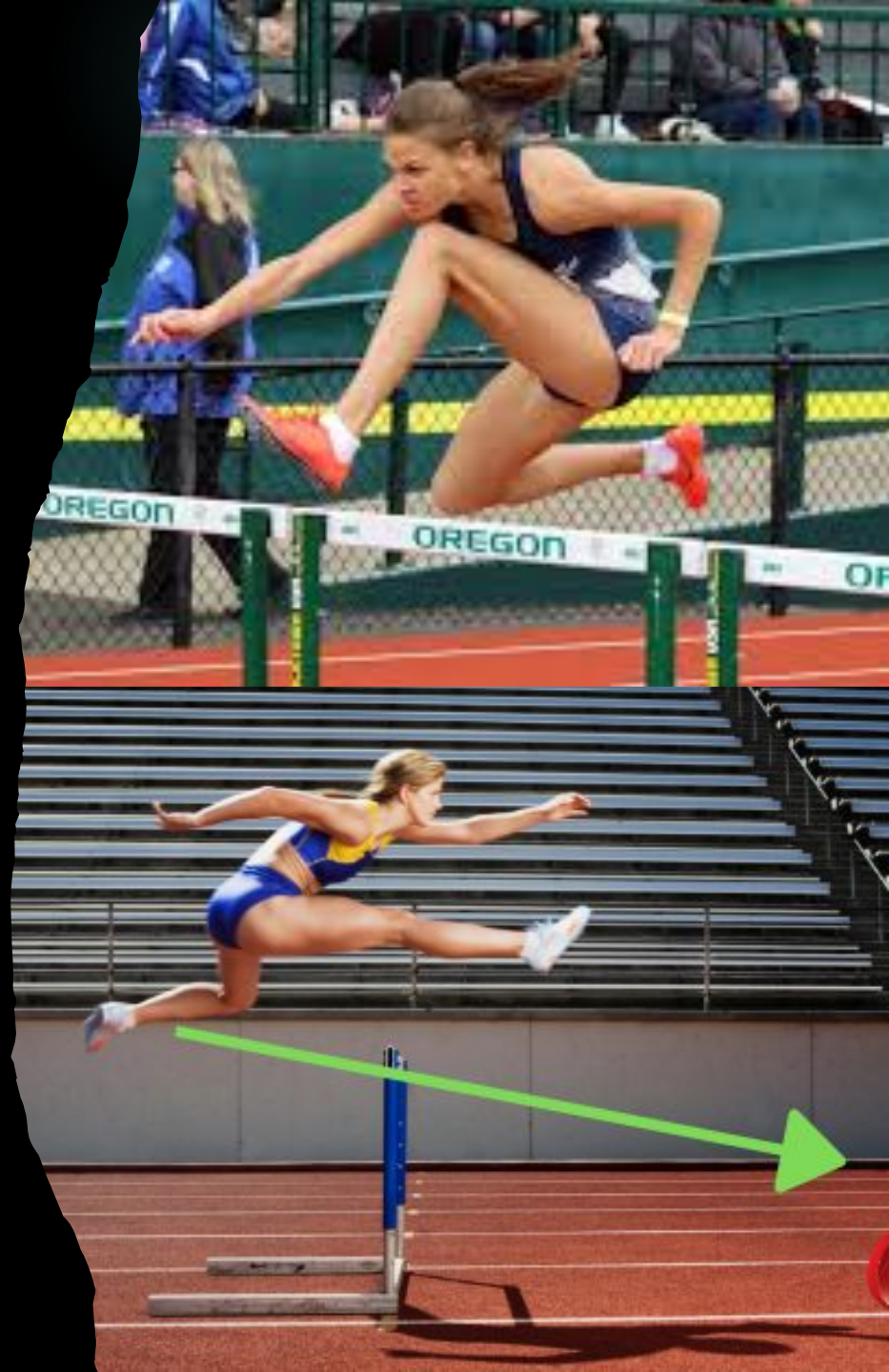
Drill #3:

- ▶ Trail Leg Drag
 - ▶ Continue to use fence to promote safe lean (or second hurdle)
 - ▶ Crook of the inside part of the foot stays in contact with the hurdle
 - ▶ Grounded Foot parallel to the fwd. tube of the hurdle***
 - ▶ **VERY IMPORTANT FOOT PLACEMENT!!!!**
 - ▶ Forces trail knee above ankle as you climb
 - ▶ **NEARLY FOOLPROOF**
 - ▶ All same cues as before



Then we get hurdling...

- ▶ Start with 5-Stepping
 - ▶ Slow (high knee) run between regularly spaced hurdles
 - ▶ Cue good running mechanics
 - ▶ Hurdlers must run with great front-side mechanics
 - ▶ Aggressive into the hurdle
 - ▶ Staying compact
- ▶ This is a great speed to work on mechanics
 - ▶ Listen to coaching
 - ▶ Can do a lot of repetitions



Who are you coaching?

- ▶ 3-Stepper?
 - ▶ Let's Figure Out How Fast We Can Run This Race!
 - ▶ How many in each program?
- ▶ 4-Stepper?
 - ▶ You are 95% sure they will never 3-step
 - ▶ Maybe it'll help them in the 300 hurdles... at the end of the 100H early in season
- ▶ 5-Stepper?
 - ▶ You are 99.99% sure they will never 3-step
 - ▶ If not, DO NOT LET THEM START THERE
 - ▶ Nearly impossible to undo the bad habits of running nearly TWICE AS MANY STEPS AS DESIGNED



Keep it Simple for Future 3-Steppers

- ▶ We know hurdlers must take off 6'/7.5' away from the hurdle to 3-step:
- ▶ Set up one or two hurdles (grass, turf, track), put down a cone, tape, rope or barrier to ensure they take off no closer.
- ▶ Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.
- ▶ K.I.S.S.

Start to the First Hurdle

- ▶ You are ultimately limited by the amount of speed you can generate to the first hurdle, start there!
- ▶ MUST take 8 steps to the first hurdle (or 7, begrudgingly...)
 - ▶ Non-negotiable for a 3-stepper
 - ▶ Must take off from 6' away (women) and 7.5' (men)
 - ▶ Use tape, cones, rope, etc.
 - ▶ First step must be dynamic, full extension
 - ▶ Place cones at each step if needed
- ▶ How can we create more speed to the first hurdle?



10 Steps to the First Hurdle

- ▶ Racing tool
 - ▶ Back athlete up 4-5 feet behind start line (have not measured*)
 - ▶ Athlete creates more speed to the first hurdle
 - ▶ Still using same block configuration, hopefully same takeoff distance
 - ▶ In races, may allow them to 3-step or 3-step farther
 - ▶ Who is faster, the 5-stepper that took off at 100M
 - ▶ Or the 3-stepper that took off at 103M?
 - ▶ I'd much rather have a developing athlete doing this!!!
- ▶ As a training tool, ALL of your kids can benefit from more speed.
 - ▶ Challenges even your best kids to benefit from running the race/practicing with more speed and react to the change in stimulus.

Take-Off Distance Matters... A lot!



- ▶ Athletes are often taking off too close to the hurdle
 - ▶ Bad habits, lack of power, coming from 4-5 stepping
 - ▶ Enforces bad habits
 - ▶ Take-off leg bent to the inside
 - ▶ Upward Impulses
 - ▶ All problems exacerbated over 10 hurdles
- ▶ Put down tape, cones, video, watch for it

1-Stepping

- ▶ Greatest drill for ensuring trail leg is being utilized
 - ▶ Trail leg becomes take-off leg for next hurdle
 - ▶ Spacing: 6'-12'
 - ▶ Can do trail leg (on side)
 - ▶ Lead leg if hurdles low enough (or along side)
 - ▶ Over the top
- ▶ Start with 5
 - ▶ Add more for manageable and safe hurdle endurance
 - ▶ Build Endurance w/o sacrificing quality



Discounted Hurdling

As a rule, we do not do anything at full height or full spacing, EVER

- ▶ Spacing

- ▶ Might start at 3' or 4' for an athlete trying to build early confidence
- ▶ Likely 2' early in the season for your established athletes
- ▶ As little as a half-foot late in the season w/ good conditions
- ▶ An athlete that can do this in practice has NEVER failed to do it during a meet

- ▶ Height

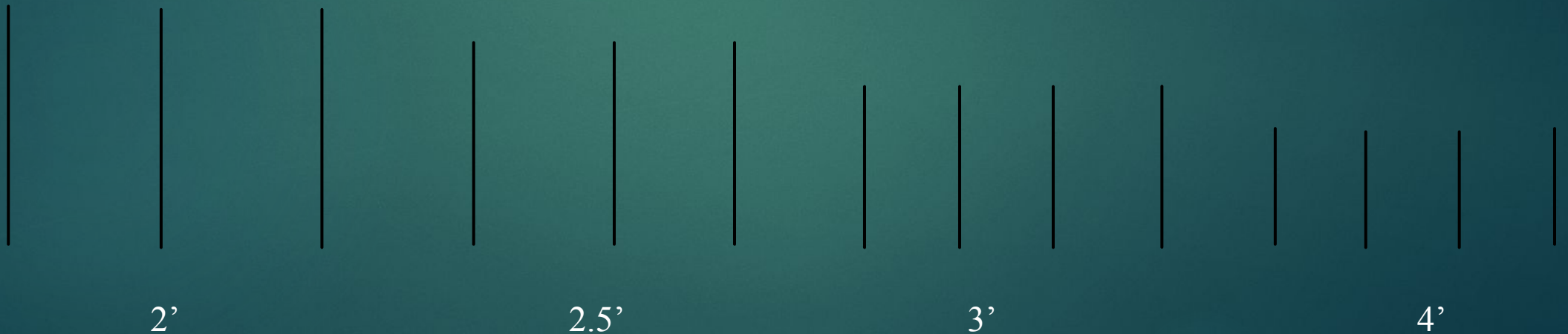
- ▶ Move up and down to accomplish goals

Keep it simple:

- ▶ We do a lot of repetitions out of blocks and over hurdles (at discounted distances)
 - ▶ Drills + Starts + 5 x 5 Hurdles
 - ▶ D/S + 1 x 1 Hurdles, 1 x 2 Hurdles, 1 x 3 Hurdles, 1 x 4 Hurdles, 1 x 5 Hurdles
 - ▶ D/S + 3 x 3 Hurdles, 3 x 5 Hurdles
- ▶ Racing in groups when we can, doing less when needed, ample rest, video, lots of feedback

Hurdle Endurance

- ▶ 10-12 Hurdles
 - ▶ Hurdle Height progressively gets lower
 - ▶ Hurdle Spacing progressively gets closer
 - ▶ Confidence builder, strength builder, race modeling
 - ▶ 3-4 Reps at most
 - ▶ Close hurdles, discounted heights = cueing SPEED, QUICKNESS

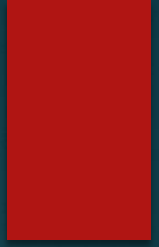


3-Step Condensed Hurdling

Once an athlete can do the thing, find things to help them do it better...

- ▶ Start around 20' between hurdles (30"/36")
 - ▶ 4-Step Approach
- ▶ Turnover focused, rhythm
 - ▶ Changing and challenging the rhythm that athletes establish at normal distance
 - ▶ Stride length predetermined by race, now we figure out how to do it faster (quicker)
- ▶ Can do this on trail leg side, lead leg side, over the top
- ▶ Can do more reps of this than you can at standard spacing

Questions?



Contact Information

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- ▶ Washington Track & Field Academy
- ▶ Meet Director:
 - ▶ South Sound Classic (May 2nd)
 - ▶ South Sound Freshmen-Sophomore Invitational (March 29th)

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