

TRAIN THE CATS

Tony Holler, Head Boys Track Coach, Plainfield North High School, Plainfield, IL
Cell: 630-849-8294 (call or text) tony.holler@yahoo.com Twitter: @pntrack Website: pntrack.com
Blogs can be found at ITCCA.COM

SPRINT CUES

- “RUN TALL” ... great runners run with perfect posture (shoulders back, abs tight, hips forward) ... this is my #1 verbal cue ... this is the key to knee lift and glute recruitment
- “HIT IT HARD” ... soft landing = slow ... hard landing = fast ... it’s all about vertical force and minimizing ground contact
- “FAST AND EASY” ... great sprinters make it look easy
- “HAMMER BACK” ... arms at 90 degrees ... short levers = fast levers ... lengthen on back stroke ... elbow high on backswing
- “CROSS THE HIPS” ... part of “hammer back” ... open palms cross the hips
- “DON’T FLOP” ... hands & wrists stay stiff, straight
- “DON’T REACH” ... foot strike under hips
- “HEEL UP – KNEE UP – TOE UP” ... dorsi-flexed foot is imperative – short lever, calf activation, minimizes ground contact

ACCELERATION CUES

- “CHIN TO THE CHEST”
- “SEE THE TRACK”
- “BIG & STRONG” ... the winner at 10 meters is typically not the winner at 100 meters
- “SPLIT & RIP”
- “PUSH-PUSH-PUSH”
- “DON’T SPIN YOUR WHEELS”
- “GO NORTH” ... lane within a lane
- “FEWEST STEPS WIN”
- “DRAG THE TOE”

SPEED DRILLS

- A-Skips
- Butt Kicks
- High Knees
- B-Skips
- Cycles (run in place, cycle forward)
- 5-Box Jumps (2 foot, left, right)
- Butt Kick & Reach (retro sprints)
- Prime Times (straight-legged bounding sprints)
- Starts (3-point, falling, 4-point hop & go)

Teach Sprint
Fundamentals Using
John Wooden’s
Eight Laws of Learning

1. Explanation
2. Demonstration
3. Imitation
4. Repetition
5. Repetition
6. Repetition
7. Repetition
8. Repetition

X-FACTOR

- LUNGES (lunge pop-ups, rocket lunges, long lunges)
- SQUAT BOUNCES (bounce in squat position for 20 seconds)
- RUSSIAN LUNGES (bounce in lunge position x3, then explode into air landing in new lunge position)
- BOUNDS (bounding, knee high with lots of air time ... but limited ground contact) ... best done competitively or measured
- CAT JUMPS or DEPTH JUMPS (dropping off high places and landing firmly ... “stick the landing” ... in squat position ... progress to 180s and 360s)
- WALL SWINGS (fast with max ROM, grabbing some track on the back swing)
- HURDLES OVER & UNDER (first step over, second step under)
- SHORT HURDLES high speed & high knees ... hurdles 1.9 meters (6’3”) apart ... hands above head or with up to 10-pound bar ... I use “firing strips” now for my hurdles (cheap, easy, safe)
- CORE ROUTINES
- MISCELLANANEOUS ... anything done at high intensity for 5 or 6 seconds followed by a full recovery would fit into our X-factor workouts.

RECORD, RANK, & PUBLISH

MEASURE SPEED AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE

THE BEST SPEED DRILL ... MAX-SPEED SPRINTING IN SPIKES

QUALITY – QUALITY - QUALITY

- 40 yard dash ... standing or down start ... hand-held
- 30 meter starts from blocks (FAT)
- 10 meter fly (FAT)
- <http://itccca.com/6269/2013/12/inertia-and-data-driven-speed-training/>

PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY FOR SPRINTERS

- Sprints should be the central focus of track & field ... 78% of high school track events are directly related to sprinting ... (aren’t the best field event athletes fast, quick, bouncy, and explosive?). Distance events make up only 22% of our events (only if you consider the 800 a distance event). Great distance runners dominate two events, great sprinters dominate four events. And, don’t forget, sprinters and jumpers have an advantage at a two-day state meet due to lower volume.
- Train with focus and quality ... do not over-train
- SPRINTERS ARE CATS ... train them like cats ... cats do not jog
- Most track teams regress due to ill-advised workouts, attrition, negativity, and injury
- Formal practice from 2:50 PM – 3:50 PM on school days
- If school is not in session:
 - No official practice on non-school days (weekends, spring break, etc.)
 - On days when school is not in session, practice is unofficial and non-mandatory ... we may have throwers, vaulters, and hurdlers practicing but we don’t take role ... they are there because they want to be there.
 - Sprinters rest (remember ... sprinters are cats)
- Day after weekday meet = sprint holiday ... no practice for sprinters
- Flexibility is a good thing but do NOT stretch before practice
 - No pre-practice stretching ... sprint muscles are strong rubber bands (not stretched-out)
 - Stretching does NOT prevent injury
 - Stretching does NOT relieve muscle soreness ... NEVER STRETCH HAMSTRING INJURIES
- Two lactate workouts per week (and meets are considered lactate workouts). No aerobic workouts.

SAMPLE WORKOUT PLAN

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov-Jan	Speed Drills Timed 40s/Flys Weights	X-Factor Weights	Speed Drills Timed 40s/Flys Weights	X-Factor Weights		
Feb-Mar	Speed Drills 30M Starts	Speed Drills 23 Sec Drill	Speed Drills X-Factor	Speed Drills 10M Flys	Speed Drills Handoffs	Meet
April	Speed Drills 20M Flys	Meet		Speed Drills X Factor	Speed Drills Handoffs	Meet
May	Speed Drills X-Factor	Speed Drills Lactate Sets	Speed Drills 10M Flys	Speed Drills Handoffs	Meet	

WINTER PROGRAM (PRE-SEASON)

- November 25 through February 10
- January 21 through February 10 is considered “Track Tryouts” but the program remains unchanged.
- Program consists mostly of football, baseball, and track athletes. Boys only. Anyone can participate. No charge. Non-mandatory. No roll taken.
- 140 boys showed on day one ... average attendance 120
- Schedule:
 - Monday - speed and strength
 - Tuesday – X-factor and strength
 - Wednesday - speed and strength
 - Thursday - X-factor and strength
 - Friday - off
- I do the Mon-Wed sessions. The head football coach helps me with Tue-Thurs X-factor sessions
- Our football staff mans the weight room every day.
- We get out of school at 2:10 ... workouts start at 2:30 ... finished by 4:20
- We run two speed sessions and two strength sessions, 55 minutes each.
- Monday and Wednesday speed sessions consist of 20 minutes of drill work and 35 minutes of timed sprints. I can time and record 150 40s in 33 minutes.
- I time between 8,000 and 10,000 40s every year.
- Times are published by 8:00 pm on pnttrack.com ... RECORD, RANK, PUBLISH
- Hyperlink ... [published times](#)
- X-factor workouts have no timed sprints. We break up into stations and do drills that are unique.
- No sport-specific activities. No footballs, baseballs, hurdles, high jumping, pole vaulting, etc.
- <http://itccca.com/6269/2013/12/inertia-and-data-driven-speed-training/>

SUMMER

- Speed Camp ... two weeks ... Mon-Wed-Fri ... 75 minute sessions ... coed ... 30-35 kids.
- Freshmen Football - I am the head freshmen football coach. We speed train and strength train for 90 minutes every session ... 25 contact days. The last 30 minutes is spent learning the offense.
- <http://itccca.com/5600/2013/08/summer-vacation/>

WORKOUTS

- We do speed drills almost every day. Boring as hell but critical to the cause.
- 24-Second Drill ... indoor season, once per week in February & March ... two 24 second sprints ... measure the distance traveled (23-Second Drill if outdoors) ... runners run solo ... goal is 200 meters ... 8 minute break ... 2nd run tries to get within 5 meters of first ... **RECORD, RANK, PUBLISH**
- Sets: 200-100 with 40 seconds rest ... 8 minute break ... 150-150 with 40 seconds rest ... only done in May. The “sets” can be of any distance but I like the 300. Wear spikes. Pace is goal-400 pace. 48-second 400 guy runs 200 in 24, 100 in 12, 150 in 18. We run into start and drop a hand at the start line for timing purposes.
- On bitter cold days outside ... skip drills ... 20 x 100 ... end zone to end zone ... run one every minute ... 20 x 100 in exactly 20 minutes. Each one should be at a cruise pace ... like the first lap of a good 800 ... shoot for 13-15 seconds per 100 yards ... gives 45-47 seconds rest. Entire team runs at same time ... spread across goal line. 20 minute practice and go home!
- Chasers ... fun sprint drill ... three guys line up ... middle guy takes off and the guy on left and right try to chase him down ... 40 yards. The loser takes the middle on the next one. If the middle guy loses, he is in the middle with a one-step head start. If he still loses ... he does not belong in that group. Wear spikes. Kids will sprint hard and finish with a smile.
- Starts ... 3x30 out of the blocks ... FAT timed ... **RECORD, RANK, PUBLISH**
- X-Factor ... 3 stations ... short hurdles and wall swings, core, and hurdle agility (or substitute something else)
- Sprint Holiday ... no practice ... might be the best thing we do. If we have a weekday meet ... sprinters don't practice the next day. They go home and take naps. Sprinters are cats.
- Toughest workouts = meets. We run hard in meets. We run one meet per week indoors, two meets per week in April, and one meet per week in May.
- <http://itccca.com/5485/2013/07/the-gauntlet-and-becoming-a-zen-coach/>

FOUR STAGES OF LEARNING

1. Unconscious incompetence
2. Conscious incompetence
3. Conscious competence
4. Unconscious competence

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.
Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent.
Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.
Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.
Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.
- Calvin Coolidge