

Fundamental Approach to Coaching the Pole Vault

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PRESENTATION GOALS

- Help your athletes learn the pole vault so they can remain safe and have long careers
- Develop a plan for developing pole vaulters
- Develop a basic set of drills that provide the greatest impact on success
- Gain a different perspective on how to coach the pole vault

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MY BACKGROUND

- High School at Monroe City
- Mizzou Pole Vaulter
- 2 years Coaching at Mizzou
- 2 years of Post-Collegiate Vaulting
- 11th year Coaching at Battle High School
- Technical Influences
 - Dennis Hancock, Todd Cooper, Rick Attig, Alan Launder,
 - Dan Lefever, Rick McGuire, Brett Halter



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Why use a “Fundamental” Approach

- Pole Vault is a highly complex and technical event
- At the highest levels, is fine-tuned with very specific drills and points of emphasis
- Most high schools will never have a world class athlete walk through the doors
- Don't confuse freakish athleticism with technical proficiency
 - Both can create high level pole vaulters, but both are not attainable for all athletes

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The “Big Rock” Approach Matters



- Too many points of emphasis can ruin beginners
 - Can limit opportunities for success
 - Can be debilitating for young athletes
 - turn them away from the sport
 - Fall into “Obsessive” role (George Leonard, Mastery)
 - Put athletes in unsafe situations
- Not every drill or position in the vault is attainable/necessary
- Too much time spent on the wrong areas will stunt growth

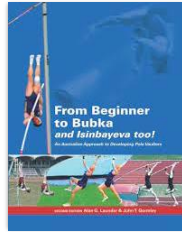
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Alan Launder

Author of "From Beginner to Bubka"

"That Which Is Technically Desirable Must Be Physically Possible"

"Success comes from Performing Simple Movements Extra Ordinarily well"



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The Keys to Success can be Found in Almost all the Best Vaulters

- "The strategy of my coach and me was that we looked at pictures of all the best pole vaulters from around the world, and we took the best parts from them, and we created a person that had never existed. We then started to work toward being such a person."
- — [Sergei Bubka](#)



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Dennis Hancock
Todd Cooper
Rick Attig
Alan Launder
Dan Lefever

"OUR" BIG ROCKS

- Maximum, Controllable Velocity at Takeoff
- Maximum Takeoff Angle
 - Early, Tall plant
 - Jumping at takeoff
- Top Arm Pressure through swing

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All Three Big Rocks...

- Create pole speed
- Create a high pole bend
- Keep the athlete in control of their body throughout the vault
- In total, all add the maximum grip height and potential clearance

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BIG ROCK #1 MAX "CONTROLLABLE" VELOCITY AT TAKEOFF

- Speed can make us all jump higher but if it's not controllable, its wasted
- Long jump approach to the vault (reach takeoff at max velocity and with good posture)
 - In every jumping event, posture is critical
- Sprint mechanics Emphasis with a pole



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COACHING QUES - MAX CONTROLLABLE VELOCITY AT TAKEOFF

- Push from the start
- Knee Drive
- Not moving legs/feet fast but instead focus on striking the ground (one inch punch!)
- Stride quickens as vaulter approaches the takeoff
- Use Pole to build speed and set up plant



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**DRILLS -
MAX CONTROLLABLE VELOCITY AT TAKEOFF**

- General Sprint Drills
 - With and without pole
- A runs with pole
- 20-20 drill
- Flying 30's
- Rotary Runs with/without pole
- Pole Runs
- Pole Runs with Slide box/towel

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**BIG ROCK #2
MAXIMUM TAKEOFF ANGLE**

- Early tall plant and Free Takeoff
- Maximizes the transfer of energy from the approach
- Helps move the pole to vertical
- Creates a high pole bend (opportunity for more push-off at the top of the vault)
- Puts the athlete in a position to control their swing and body position throughout the vault



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**COACHING QUES -
MAXIMUM TAKEOFF ANGLE**

- Early Hands
- Wrist, elbow shoulder
- Arm behind the ear
- Load the Penultimate Step (flat foot contact)
- Blind Pole Vaulting (Proactive take off)
- Beat the "Magician"
- Jump through the bend

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TAKEOFF DRILLS -

- Over the tip drills
- Long jump drills
 - Continuous takeoffs
 - 4 left take offs
- Sand vaults
- Straight pole
- Hurdle and Cone Modifications



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PLANT DRILLS -

- Standing Plants
- Walking, Skipping, A Run Continuous Plants
- Free Pole Drops
- Two step plant/takeoffs

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BIG ROCK #3 TOP ARM PRESSURE THROUGH SWING

- Rowing motion
- Keeps the pole compressed longer
- Keeps the pole moving
- Allows athletes to be in control of the swing
- Aids in "catching the pole"
- Critical that the arm does not bend



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COACHING QUES - TOP ARM PRESSURE THROUGH SWING

- Initiate Swing and Row at the same moment
- Extend through the cord
- Keep the right arm straight
- NOT A PULLING MOTION
- Row to your leg
- Don't pull with the left

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**DRILLS -
TOP ARM PRESSURE THROUGH SWING**

- High Bar Drills
 - Single leg inverts
 - Ankle Taps
 - Knee Tucks
- Lying Over Head Rows
- Single Arm Straight Pole Inverts
- Lying Over Head Med Ball Toss

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Closing Thoughts

Standards at 80
Mentality

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Thank you!

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