“FEEL THE BALL”

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Objectives

- Development of Hammer Throwers and the search for Zen
- Review of technical philosophy
- Hammer drills to emphasize “feeling the ball”
- Discussion of cues
- Conclusion; Q & A
Evolution of a hammer thrower

- **Whole-Part-Whole**
  - Move the ball and complete turns however possible
  - Orbit Mania and Footwork obsessions
  - Working on and developing parts of the technique
  - THEN ONE DAY...
    - The stars and planets align!
    - We are back to a ball and rhythm focus!
My Hammer Story

- School of Hard Knocks!
  - Trial and Error
  - Teammates
  - Articles
  - Videos
  - Strength Emphasis
  - Footwork emphasis
  - A little luck
My Hammer Story

- Hello Dr. Farmer!
- The Professor
  - Philosophical
  - Global view: The Big Picture
  - Hammer Focus
    - “Feel the Hammer”
    - “Move the Hammer”
    - Rhythm
“a cosmic, interplanetary experience
...You’re spinning, the earth is spinning and you have this transcendent, Zen-like moment like the planets...”

- Kevin McMahon
Describing the Hammer Throw

“Zen and the Art of Hammer Throwing”

- Koji Murofushi
  - On how to continue improving: “Feeling is key…Perhaps feeling is missing”
Insight from Former Gamecocks

- Find your inner Qi (Chi)
  - “Secret Ninja Training”
    - Instincts
    - Reactionary
    - Body Awareness
    - No Fear
    - Auto Correct
Starting winds and entry

- (for a right handed thrower)
  - Establish the axis (find your center)
  - Move the hammer around the axis
    - Right to Left
    - Orbit
    - Relaxation
  - Constant tension (in the wire, between the ball and the thrower; the arms are an extension of the wire)
“Feel the Ball” Technique Basics

Through the turns

- To accelerate the ball, with each right foot contact the thrower works the ground and sits back against the ball
- Let it run! The ball is allowed to move out and around the left side and pulls the thrower into the next turn
- Run down the stairs! (as the ball is rising to its “high point” the thrower stays “down”; and takes a step to complete the turn)
“Feel the Ball’ Technique Basics

- **Rhythm**
  - Acceleration
    - Increase ball speed with every wind & every turn
    - Each wind & each turn is a “pulse” or a “beat”
    - Slow to fast
  - Visualization-picturing the throw, rehearsing the rhythm, feeling the “woosh” in your mind are very valuable!
A Hammer Drill Buffet…

- Keep the Basics in Mind
- Emphasize Feeling the Ball!
  - Stay opposite (against the ball)
  - Maintain your center
  - Feel the ball
  - Feel the ball move around your center
Pud-Catch and Sling
Pud-Right Side Emphasis
One Turn Throws
Pass Around
Pass Around: Short vs Long
Pass Around R hand turns
Pass Around into Turns
Pass Around Add R Catch
Ground Start
Ground Start-Lost tension
Ground Start-lifting up
Drilling and throwing from various surfaces

Broom throwing
- Hammers can be made from many things
- The bottom line is moving whatever you are holding onto from right to left; maintain your center; let it pull you into the turns- FEEL the OUTWARD PULL around your left and toward the direction of the throw, step over (“close the hip” against it), and repeat

Air throwing (Koji)
- Move your hands-move the air-feel the “WOOSH”
Putting it all together
Hammer Cues

- Wind-Unwind (like a spring!)
- Push-Follow (Move it! Chase it!)
- Let it run!
- Let the ball take you around
- Left, left, left! Long (and loose) around the left
- Out and around (to move the hammer out and away from your center, you must be opposite or against the hammer)
In Conclusion...

- The hammer throw is “a different animal”
- It is the only throw event where the athlete puts the implement in front of the system to throw farther!
- Speed of Release? 65mph! Outward Force? 800lbs+! Nothing else comes close!
- Feel the ball focus!
- Hammer throwers must always return to “Zen”
A little help from CaddyShack

“Find your center and be the ball”
Questions? Comments?

- Thanks!
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