THE ART OF COACHING
THE POLE VAULT

Tom Hays, University of Kansas
• As a coach do you know what you are looking for?
• Do you know how to evaluate?
• Does your philosophy cloud your evaluation?
• What are your strengths and weaknesses as a coach?
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2005 world indoor silver medalist; four-time U.S. outdoor champion; six-time U.S. indoor champion

The physics of pole vaulting
Horizontal energy of a running athlete is converted to vertical energy by the pole.

- Speed
- Pole bending
- Pole bounce
- Vertical energy
- Rotational twist

Pole bounce energy back to athlete.
How do you watch film?
(regular speed, slow motion, frame by frame and the slow motion!)

Keep score, and know why you are keeping score!

Test!

HOW DO YOU EVALUATE?
WHAT TYPE OF VAULTER ARE YOU COACHING?

- Vaulter #1 moves the pole with their run, plant, take-off!
- Vaulter #2 moves the pole with their swing!
- Vaulter #3 moves the pole with the run, plant, take-off and speeds it up with their swing!
VAULTER #1 MOVES THE POLE WITH THEIR RUN, PLANT, TAKE-OFF!
VAULTER #2 MOVES THE POLE WITH THEIR SWING!
VAULTER #3 MOVES THE POLE WITH THEIR RUN, PLANT, TAKE-OFF AND SPEEDS IT UP WITH THEIR SWING!
DOES THE ATHLETE SEE WHAT YOU SEE?
3 CHECK POINTS TO LOOK FOR!

Check point #1 (right hand, right foot)

Check point #2 (arms straight as take-off foot touches down)

Check point #3 (lead knee forward of the take-off before pole bends)
HOW AND WHEN DO I CHANGE AN ATHLETE’S TECHNIQUE?

- After I get them fit!
- After they establish constant rhythm!
- When they are fresh!
- Keep it simple, small adjustments!
- Change starts away from the pit!
- We start little things on day one!
- We start teaching concepts day one!
HOW I SEQUENCE PRACTICES TO HELP LEARNING

- My rule of 7s!
- I never repeat a successful practice!
HOW WE MANAGE OUR MEETS

- We always have process, goal or objective!
- Early in the season our goal is to make bars!
- Mid-season our goal is still to make bars, but this is the time we start trying to increase our starting height!
- Championship season we start to get a little more aggressive with a very direct plan for each meet!
What’s it for?

Have a routine! (Pre-meet warm-up)

Step on the runway with a purpose! (Check your step or Vault)

3-4 jumps in warm-ups, warm-ups are for warming up not searching for a feeling!

1 jump to get off the ground!

2-3 jumps to get to your starting pole and check standards!
Establishing Rhythm?

- Away from the runway
  (approaches, slide boxes, strides, accelerations)
- How the athlete starts his or her jump?
  (the first step of the run)
- Establish rhythm, everyone’s different!
- Rhythm overcomes effort!
Use all of your senses!
Play games!
Mimic others!

COACHING ATHLETICISM
WHAT AFFECTS LEARNING?

- More than “ONE VOICE”
- Stress
- Fitness
- Rhythm or the lack of rhythm (Rhythm over...
The great coaches just seem to get them ready a little faster!

THE ATHLETE ONLY LEARNS WHEN THEY ARE READY!