

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?



THE ART OF COACHING?

Jenn Suhr

Height: 6-0

Weight: 141

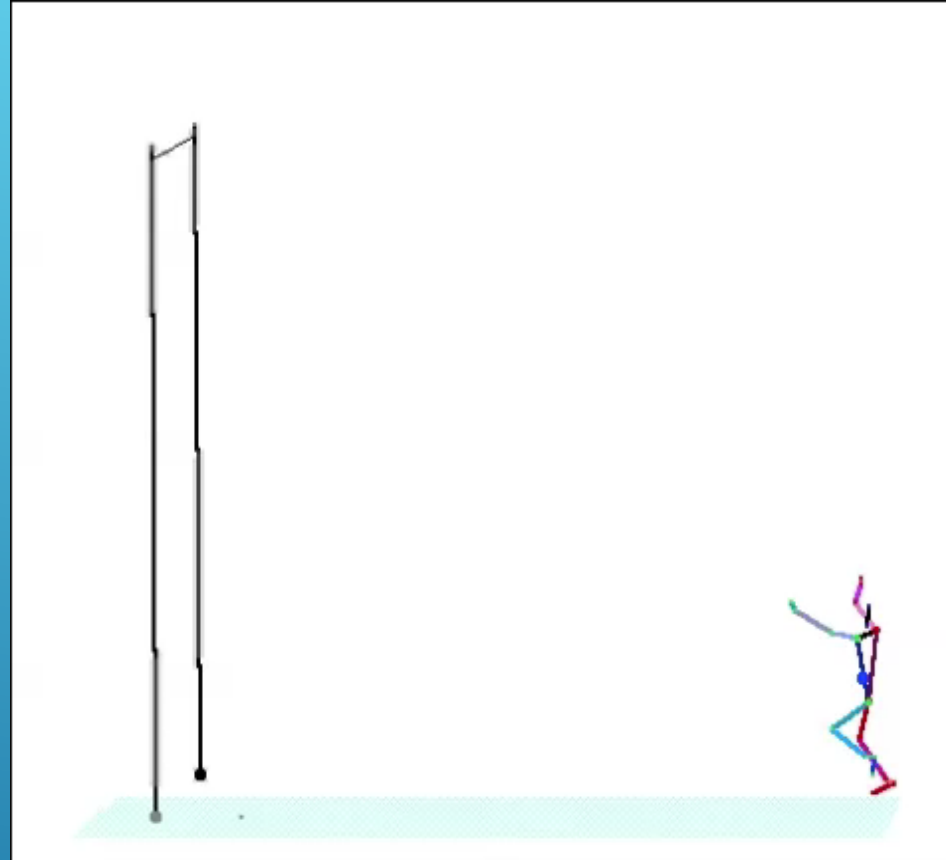
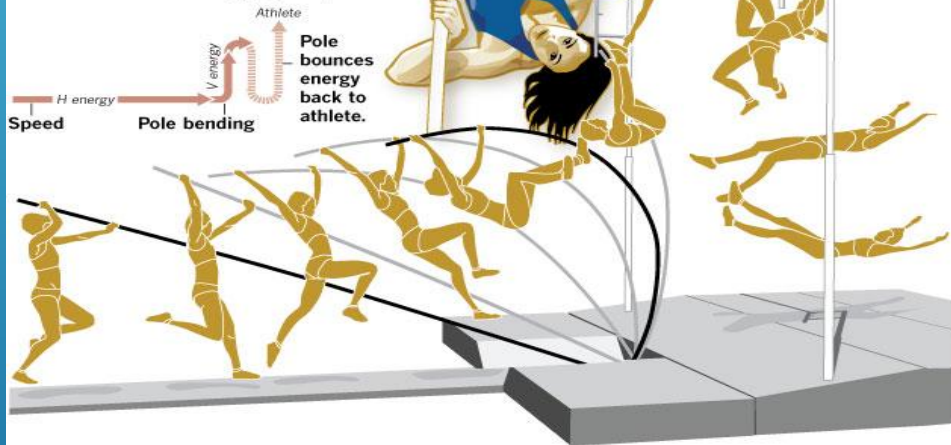
Age: 30

Residence: Churchville,
N.Y.

Competitive highlights:
2008 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.



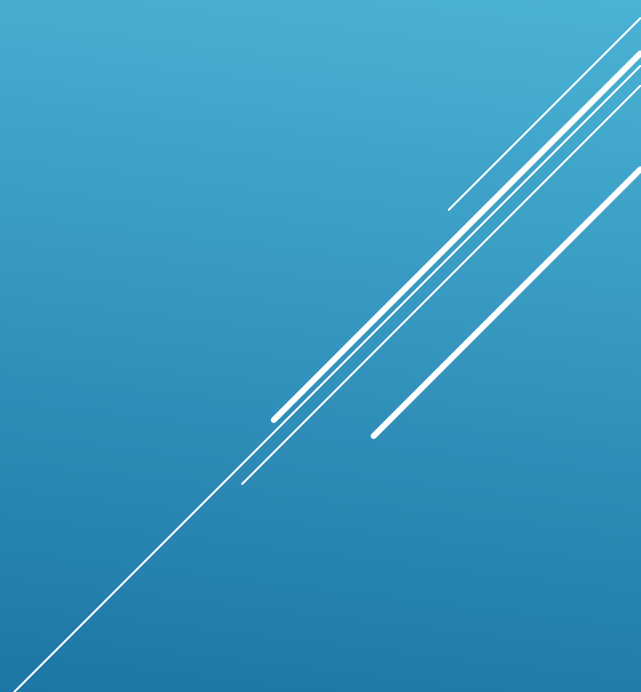
THE ART OF COACHING THE POLE VAULT!

- ▶ 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?



- ▶ 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!

WHAT TYPE OF VAULTER ARE YOU COACHING?



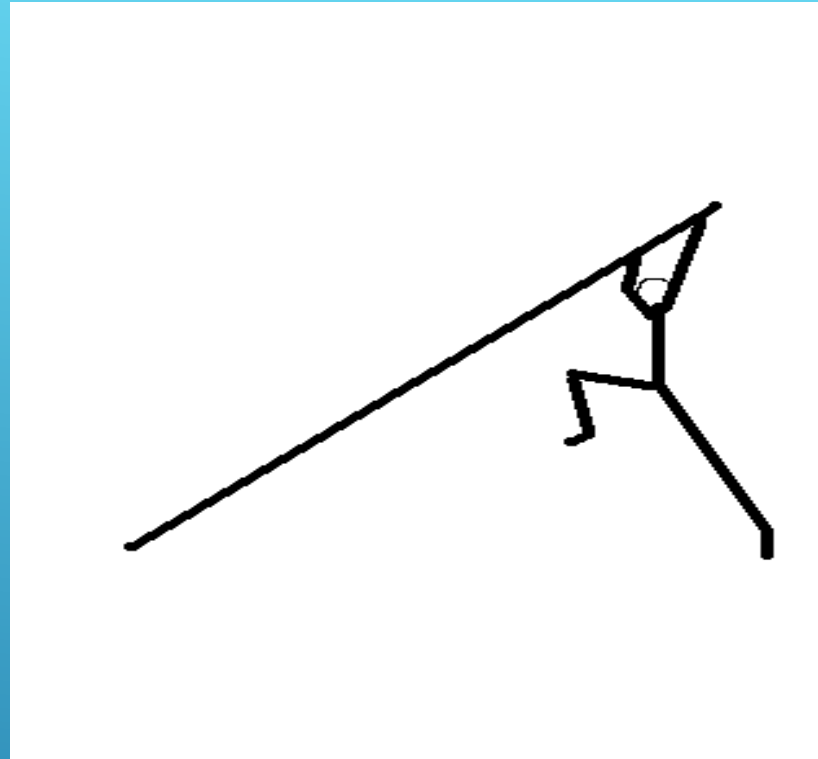
VAULTER #1
MOVES THE POLE WITH THEIR RUN, PLANT,
TAKE-OFF!



VAULTER #2
MOVES THE POLE WITH THEIR SWING!



VAULTER #3
MOVES THE POLE WITH THEIR RUN, PLANT,
TAKE-OFF AND SPEEDS IT UP WITH THEIR
SWING!



DOES THE ATHLETE SEE WHAT YOU
SEE?





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)

3 CHECK POINTS TO LOOK FOR!

- ▶ 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 AND WHEN DO I CHANGE AN ATHLETE'S TECHNIQUE?

- ▶ My rule of 7s!
- ▶ I never repeat a successful practice!

HOW I SEQUENCE PRACTICES TO HELP LEARNING



- ▶ 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!

HOW WE MANAGE OUR MEETS

- ▶ 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!

MEET WARM-UP?

- ▶ 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!

ESTABLISHING RHYTHM?



- ▶ Use all of your senses!
- ▶ Play games!
- ▶ Mimic others!

COACHING ATHLETICISM

- ▶ More than “ONE VOICE”
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Fitness
- ▶ Rhythm or the lack of rhythm (Rhythm over

WHAT AFFECTS LEARNING?



The great coaches just seem to get them ready a little faster!

THE ATHLETE ONLY LEARNS WHEN THEY
ARE READY!

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Tim Mack - 5.90 m
2004 U.S. Olympic Trials
July 11, 2004

