Spencer Huls-Getting the Most out of Every Hurdler

1. Program Goals
2. Every hurdler to his or her best potential regardless of form or preconceived ideas
3. Not every hurdler can be coached the same way and do the same things
4. Coach your kids to their abilities and specialized skill sets
5. Not every kid is going to three step
6. Not every kid is going to have a pretty trail leg
7. Not every drill is going to work for every kid

* Adjust drills when necessary

1. Make bad hurdlers into mediocre hurdlers and mediocre hurdlers into good hurdlers (Sometimes we get to make good hurdlers into great hurdlers)
2. Set realistic goals often
3. Set daily goals – Don’t necessarily tell your kids what these are
4. Set weekly goals – Have your kids HELP to determine these
5. Set season goals – Tell your kids where you realistically see them at the end of the season
6. Set career goals – It’s ok to shoot high here
7. Stick with what works
8. Determine a set of drills that will work and use them over and over again
9. This doesn’t mean you can’t alter them or change them for specific kids
10. Beg, borrow, steal and invent
11. Beg – if you’re stuck; ask someone (406)531-0750 [spencerh@corvallis.k12.mt.us](mailto:spencerh@corvallis.k12.mt.us)
12. Borrow – watch what other coaches are doing and use what makes sense
13. Steal – Ask former athletes what they do in college
14. Invent – Don’t be afraid to do what makes sense even if no one else is doing it. If it doesn’t work, don't do it. You haven’t lost much
15. Don’t do different drills every week (In fact, very rarely do different drills and only after doing the ones you do every week)
16. Drills only work under repetition
17. You can supplement, but make sure you do your base drills every hurdles practice
18. Alter drills if necessary, but stick with them if they work
19. Become an expert
20. Watch every athlete in every drill
21. Watch every race
22. Watch film on every race
23. Watch film on good high school hurdlers
24. Watch film on good college and pro hurdlers
25. The idea is to be able to see issues at full speed in every rep and know how to correct the issue
26. Work in the offseason
27. In-season practices are compressed to meet a final goal
28. Off-season allows you to pick apart your athletes and slow down to get every drill right
29. Don’t set a specific agenda or goal for offseason training.
30. Allow more creativity with drills to see if they work
31. Go as slow as is necessary to work athletes through specific problems
32. Hurdlers are teammates first
33. Some are coaches
34. Older hurdlers should watch and coach younger hurdlers
35. Some are students
36. Younger hurdlers must go with older hurdlers to warm up and prepare for races
37. Some are more than hurdlers
38. Sometimes other events (especially relays) must take precedence over the hurdles
39. Most can’t, and shouldn’t hurdle every day
40. Refer to normal week schedule (attached)
41. **110s/100s** – Making poor hurdlers into mediocre hurdlers; making mediocre hurdlers into good hurdlers; and making good hurdlers into great hurdlers
42. Poor Hurdlers into Mediocre hurdlers
43. Why are they slow?
44. Slow in between the hurdles
45. Are they slow in general?
46. Is their form over the hurdle making it impossible to run fast in between?
47. Is their take-off point off?

* Too close?
* Too far?

1. Is there a mental aspect keeping them from running fast?
2. Slow over the hurdles
3. How do they approach the hurdle?

* High Jumping?
* Stuttering?

1. Is their form over the hurdle so bad it takes forever to get back onto the ground?
2. Fix their drills
3. Whatever their issue is from the list above, they are probably re-enforcing the problem in their drills
4. Common errors we teach in our drills (refer to attached list of drills)
5. Mediocre hurdlers into good hurdlers
6. Fine tuning
7. Film study
8. You watch and critique
9. They watch and critique
10. Usually a fairly large issue that will consistently come up
11. Fix the big issue that comes up often before fine tuning anything else
12. Fix the drill (just like above)
13. Personalize the drill (make it work for this specific athlete)
14. Slow down if necessary (even if you have to hold them out of a meet)

* Let them run an event that is out of their normal

1. Stay positive
2. These kids get frustrated the easiest
3. Praise any improvement
4. Point out how it feels after they’ve done it right
5. Be patient – this is a long process sometimes (years)
6. Good hurdlers into great hurdlers (The fun part)
7. Limit film study (depending on the kid)
8. Use film for you, not as much for them
9. Sometimes kids critique themselves into a slump
10. You slow down and critique their form
11. Show it to them if necessary
12. Use it to shape the focus of your practices
13. Again, fix the drill
14. Don’t be afraid to try aggressive strategies
15. In practice first
16. If it works try in the race
17. Examples
18. Seven step to the first hurdle
19. Cutting your stride

* Low hands
* Shuffle step

1. Snap the lead
2. Different hand action over the hurdle
3. Smile: You don’t get these kids often
4. **300s** – Making your athletes tough without killing them
5. Training
6. Two conditioning days during a normal week
7. One day with the rest of the team (Tuesday)
8. No hurdles
9. Interval days
10. Usually 300’s

* Run with 400m Runners and 1600r participants
* Start easier to get into shape
* Get harder in the middle
* Back off toward the end

1. Suffer together with teammates

* They all hate you together
* - They run for each other and not themselves

1. One day with just 300 hurdlers
2. We hurdle this day

* Change drills slightly

+ Less Static- More kinesthetic

+ Four step drill

* Try to replicate race pace

+ Most days we come out of blocks with our spikes

* Start with the first three hurdles to establish race pace and rhythm to the first three
* Progress to running first three followed by the second three followed by the third three
* During the hardest part of the season we run either a 200 or 300 with the last three hurdles in place

+ Simulates gutting it out and adjusting when tired

1. Season Strategy
2. Rarely race anyone in the 300s until the third meet (even good ones)
3. Being in shape is extremely important before racing
4. Blow to confidence can ruin the season
5. Rarely practice 300s until the second or third week of practice
6. Usually at least two weeks of practice with the 300s until they race
7. Be careful not to break your athletes down
8. Many times they race either the 110s or the 300s
9. Many times they race either the 300s or the mile relay
10. Rarely to they run their full slate of events
11. Plan your 300 races based on the best benefit to the athlete
12. Young athletes (maybe avoid tough competition)
13. Stud athletes (maybe only run against tough competition)
14. Evaluate each athlete and plan your season to their advantage
15. Adjust the plan if necessary
16. Injury
17. Fall
18. Success in another event
19. Race Strategy
20. Always have one and always discuss it with athlete
21. Sometimes it has only to do with race pace
22. Sometimes it’s as detailed as where to go from 15 to 16 steps
23. Almost always I prefer to go fast at the beginning and try to hold it
24. Nearly impossible to make up ground on good hurdlers in the 300s
25. Be reasonable as well
26. Until you’re a stud even 90% speed is asking a ton
27. Accelerate into and off the hurdle
28. Last three steps in
29. First three steps off
30. Fast and easy for the rest

Drills

1. Warm-ups (Hip Flexibility) – Hurdles at lowest mark
2. Straight Leg Can Cans – Switch directions
3. Bent Knee Can Cans – Switch directions
4. Walking over consecutive hurdles (Lead and Trail) – Switch
5. Lateral Step over – Switch directions
6. Hamstring stretch (On hurdle)
7. Groin stretch (On hurdle)
8. Forward and Back Leg Swing (Hurdle as support)
9. Lateral Leg Swing (Hurdle as support)
10. Static (kind of) Lead and Trail leg drills
11. Lead Leg
12. Into a wall or bleacher
13. Step into takeoff
14. Drive lead knee up and extend into wall or bleacher
15. Focus on:
16. Bent knee
17. Lead/trail arm
18. Long back leg
19. Drive hips into not up to wall or bleacher
20. Trail Leg
21. Off hurdle
22. Offset hurdle so knee starts above ankle
23. Knee on the end of the hurdle
24. Leg and ankle on along and on the top of the hurdle
25. Lead leg (on the ground) in front of and outside the hurdle
26. Pull knee up and ankle slides along and off the end of the hurdle
27. Go up on the toe of lead leg
28. Cycle trail leg back onto the ground after full motion
29. Focus on:

Knee remaining above ankle

Lead Arm/Trail arm starting in correct position and cycling

Leg finishing at full stride in sprinting form

1. Marching Lead and Trail Leg drills
2. Lead leg
3. March beside hurdle
4. At appropriate take off mark drive knee up and over the hurdle
5. Ankle should hang below the knee (not interested in clearing the hurdle)
6. Focus on:
7. Take off mark (not interested in whether or not athlete would clear the hurdle)
8. Drive knee first (not ankle)
9. Lead and trail arm position
10. Long back leg
11. Hips moving horizontally through the barrier
12. Trail Leg
13. March beside the hurdle
14. Step past the hurdle with lead leg
15. Bring trail leg through and over the hurdle
16. Focus on:
17. Knee above ankle at all times
18. Lead and trail arm position
19. Upper body position through the hurdle
20. Finish with knee in front in good sprinting position
21. Cycle to the ground
22. Jogging Lead and Trail Leg Drills
23. Lead Leg
24. Jog beside a set of three hurdles
25. At appropriate take off position drive knee first up and over the hurdle
26. Ankle should still hang below knee (not interested in clearing the hurdle)
27. Focus on:
28. Take off mark (not interested in whether or not athlete would clear the hurdle)
29. Drive knee first (not ankle)
30. Lead and trail arm position
31. Long back leg
32. Hips moving horizontally through the barrier
33. Trail Leg
34. Jog beside a set of three hurdles
35. At appropriate take off position jump off of trail leg and bring only the trail leg over the barrier
36. Focus on:
37. Long trail leg on takeoff
38. Knee over ankle at all times
39. Lead and trail arm position
40. Upper body position through the hurdle
41. Finish with knee in front in good sprinting position
42. Hips moving horizontally through the hurdle
43. Slow overs
44. Hurdling, but jogging in between (Five steps)
45. Focus on all of the above putting lead leg and trail leg drills together
46. Ankle will have to come up to clear on lead leg, but this is the first drill it does
47. Try to build the habit of leading with the knee, not the ankle
48. On 300 days make it a four step drill so they have to alternate

These are my everyday drills. I sometimes throw in other drills to help specific hurdlers or specific groups, but when we finish with these we go into hurdling full speed; first on short hurdles then on full height hurdles.

Add on Drills

1. Three step drill over mini hurdles
2. Discount a bunch of length and height and work on slow rhythm
3. Gradually move the hurdles out and run faster focused on running and rhythm, not hurdling
4. I never raise the hurdles in this drill. Always discounted height
5. Becomes an every day drill for hurdlers trying to three step or maintain a three step

II. Five Meter Drill

1. Like it sounds, Five Meters apart
2. Lowest setting
3. Start Eight Meters in front of first hurdle
4. Spikes on
5. Quick Feet/Low hands
6. 4 hurdles 4 reps
7. Becomes an everyday drill for faster hurdlers trying to cut stride and stay away from hurdles

III. Fast Hurdling

1. Once a week (110/100) over multiple hurdles (three max)
2. Up to two more times a week blocks to first hurdle

Weekly Practice

Monday – 110 hurdles

Team Warm-up

Hurdle Warm-up

Hurdle Drills

Blocks to first one, two and or three hurdles

Tuesday – Intervals

No hurdles

Team Warm-up

Workout

Go home

Wednesday – Starts and Relays

Team Warm-up

Block Drills or Relay Hand-offs

Block work (Sometimes put up a hurdle)

Thursday – 300 Hurdles

Team Warm-up

Hurdle Warm-up

Hurdle Drills

300 practice (Blocks to first three etc.) – See 300 presentation notes

Friday – Pre- Meet

Team Warm-up

Individual Warm-ups and drills on your own

Relay Handoffs/Blocks/Blocks to Hurdle

Loose Season Conditioning Plan (400m, 300h, 1600r)

Week One: One Interval day – 200s or 300s fairly slow with 3 minutes rest

Week Two: Two Interval days (one might be on Saturday) First day 300s fairly slow (more of them) 3 min rest. Second day 200s fairly slow 3 min rest.

Week Three: First meet on Saturday- One interval day 300s faster 3 min rest

Weeks Four and Five: Two interval days when possible: First day 300’s moderate pace numbers slightly increase 3 min rest. Second day 200s fairly slow 3 min rest.

Weeks Six, Seven, and Eight: I call this Mid-season grind Two interval days: First day 300s fairly fast pace, and more still- 3 min. rest. Day two 200s moderate pace 3 min rest.

Week Nine: Two interval days, but backing off. First day 300s Fast pace, but not many 3 min rest. Day two 150s or 200s moderate pace but not many 3 min rest.

Week Ten: One interval day 200s Fast pace but not many. 3 min rest

Week Eleven: One interval day 200s or 150’s Fast pace but not many 3 min rest

\* 300 hurdlers should do a hurdle workout every time there is a second interval day that week and toward the end when there is only one interval day it should be a 300 hurdle day

\* 110 hurdlers that don’t run anything longer than 200m should run 200s when the others run 300s and run 150s down to 100s when the others run 200s