



2026 Montana Coaches Association - Multi-Sport Coaches Clinic

Young Hurdler Development

Introduction

Lance Osler - Hamilton HS Assistant Coach - Hurdles

1989 Flathead High Grad

Track career at Idaho - graduated in 1994

Started coaching in 1995 Big Sky HS

Mountain West Track Club hurdle coach

Currently hurdle coach at Hamilton HS

Corbin Weltzien - Hellgate HS Graduate - currently running D1 Track for Davidson College NC

2025 110H 39" results

14.03 Stadium record Helena

14.15 Meet record Russ Pilcher Top 10 Missoula

14.04 Meet and Stadium record Archie Roe Kalispell

14.05 Meet and Stadium record Greg Rice City Meet Missoula

2025 MT AA State CHampion

2026 Collegiate 110H 42" results

14.65 PB

Young Hurdler Development

Philosophy

1. Athlete Assessment
2. Fundamental Sprint Mechanics
3. Lead Leg & Trail Leg Mechanics
4. Rhythmic Progressions
5. Hurdle Progressive Drills

Young Hurdler Development – Session 1 classroom

Philosophy - Rhythm, Posture and Balance

In all track and field events our Athletes should be focusing on their rhythm, posture and balance. If one of these physical elements is missing then the athletes will not perform to the best of their abilities. When you are developing athletes at a young age you should be thinking about incorporating these elements into your workouts.

Keys to Developing Hurdle workouts:

- **Create a Hurdler mentality:** Cultivate confidence by minimizing the fear of falling.
- **Fun Factor:** Keep drills engaging to maintain youth interest.
- **Base Building:** Build in drills that strengthen the needs of the athlete to maintain posture and balance, that you uncover in the Athlete Assessment.
- **Develop muscle memory:** Constant repetition of drills maintaining rhythm, posture and balance
- **Rhythm Stepping:** Focus on stride patterns, without jeopardizing posture
- **Wickets:** Rhythmic stepping over a barrier

Hurdle day - pick a day that just focuses on only hurdle drills

Non hurdle days - work on the fundamentals of sprinting and hurdling. These are the building blocks that lead to hurdle days and event specifics drills.

1. Athlete Assessment

- Determine each athlete's current Sprint fundamentals
 - Able to maintain knee drive over a distance
 - Able to maintain dorsi-flexion of the ankles
 - Able to maintain arm swing
- Determine each athlete's ability to maintain Rhythm, Posture and Balance
 - Hip strength and mobility (forward, back and side to side)
 - Hip flexor strength is a key to fast hurdling and sprinting
 - Hip mobility is a key component of fast hurdling
 - Groin strength
 - Ankle strength and mobility
 - Flexibility in the ankle, monitor range of motion
 - Maintain posture over distance
 - Test rhythm (ability to change stride length, skip, bound, jump etc.)

Use Plyometrics to test the athletes, and in the process find the faults and build them up. Only use body weight in this process. Add drills to your daily routine and warmup to build up each athlete and athletes should only progress as they can show strengths in these fundamentals

Examples:

- POGOs
- Standing long jump
- Standing squat
- Lunges
- Double leg jumps for height
- Power skipping
- Standing Ts (use hurdle for balance)
- Push-ups
- Burpees
- Jump Rope

2. Hurdler Warm-up / Fundamental Sprint Mechanics

- **Posture:** Maintain a tall, upright torso with a forward lean from the ankles. Keeping hips over the foot.
- **Step Force:** with all drills, emphasize putting force into the track
- **Hip position:** hips should always be over the foot
- **Dorsiflexion:** Keep toes pulled up toward the shins during flight and recovery.

Activation Stretch

Dynamic Stretching (often in a Team warmup setting)

Bands, jump rope, other stretching as needed by athlete

Ground drills:

- Ankle rolls
- Hamstring sweeps with 3 strides
- Quad stretch (up on toe, slow down on toe)
- Side lunge (with swing side to side)
- Front and back lunge (pulling yourself up)
- Toe bounces

Hip and Ankle Mobility:

- Half Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch w/ Rotation
- Spiderman Lunges
- 90/90 Switches
- Hip Pendulums – side to side, front/back
- Split lunges – glutes to your heels

Sprinter/Hurdler drills:

- Walking high knees
- A skip
- B skip
- C skip
- Straight leg Paw with A skip
- High knee skips
- Carioca
- Line taps (double leg, side to side, single leg)
- Stride outs

Hip and Ankle Mobility:

- Half-Kneeling Hip Flexor Stretch with Rotation – Lunge – knee at 90 and then rotate towards forward knee
- Spiderman Lunges – start in plank and then lunge with each leg outside of hands
- 90/90 Switches – sitting legs wider than the shoulders, rotate until legs are flat and then switch with keeping hands above your head
- Hip pendulums, side to side and then forward/backward
- Split lunge – lean forward and try to get your glutes to your heels
- Forced ankle flexion - against the wall or off the edge of a step
- Wall sit, with toe flexion

Power movements: (early season movements to build strength)

- Jump for height – land absorbing with hips, knees and ankles – power up as quickly as possible.
- Jump for distance – standing long jump as far as you can go, land and hold before jumping again
- Knee tuck jumps – step forward with one leg and jump as high as you can tucking knees to chest, land, step and then explode up again.
- Knee drive in sprinter lean, drive with hips over feet, repeat

Hurdle drills

- Front single leg step-overs at 30"
- 4Square or Hip flexor side drill
- Side rhythm step (both sides)
- Backward single leg step overs at 30"
- Trail leg wall drills
- Trail and Lead leg over sides (dominant legs)
- One step hurdle drill

Session 2 on Track

3. Rhythmic Progressions

- **4 Square Drill**
- **8 Square Drill**
- **Hurdle Hops** - hop over one hurdle, side steps over wickets
- **Z Steps**
- **Wickets Drills** - there are many variations of drills so explore and be creative.

Here are a few of my favorites

- Quick Steps - getting feet up and down as quickly as you can over the barrier
- Sprint strides

Wicket Spacing Chart

Early Season		Mid Season		Late Season	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
5'	5'	5'	5'	5'	5'
10'	10'	10'	10'	10'	10'
15'	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'
20'	20'	20'	20'	20'	20'
25'	25'	25' 3"	25' 3"	25' 3"	25' 3"
30' 3"	30'	30' 6"	30' 6"	31'	30' 6"
35' 6"	35' 3"	36'	35' 9"	36' 9"	36'
41'	40' 6"	41' 6"	41' 3"	42' 6"	41' 6"
46' 6"	45' 9"	47' 3"	46' 9"	48' 6"	47' 3"
52'	51'	53'	52' 3"	54' 6"	53'
57' 9"	56' 6"	59'	58'	60' 9"	59'
63' 6"	62'	65'	63' 9"	67'	65'
69' 3"	67' 6"	71' 3"	69' 6"	73' 6"	71' 3"
75'	73'	77' 6"	75' 3"	80'	77' 6"
81'	78' 9"	84'	81' 3"	86' 6"	84'
87'	84' 6"	90' 6"	87' 3"	93' 3"	90' 6"
93'	90' 3"	97'	93' 6"	100'	97'
99' 3"	96' 3"	103' 9"	99' 9"	107'	103' 9"
105' 9"	102' 3"	110' 6"	106'	114'	110' 6"
112' 3"	108' 3"	117' 3"	112' 3"	121'	117' 3"
		124'	118' 9"		

4. Lead Leg & Trail Leg Mechanics

- **Lead Leg:** Drive the knee straight up, snap the heel down, and avoid swinging with a straight leg.



45-degree body angle into the hurdle with Knee drive at hurdle height (not higher). Toe flexion.

- **Trail Leg:** Pull the knee high (into the armpit) over the hurdle and bring the foot all the way around in line with the body before coming down directly under center of mass. Toe flexion.



Lead leg should be driving into the track with as much force as the athlete is able (rip or paw the track, do not stab the track)

Off the Back of the hurdle: Once the trail leg is all the way through and in line with the body, step down using a driving force into the track, with hips over the foot. 45-degree body angle off the hurdle. Toe Flexion.



- **Arm Action:** Use a counter-balancing lead arm reach while keeping the trail arm tight. Bad arm swing is a byproduct of a poor trail leg movement.
 - Arms should come up and down in a hammer motion. Lead arm to hip and trail arm punching up.
 - I don't try to fix arms, I prefer to fix the trail leg, and the arms will come in-line as the athlete has proper rhythm, posture and balance.

5. Hurdle Progressive Drills

- **Wall Drills:** Isolate and practice the trail leg sweep while leaning against a wall, pulling the trail leg over the hurdle
- **Angled hurdle wall drill:** move the hurdle perpendicular to the wall. Lower one end of the hurdle. Keeping the lead leg out front, reach back with the trail leg as far as you can and then pull the trail from the knee, high with the heel tight and with toe flexion all the way around and in-line with the body before stepping down forcefully.
- **Tennis Ball Lead legs:** place a hurdle at height desired against the wall. Place a tennis ball under the knee and rock back and then with forward drive, keep the knee tight and hold the ball until leg has to extend to catch yourself against the wall.
- **Side-Hurdle Walk overs:** Walk beside the hurdle to isolate lead leg and trail leg mechanics separately.
- **Sitting Trail Legs:** sitting on the ground with the lead leg outstretched and the trail leg back, lift and bring the trail knee through without twisting the body.
- **Hanging trail legs** - more advanced but at a lower hurdle height all levels of hurdles can benefit
- **Side-Hurdle Rhythm** - Spread the hurdles out and with more speed do leads and trails, eventually taking just one step between.
- **Discounted Hurdles:** Lower the height and shorten the distance to build speed and confidence. Boys distance 8.5m between hurdles, Girls 7.9m between hurdles.