



# USATF Coaching Education

Presented by Gill Athletics



## A Message from the Chair: Troy Engle, Associate Director and Head Coach US Paralympic Track & Field

**Special points of interest:**

- USATF partners with American Red Cross
- National Podium Education Project review
- Applications still being accepted for the 2007-08 Minority Women Coaching Education Scholarship

As I read through the draft of this issue to prepare my brief 'welcome note', one thing really struck me – we, as a coaching community, do a pretty darn good job of collaborating! In this issue we have some really fantastic articles written by coaches from all levels, of all ages. In addition, we have re-printed information that is drawn from a fantastic USOC publication – the Olympic Coach E-Zine. Perhaps the greatest example of that collaboration is the Podium Education Program, which represents the combined efforts of all the stakeholders in USATF's High Performance Division in an effort

to share knowledge among our entire coaching community in a 100% COST-FREE setting – wow! Cathy Sellers, the USOC Manager of Coaching, recently published data in another article of the E-Zine which summarized the important stepping stones in the development of our (US) elite level coaches across a spectrum of sports. The coaches were asked to self-report, through a questionnaire, on the important influencing factors in their own professional development. At the top of the list was the importance of "mentors". In the

electronic age, I see this publication (and others like it) as the natural 21<sup>st</sup> Century version of mass mentorship. Not too long ago, many of us 'older' coaches were lamenting the death of the good-old-fashioned clinic. As a look at this publication, I am realizing that while the clinic, in its classic sense, has become less frequent, our educational opportunities and modalities of sharing information are as strong as ever!

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I did. There is information that every coach, at every level can use immediately.

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

NPEP Review	2
Minority Women CE Scholarships	3
Increasing Level 1 Effectiveness	4
Mind Games	5
Sport Drinks	6
A View From the Top	8
Drill Sergeant	9
Calendar of Schools	15
Classified Ads	16
New from Gill Athletics	18

### USATF Partners with the American Red Cross

More than half of all sports-related injuries are preventable. With proper training, millions of athletes would be injury-free each year. That's why USA Track & Field, in partnership with the American Red Cross of Central Indiana and the United States Olympic Committee, is implementing an online training program that will provide convenient, effective, affordable training for coaches at all levels of sport.

To help promote safety and offer an effective way for coaches to meet that fundamental responsibility, we have partnered with the American Red Cross of Central Indiana to pro-

vide First Aid for Coaches, a component of Sport Safety Training online.

Online training allows individuals to learn on their own time and at their own pace. Because the courses are online, they can be accessed any time of day from a computer with an Internet connection. That is essential for coaches, parents and others who need this training, but don't have flexible schedules to allow for a traditional course.

To register for one of these American Red Cross online courses, please visit this website: <http://www.usatf.org/groups/Coaches/programs/RedCrossOnlineTraining/index.asp>

# National Podium Education Project Review

**Brooks T. Johnson, Chair, USATF High Performance Division**

The High Performance Division of USA Track and Field is mandated and charged in its grant award from the USOC with two things:

1. Maintain the current medal count in Olympic events at major international competitions.
2. Increase this medal count where and when possible

When the High Performance Division came into being in 2001, the U.S. was averaging between 18-20 medals at the Olympics and World Championships. Since the 2004 Olympics, 2005 World Championships, and 2007 World Championships the U.S. has averaged in the middle twenties, with 26 medals in 2007. This count compares with the Russians who were second with 16 TOTAL medals (we had 14 gold alone). The Kenyans were third with 14 TOTAL medals (we had 14 gold alone). There were more than 200 countries represented at the World Championships of 2007, with 64 countries winning medals. Both represent an all time high as far as participation and the number of countries that won medals. Bottom line, the U.S. has substantially increased its medal count in the face of ever-growing stiffer competition.

Despite our medal count success, what is clearly a glaring and dangerous fact is that 90% of our medal count is usually produced by 5-7 coaches. Even more of a concern is the fact most of these same coaches repeat from one major competition to the other. We must broaden the number of coaches in the U.S. who have the knowledge and expertise to "crack the code" at the podium level at these major competitions. The best approach to widening and spreading this knowledge is to bring together the U.S. coaches who have already "cracked the code", with U.S. coaches who are seeking to gain the insight and information necessary to join these elite code crackers. We ask the code crackers to share special aspects of coaching and development that allows for athletes to enjoy success at the podium level. We invite coaches of both types from all over the country, thus the National Podium Education Project.

The High Performance Division and Coaches Education have worked together and combined resources to produce a very successful and rewarding week long event. It is free and approximately 500 coaches attended the 2007 National Podium Education Project that took place December 10-15, 2007 in Las Vegas, NV. In 2007, there were more than 44 states represented and several countries. These numbers express in the most convincing terms that such an event and experience is needed and desired by coaches around the country. Coaches Education has done an outstanding job of reaching out and attracting large numbers of coaches to Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Schools. The Podium Education Project is the final piece, the PhD, the ultimate extension of the Coaches Education Program and is eligible for Level 3 credit for Level 2 coaches that attend.

The National Podium Education Project represents the manner and mode with which different entities within the sport could/should cooperate and coordinate their efforts for the benefit of coaches and athletes. With this NPEP as a model, we have the makings of a very productive association between HPD and CE with athletes and coaches being the ultimate winners.

**SAVE THE DATE:** The 2008 National Podium Education project will be held December 16-20, 2008 at the Tuscany Suites & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. During the 2008 NPEP there will be event sessions for sprints, hurdles, throws, high jump, pole vault, horizontal jumps, endurance, and combined events. Additional information about the event and online registration will be available on the USATF website very soon.



# **2007-08 Minority Women Coaching Education Scholarships, Still Accepting Applications**

A matching grant provided by USATF and NCAA will fund scholarships for a select number of minority women coaches to attend USATF Coaching Education Level 1, 2 and 3 courses during the 2007-08 academic year. These scholarships are available to ethnic minority women track and field coaches.

<b>Scholarship Type:</b>	<b>Max Amount:</b>	<b>Max Number:</b>
Level 2	\$750	8
Level 3	\$450	4

USA Track & Field's Minority Women Coaching Education Scholarship will provide academic as well as hands-on training to minority women coaches through the USA Track & Field (USATF) Coaching Education programs. This program will offer 15-20 minority women coaches the resources necessary to attend one of USATF's rewarding programs. USATF will offer minority women coaches a scholarship to one of the following: 2007 USATF Level 1 School, 2007 USATF National Podium Education Project, 2008 USATF Level 2 School or 2008 Advanced Coaches Summit (Level 3) Course. These programs focus on both general coaching topics and specific event groups – Sprints/Hurdles/Relays, Endurance, Jumps, Throws and Combined Events.

USATF programs integrate the latest developments in sports science and highlight with the newest training methods. Since the introduction of the program, over 25,000 coaches have attended USATF Coaching Education courses. Program alums include Olympic coaches and NCAA Champions.

All Level 1 scholarships and National Podium Education scholarships have been awarded for this cycle, but applications are still being accepted for Level 2 and Level 3 scholarships until Friday, February 29, 2008. Applications and supplemental materials can be emailed to Amanda Payne (Amanda.Payne@usatf.org), mailed to: USA Track & Field, Attn: Minority Women Scholarship, One RCA Dome, Suite 140, Indianapolis, IN 46225, or faxed to 317-261-0514. Applications can

be downloaded from this website:

<http://www.usatf.org/groups/Coaches/education/scholarship.asp>

A resume of coaching background/experience as well as a letter of recommendation from the Athletic Director or Head Coach (if applicant is an assistant) of current coaching position must accompany the application. Additionally all applicants for the scholarship should have a current USA Track & Field membership #. All awardees will be notified by March 31, 2008. All Scholarships must be utilized during the 2007-08 academic year.

## **A Description of Programs:**

### Coaching Education Level 2 School

Each year, USA Track & Field offers the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of our Coaching Education program. Level 2 is a week-long program covering advanced sport science concepts and training principles. Level 2 provides coaches more advanced, in-depth coverage of sport science: biomechanics, physiology, psychology, and training theory. The course also focuses on the technical aspects of the chosen event group using video analysis, group projects, classroom instruction, and hand-on training. Level 2 graduates are prepared to coach high-level juniors, college and post-collegiate athletes.

### Advanced Coaching Summit (Level 3)

USATF's Advanced Coaching Summit (Level 3) program is a scientific, knowledge-based seminar which takes place over three days. Some Level 3 participants continue with independent study and publish an event-specific research paper. This level provides coaches with "capstone" knowledge in their chosen event group as well as "cutting edge" sport science concepts. The Advanced Coaching Summit (Level 3) prepares an individual to coach at the national/international level.

# Increasing the Effectiveness of Your Level 1 School

Matt Lydum- Coordinator of Instructor Quality Control

Dave Shrock - Instructor Training Course Facilitator

Even the veteran Level 1 instructors often can increase effectiveness as a teacher by reflecting on many of the basic premises of effective school management and instruction. It is important to remember that you, the CE instructor, are perhaps the only representative the participants will ever meet from USATF. It is important to represent our organization with professionalism and enthusiasm. Through CE workshops, school feedback forms, and countless informal conversations, we have identified many of the strategies to help make your next level 1 school more effective.

## Before you begin:

- Find classrooms with movable desks and chairs, as fixed auditorium seating is OK for a one hour class, but brutal on participants for a 21 hour school.
- Download current power point presentations, administrative booklet and paperwork from the CE download site. Make sure all instructors also have access to the material.
- Study the curriculum before presenting. Carefully examine the power point presentations, Level 1 book, and test questions.
- Incorporate some active learning sessions to break the grind of long classroom presentations. This can be as simple as having participants stand to try the shot put power position. Having participants demonstrate a tall PV plant can serve as instruction and a welcome stretch.
- Wear USATF gear, or neutral attire.
- Utilize appropriate signage to lead participants to venue.
- Attempt to have an internet connection at registration for easy database updating and participants to register on-line for USATF.

## School management:

- Start and end all session on time. Allow sufficient break periods.
- Be aware of hydration and sustenance needs. Provide at minimum water, and you are encouraged to consider additional refreshments.
- Remember the foundational nature of the Level 1 curriculum. Keep track of time and avoid dwelling on specific points ad nauseam.
- Keep the presentation room clean and avoid clutter.
- Erase the board when you are done presenting.
- Be available during breaks for questions and clarification of presentations.

## During your school:

- Don't sell your own materials such as books, videos or camps.
- Don't push non-Gill equipment as Gill Athletics are our title sponsor.
- Avoid overt recruiting for both schools or clubs.
- Be respectful of coaches working with all developmental groups in your audience. Instead of responding to a youth coach's question with "I have no idea", it would be better stated, "Good question, would another youth coach like to make a comment?"
- Remember that the curriculum has been crafted through years of development. You are teaching a school...not a clinic and should not question or counter the Level 1 curriculum with comments such as "I disagree with the USATF or the curriculum"
- Minimize personal anecdotes and stories which often detract from the curriculum.
- Be sensitive to the participants and avoid offensive comments and/or language.

## After the school:

- Read the evaluations and reflect on your performance.
- While it is fresh in your mind, make some notes on how the school and/or your instruction could be improved next time.
- If you find errors or inconsistencies in the curriculum, communicate your concerns to the appropriate people.

We all know that teaching Level 1 schools is about promoting our sport and contributing to the advancement of our coaching knowledge base. No one chooses to pursue serving as a coaching educator for fame or fortune. So, your contributions are greatly appreciated. And, while not perfect, the program has been very successful over the years. However, maintaining the status quo will lead us quickly toward obsolescence. We must improve. Let us continue to refine our programming and work toward excellence in coaching education.

## MIND GAMES

### USOC Sport Psychology's "TOP TEN" Guiding Principles for Mental Training By Sean McCann, Ph.D. USOC Sport Psychologist

Originally published in the Winter 2008 Olympic Coach E-Zine

1. Mental training can't replace physical training and talent.

We haven't seen any Olympic Athlete who succeeded without doing the physical and technical work, even though we have worked with some of the most mentally talented athletes in the world. The reality is that even an exceptionally talented athlete who has not prepared well physically loses confidence and is vulnerable in competition. The best and easiest confidence is that which comes from the knowledge that you are as prepared, or more prepared, than your competitors, and that you are physically capable of a winning performance.

2. Physical training and physical ability isn't enough to succeed consistently.

On the other hand, we have worked with a number of athletes whose coaches called them "the most talented athlete on the team," yet these athletes never achieved international success. These physically gifted athletes were not able to manage the mental demands of the sport. Some athletes can't handle the focus and discipline of training, where others can't handle the pressure and stress of competition. If you are lacking in either of these areas, you may succeed at times, but you will not succeed consistently.

3. A strong mind may not win you an Olympic medal, but a weak mind will lose you one.

It is very difficult to predict that a mentally strong athlete will win an Olympic medal, due to all the factors that play into winning a medal. There are so many variables—training, health, finances, coaching to name a few—to properly account for, that success for any athlete is never certain. On the other hand, one of the easiest predictions to make is who will fail under Olympic pressure. Athletes with an obviously weak mental game virtually never win at the biggest competitions.

4. Coaches frequently don't know what their athletes are thinking.

While all great coaches pay close attention to behavior of their athletes on the field of play, very few coaches have a similarly detailed knowledge of what their athletes are thinking or should be thinking. Few coaches know enough about the specific mental "demons" all athletes have, so they are often unable to intervene when they need to at competition. We have come to the conclusion that like politics or religion, it is an area many coaches are afraid to ask about. While some coaches know that "psychological factors" were the cause of an athlete failing in competition, many of these coaches are not aware of the athlete's mental state before they compete.

5. Thoughts impact behavior. Consistency of thinking = consistency of behavior.

It is a simple but powerful idea that all sport behavior starts with a thought. While much of coaching focuses on making sport behavior more consistent and controllable, much less of coaching focuses on making thinking more consistent and controllable. Because of this, many coaches are surprised by not only the difference between their athletes' practice behavior and competition

behavior but that the reason for that difference is due to how their athletes are thinking. One goal of sport psychology is to understand and control the thinking process, therefore understanding and controlling behavior.

6. Coaches often have a different view of changing technical mistakes vs. mental mistakes.

As sport psychologists, we are optimistic about the ability to work on mental mistakes. Thus we are often surprised when coaches are willing to write off an athlete as a "choker" when they repeat mental mistakes in competition. These are often the same coaches who will work literally for years with an athlete on a repeated technical mistake. To a coach who says, "I don't think they'll ever do it", we ask, "How many times have you specifically worked on changing the mental mistakes? What drills have you tried? How do you give the athlete feedback on his mental mistake? Does the athlete know exactly how she should think? Have you had this discussion?"

7. Coaches must be involved in the mental training process.

Historically, in sport psychology, we have heard coaches say after a strong period of training before the season "Well, now it is all mental. Now it is up to the sport psychologist!" While it is nice to feel important to a team's success, we have learned from hard experience that it is all wrong for coaches to "outsource" mental training and sport psychology to a sport psychology consultant. We have learned that many elite coaches feel out of their comfort zone when dealing with in mental training issues, and fear asking probing questions about how an athlete thinks and feels. We have also learned to push coaches to go past their fears and get used to coaching the mental as well as the physical athlete. If

coaches don't become the prime provider of sport psychology for their teams, all kinds of teaching opportunities and chances for excellence will be missed. At worst, coaches who are unaware of their athletes' mental skill building will coach in ways that oppose or undermine the mental skills acquired. The bottom line is that coaches must be involved in mental training for it to be successful.

8. Sometimes it is ok to force athletes to take the time to do mental training.

The USOC's Sport Psychology Department's philosophy on this topic has evolved over the past ten years. In the past, we were unwilling to say that all teams should do some form of mental training. We had been fairly passive, waiting for coaches to approach us with requests for service. Unfortunately, many of those requests came from coaches who had seen their athlete melt down in the biggest competition of their life. Obviously, it is too late at that point!

Surprisingly, many coaches seem willing to accept an athlete's reassurance, "My mental game is just fine." Why, when you wouldn't ask the athlete to determine if his technique is "just fine", do you let the athlete avoid working on their mental game for years until a crisis forces them to admit they need work? At

Sequencing, cont. from page 5

the USOC, we are now quite comfortable pushing athletes into doing the mental training work, even if they don't always see the value at first.

Like any other skill, mental skills need to be measured in order to maximize performance of those skills.

"What gets measured, gets done." This old expression from business writer Peter Lynch is useful for coaching as well. Just as ski coaches time training runs, or basketball coaches calculate free throw shooting percentages, application of mental skills can be measured. Moreover, they **MUST** be measured if they are to change. Once you think of mental skills as behaviors to be measured, you can begin to use your own coaching creativity to teach, modify, and increase the use of, mental skills.

10. Coaches need to think about their own mental skills

Most coaches can readily see that the same skills they are teaching their athletes are also useful for their own work in coaching. With the amount of pressure coaches face, for example, the ability to manage emotions, control arousal, game plan, and simulate pressure are all useful for coaches. |

This is an excerpt from the Coaches Guide –Mental Training Manual, USOC Sport Psychology staff. This manual is available from the USOC for \$24.95, call 719.866.4517 for more information.

## **Sports Drinks for Athletes**

**Bob Seebohar, MS, RD, CSSD, CSCS**

**USOC Sport Dietician (Endurance Sportfolio)**

Originally published in the Winter 2008 Olympic Coach E-Zine

There are just about as many sports drinks on the market as there are different ways to train athletes. The benefit of this is that it is possible for an athlete to dial in his or her individual hydration needs. The downside of this is that there are so many choices it is difficult to know which beverage is best for each athlete and at what time during their training phase.

It isn't as easy as it used to be to go into the supermarket and grab a sports drink off the shelf. Nowadays, you must read not only the nutrition facts label but also the ingredients list very carefully to ensure that the drink contains the proper nutrients that will support a high level of performance and none that will impair it. Energy drinks have also entered the beverage market and these drinks add to the confusion when trying to help an athlete choose which one may or may not be best.

A sports drink is a beverage that is designed to help athletes rehydrate themselves by providing fluid, electrolytes and carbohydrate. An energy drink is a beverage that is designed to give athletes a "burst" of energy through the addition of caffeine and herbal ingredients. Sports drinks can typically be trusted to provide the athlete safe and tolerable in-

redients while energy drinks sometimes walk the fine line of being safe and useful.

It is important to remember that these products are classified as supplements and any supplement should be scrutinized carefully before it is used by an athlete, especially energy drinks. Because some supplements can be contaminated with other ingredients not reported on the label or may not contain the ingredients listed on the label, a conservative rule of thumb is to choose a beverage that does not contain any questionable substances without clinical proof or third party testing that ensures the ingredients contained in the product work and are at the reported quantities without other, possibly banned, substances present.

Taking the conservative approach, sports drinks that are manufactured by reputable companies are generally safe to consume and provide the necessary ingredients to assist an athlete in the rehydration process. True to its definition, energy drinks are formulated to provide energy, although this energy is often short-lived. It is more beneficial for an athlete to obtain energy

Sport Drinks, Cont. from 6

by eating the proper nutrients at the right times rather than relying on a drink that will only provide stimulation for a short time. Energy from food will prevent hypoglycemia and provide the mental alertness and cognitive functioning that is needed to compete at a high level.

When choosing a sports' drink, it is important that it provides a combination of carbohydrate, sodium and fluid in the following quantities:

- **Carbohydrates:** 14-17 grams per 8 ounces (a 6-7% carbohydrate solution).
- **Sodium:** dependent upon athlete's sweat rate and sweat sodium concentration but a range of 70-1266 milligrams per 8 ounces of fluid is recommended.

**Fluid:** dependent upon athlete's sweat rate but a range of 3-8 ounces per 15-20 minutes is recommended.

Recent research has indicated that it may be more beneficial to consume a combination of carbohy-

drates at one time. Specifically, sports drinks containing a small amount of fructose may increase the body's absorption of carbohydrates and provide the athlete more energy to fuel training. Most sports drinks already contain a combination of glucose or maltodextrin and fructose or sucrose (a disaccharide comprised of glucose and fructose) but be sure to read the ingredients list to make sure!

Keep in mind that there are certain times of the year when an athlete should not worry about consuming these types of supplements. What many athletes fail to realize is that these beverages can contain quite a few calories and contribute to weight gain when an athlete is not actively training or is injured. Sports drinks are best used when the goal is rehydration. Encourage your athlete to use them before, during and after training and stick with water as their preferred drink throughout the day outside of training times.

## **Sign up now for the Olympic Coach E-Zine!**

Olympic Coach E-Magazine, designed for coaches at all levels, provides a summary of each article in the magazine with a link that takes you directly to the full-length article and contains the same content as the print version — articles about improving athlete performance in a variety of fields, such as psychology, nutrition, sports medicine, strength and conditioning, as well as other topics of interest to coaches. The best news is that Olympic Coach E-Magazine is available to anyone and everyone for free.

To sign up for this free coaching resource go to this website:

<http://coaching.usolympicteam.com/coaching/ksub.nsf>



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# A View from the Top:

Ralph Lindeman

Head Track & Field Coach

United State Air Force Academy

## What made you want to become a track & field coach?

I first became excited about track & field as a 7<sup>th</sup> grader when my physical education teacher took our class to a collegiate dual meet between Arizona State and New Mexico and I saw a match-up between Henry Carr, Ullis Williams and Adolph Plummer—I was hooked. That p.e. teacher inspired me to become a coach, and track became my first sport! I fell in love with the hurdles and as early as high school I became a student of the event and was subscribing to Track & Field News and poring over coaching journals like Scholastic Coach and Athletic Journal.

## What is your educational background?

I got my B.S. (Physical Education) and M.S. (Exercise Science) from Arizona State University. I still apply lessons learned from many of my professors at ASU. I coached for 7 years in the high school ranks in Arizona before taking a part-time position as men's field event coach at ASU (1980-82). My first full-time position was 2 years later as the men's and women's sprint-hurdle coach at the University of Arizona (1982-84), and my 1<sup>st</sup> head coaching job was at Long Beach State (1984-89). The best educational experience of my career was in 1978, when I piled into a car and drove to the newly-opened U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs with two other high school coaches from Arizona—Ron Mann and Greg Hull, for a week-long “learn-by-doing” clinic. I have vivid memories of each instructor and each session—from John Oroggen to Tom Tellez, Clyde Hart to Bob Teel, Jim Santos to Steve Miller, all under the leadership of Sam Bell. If one were to go back and look at the coaches who attended that clinic as participants, they would be amazed at the names of coaches who went on to incredible coaching careers—many were high school coaches at the time. My roommate was Rob Johnson of Wabash College, who had become a great friend. I was one of the early participants in the Coaching Education program, taking Level I in 1984, Level 2 in 1988 and somewhere in between, Level I Instructor.

## How do you continue to educate yourself?

I study coaches and coaching—I'm an inveterate “clipper” of articles from newspapers, magazines and the internet on anything to do with coaches and coaching in all sports. I also pore over any reading material I can find on leadership and management. As a head coach, those areas become every bit as important as technical and physiological information on event areas. I also speak at any and every coaching clinic I can work into my schedule—that's maybe 3 or 4 a year in addition to one or two Level I Schools. When I speak at a clinic or conference, I don't just show up to speak and socialize—I attend every other session I can. I once heard this saying, “If you're green, you're growing; if you're ripe, you're rotten.” So I'll sit in and listen to a new speaker I haven't heard before or even a speaker I've heard a dozen times before to see if there's something new I can latch on to. I also subscribe to almost every track & field journal I can identify—those common ones published in the U.S. but also BAAA's “Coach”, Australia's “Modern Athlete & Coach”, IAAF's “New Studies in Athletics”, etc. And then I have the luxury of being close enough to the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs that I can sneak over to their library once a month or so to pore over the journals they have.

## What is the most important concept you have learned that has made you a better coach?

My earliest influence was probably Tom Ecker, whose simple text from 1974, “Track & Field Dynamics”, became my guidebook for coaching with its simple explanations of concepts like acceleration, application of forces, angles of take-off and release, etc. I considered Tom Tellez my mentor—I can't tell you how many times I've listened to him and dialogued with him about technique—he was a great teacher and made those biomechanical principles simple for his athletes and the coaches he influenced. In the end, though, the most important concept I've learned that I have to remind myself of over and over again is, “Kids don't care about how much you know until they know about how much you care.” I don't know who originally said that—but it's the foundation for my philosophy and style of coaching.

**Describe your most successful/rewarding coaching moment.** I could easily mention some of the performances, championships and titles of teams and individuals I've had the privilege of coaching. I take terrific pride in watching kids' performances develop, improve and progress, and so many of my “most rewarding coaching moments” are performances which might be considered mediocre by most. I'm also inspired and motivated with “coaching coaches”, and am honored that coaches would seek advice from me or come to listen to me speak at a coaching clinic. But without question, my most rewarding experiences are when graduates of the Air Force Academy and the previous institutions I've served at come back and tell me about their families and their careers, and thank me for my influence—I love hearing from every one of them!

## What book would you recommend to any coach about coaching?

Mike Holman hit on two of the best books in a previous “View from the Top” when he mentioned the “Omnibook” (I love John Kernan's new edition as much as the 1<sup>st</sup> edition!) and Brent MacFarlane's superb text on hurdling. But I'll take a different approach and mention some (not just one) books on leadership and performance... first, a “must read” is Jim Collins best-selling “Good to Great.” I'd also recommend just about any book by leadership expert, John Maxwell. His recent best-sellers include “Talent is Never Enough,” “The Difference Maker” about attitude, and “25 Ways to Win With People.”

**What advice would you give to a track & field coach that is just starting out in the profession?** First of all, become a student of the sport and all its events—don't limit yourself to the event or events you are most skilled in—learn them all. Read everything you can put your eyes on—texts, journals, articles about the sport, its events and its coaches. Attend every coaching clinic and conference you can afford. Identify a mentor and engage with that individual with dialogue relating to theory, technique, training, and most importantly, values and character. Finally, refresh yourself repeatedly with the quote I mentioned above... “Kids don't care about how much you know until they know about how much you care”—be a caring coach of character and integrity.



# **Drill Sergeant:**

## Guidance to Enhance your Training

### **Endurance**

## **Building a Better Runner**

*Submitted by Michael J. Smith, Kansas State University, Assistant Track and Field Coach*

*One of the central tenets of the USATF Coaches Education Endurance curriculum is to provide coaches with training “ingredients” and allow them to develop their own recipes for training their athletes. We all coach in different environments. Differences in climate, topography, urbanization, and training age all contribute to the training environment and affect the relative mix of ingredients in the training recipe. What works in one environment, may not work in another. However, there are common themes. Central among these is the concept of the inclusion of some sort of strength training to one degree or another, in the training plan for endurance athletes.*

*My current philosophy regarding strength training and the endurance events has evolved over time. As a young high school coach (William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, PA; Skyline High School, Oakland, CA) I found the majority of the kids with whom I worked were one dimensional. They possessed stamina but were not athletic. That is to say, they were deficient in areas of strength, speed, skill, and suppleness. Furthermore, they were almost always untrained, and thus their capacity for work was very low. When I moved on to Kansas State University, I encountered a more talented runner but one that was still deficient across the spectrum of athleticism and again, largely untrained. There have been exceptions to this trend, but on the whole I have come to expect certain athletic deficiencies and very low work capacities from the majority of my newcomers. At K-State, I have been fortunate to study under Cliff Rovelto who is a recognized expert in the jumps and multi-events. He introduced me to the concept of athleticism and its importance in all events in track and field. He trains his high jumpers to be better athletes under the premise that if they are stronger, faster, more flexible, and more coordinated they can jump higher. Given the apparent deficiencies of the distance runners that I was encountering, it was obvious to me that I needed to train more than the energy systems in order to maximize their endurance capabilities. I began to experiment with a training program that had an increased emphasis on strength training.*

*I have found that models of training for endurance runners vary in scope but invariably incorporate the elements of speed, stamina, suppleness, skill, and strength. Stamina and speed are arguably the two most important of these elements to be addressed in the training of endurance athletes; this is not in dispute. However, in order to maximize the training of stamina and speed, one must first create and maintain a physical platform from which to support the work volumes associated with appropriate and successful endurance training. The creation of this physical platform will aid in injury prevention, increase work capacity, and contribute to improvements in the efficiency of running. To put it simply, if the energy cost of running can be reduced by improving balance, force production, range of motion, posture, and muscular endurance, the runner can be more economical. This is, “running economy”. Theoretically, if “running economy” improves, performance gains will follow. Thus, the incorporation of physical strength into the training program has to be prioritized.*

Endurance, cont. from p. 9

*The essential function of a platform is support. The term physical platform in an athletic context describes the human body's ability to support work. A stronger distance runner is better able to tolerate more mileage and greater intensity in training i.e. their work capacity increases. Strength in this context is not synonymous with bulk or large increases in mass. Initial changes in strength are due to improvements in the neuromuscular pathways. Hypertrophy is, however, a natural result of muscular endurance training but the resultant gains in muscle mass are appropriate gains and will aid in performance. Muscle is added where muscle is needed. In fact, distance runners often need to be stronger just to train appropriately. Distance running by nature is physically very demanding. If we except the caveat that changes at the metabolic level happen more quickly than changes at the cellular level, then it is imperative that coaches address the relative strength of the athletes so that they can tolerate increases in metabolic work. It is easy to identify the improvements in the energy systems of endurance athletes. Injuries however, often occur when our metabolic ambition outpaces our cellular preparation. Tendons, ligaments, muscles, fascia, and bones are subject to great stresses from running and must be prepared to support the workload. It is not uncommon for endurance athletes and coaches to encounter shin splints, patella tendonitis, ankle sprains, plantar fascia pain, IT band tightness etc. These maladies need to be mitigated. Coaches should assume that the potential for injury exists and be pro-active. Running is, of course, a specific form of strength training but it is often not enough. We need to build a stronger, more athletic runner. This entails a more comprehensive strength training program including general strength, preventive strength, and core strength.*

*The logical starting point for a comprehensive strength training program for distance runners is the first point of contact with the ground. Given that the foot is the first point of contact in running, it follows that a strong foot, or a "trained" foot, is better than a weak/untrained foot. For cross country runners that often train on uneven surfaces, it makes sense to prepare the foot to tolerate uneven terrain characteristic of the sport. Conversely, for the cross country runner that often trains on pavement or other hard surfaces, it is critical that soft tissue be conditioned to support the greater forces associated with training on the harder surface. A summer program that includes preventive strength routines such as walking in the sand (sand routine), barefoot grass running, and balance routines will accomplish the task of injury prevention. Moreover, simple routines that improve the overall strength of the foot can reduce the energy cost associated with force absorption at ground contact and concurrently improve force application. This can improve the efficiency of the runner and enhance "running economy". There must also be an emphasis on strengthening the other areas of the kinetic chain.*

*Forces from ground contact invariably travel up the kinetic chain and summate in the core. Therefore, core strength must be improved so as to absorb those forces and maintain postural integrity. The core encompasses the hip girdle, the abdominal muscles and the back. A strong core will allow the athlete to maintain posture and thus be in a better mechanical position to strike the ground. Core strength should be considered in a 3 dimensional manner. That is to say, abdominal exercises should not be the only prescription for core routines. The core needs to be strengthened through all three planes of motion: frontal, sagittal, and transverse. Hip routines, abdominal routines, and back routines are all necessary ingredients in the building of the endurance athlete's physical platform. Some good examples of routines designed to improve core strength and posture (pedestal), flexibility and range of motion (back exercises), balance (language routine) or work capacity (Dryer) are demonstrated in a DVD (**Building a Better Runner: Building from the Ground Up**) that I recently completed with Jay Johnson (University of Colorado) and can be found at [Runningdvds.com](http://Runningdvds.com).*

*There are many ways to implement strength routines and exercises into the training program. It is possible, and in some cases recommended, that endurance athletes engage in 1-3 hours of general strength work per week. Younger more developmental athletes should begin with very basic routines focusing on core strength and injury prevention. This will aid in their overall development and serve to increase work capacity. More advanced athletes (collegiate) should be completing anywhere from 1000-3000 core exercises per week, completing injury prevention routines several times per week, and engaging*

Endurance, Cont. page 10

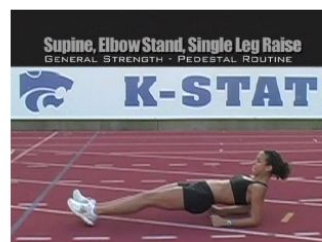
in appropriate functional strength routines 4-5 days per week. There are a number of ways to incorporate these protocols. Preventive routines can be implemented as part of the warm-up, included in lifting regimens, or put into a post-training circuit. Balance routines can also be placed in the warm-up, in a lifting regimen, and as a post-training routine. Circuit training is often very useful after hard aerobic/anaerobic training due to the restorative nature of this type of work. Core work is very productive if implemented after aerobic training or in association with morning strength protocols. Strength exercises can also be added to dynamic warm-ups (Tempo Warm-up). Coaches should individualize the introduction of strength training based on the specific needs of the athletes. Before adding strength training to a training protocol however, I would first make the following point: There is no secret to this type of work. It is work. It takes time. If you are willing to add a few simple, yet demanding routines to your training program, your athletes stand to benefit.

Below are some photos of the Pedestal Routine that you will find on the **Building a Better Runner: Building from the Ground Up** DVD that was mentioned previously in this article.

**Prone Elbow Stand, Single Leg Raise:**



**Supine Elbow Stand, Single Leg Raise:**



# JUMPS

## **Improving Approach Run Techniques**

Submitted by Todd Lane, Assistant Track & Field Coach, Louisiana State University

The success in any of the jumping events is defined by the success of the approach run. The approach run is important not only for accuracy to the take off point, but the velocity and mechanics that are developed and carried into the approach.

The mechanics of the approach run has all the same characteristics as exhibited by a sprinter in acceleration and maximal velocity mechanics and referred to as optimal velocity mechanics for the jump athlete. We will focus on the optimal velocity part of the run.

Three errors that are commonly observed mechanically in jumps approaches are: foot contacts that land too far out in front of the center of mass; foot contacts which are performed in plantar flexed positions (toes first contacts); and as the run nears the take off point a loss of vertical push into the ground and an over reliance on horizontal force to maintain velocity. All three errors create intertwined losses in velocity, losses in powerful elastic contractions, and losses in postural stability and alignment.

### **Measurements**

This exercise requires the coach to take a measurement from the greater trochanter (the top of the ball and socket of the hip) of the athlete to the ground with spikes on, with the measurement being in meters. This number is then multiplied times 2.35, which is a multiplier used to determine a desired stride length. An example would be:

$$.90 \text{ meters (from trochanter length measurement)} * 2.35 = 2.12 \text{ meters.}$$

We will take this resultant number, in this case 2.12 meters and use it later to determine the distance to set apart hurdles or cones that are used.

### **Exercise Set Up**

The exercise is set up on the track with ten six inch mini hurdles or banana hurdles or cones or whatever you decide to use. Anything over six inches may be too tall for the exercise to be performed proficiently. The first hurdle is placed 20 meters from the start line. The next hurdle is placed the distance apart that we came up with before in our example which was 2.12. Each suc-

cessive hurdle is placed 2.12 meters from the previous one.

### **Exercise Execution**

The athlete with spikes on, will accelerate quickly over twenty meters to the hurdles and continue sprinting by stepping over each hurdle and placing one foot between each hurdle. At the end of the hurdles, the athlete will continue on for another 20 meters, maintaining the same rhythm and mechanics just employed. This should be performed at a high intensity. Repeat six to eight times with ample recovery.

### **Goal**

The goal of the exercise is to get the athlete to contact the track with the ball of the foot in a dorsal flexed position, with the foot under the body and to push vertically down into the track, not pulling horizontally on the track. The hurdles should help put the athlete into these positions naturally.

### **Coach**

The coach should watch from the side and see the desired mechanics. Frequency and length should be optimal. If there is too much frequency, the hurdles will need to be spread out more. If the length is too long, the hurdles will need to be pulled in closer. Adjustments should be made through the sessions throughout the year as the run becomes more mechanically proficient.

### **Pole Vault**

Pole vaulters should start without a pole to feel and achieve desired mechanics. As progress is made a pole should be used with the exercise. Focus is not only on the mechanics on the run, but also mechanics of the vaulter and pole moving as one efficient system during sprinting and runway approaches.

This provides a nice start and teaching opportunity for coaches and athletes. Improved mechanics and cues can then be brought to the approach run and allow for further and higher jumps to occur.

# THROWS

## The Left Arm Drill

Submitted by Larry Judge, USATF Coaching Education Throws Curriculum Chair

The key to success in the hammer is staying in line with the "Hammer System" throughout the duration of the throw: the feet, knees, hips, torso, arms, and head all must move together in sync. In order to maintain the system, the right leg starts turning, and the thrower turns on the left toe and the right heel simultaneously. The body weight is over the right foot, and the left leg is working against the centrifugal force of the hammer. The lower back is straight, the shoulders are relaxed and arms are extended. The head should be up, eyes focused on the horizon and the shoulders should be level with the eyes facing just above the ball.

A great drill to work on staying hooked up with the ball and in line with the system is the left arm drill. This drill can be performed with one wind or the wrap around start. The right handed athlete will grip the hammer with the left or glove hand.

Start Position:

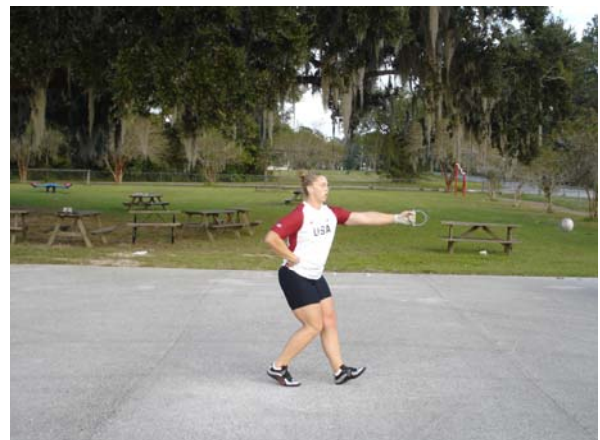


After the start that athlete will perform multiple turns with low to medium intensity. The focus should be on hitting proper positions and not on turning speed. The idea of the drill is to keep the left arm nice and relaxed and to let the ball turn the thrower as they gradually accelerate each turn. Athletes need to keep their eyes on the horizon and keep the majority of the body weight opposite the ball. A balanced upright posture is important.

Left Arm Drill 1:



Left Arm Drill 2:



Throws Cont. from p. 13

### *Left Arm Drill 3:*



*The key to efficient execution of the drill is patience at the low point. Sitting back and countering at low point will help the athlete be more patient and wait on the ball. Making sure the ball passes the athlete at zero degrees before starting into the next turn is an important concept to stress to the athlete. A very effective coaching cue to ensure this concept is telling the athlete to let the ball run left or to let the ball turn the athlete.*

*Remember that drills don't solve technical problems. Proper execution of drills helps build the skills necessary for technical execution in the ring. Create drills to teach the athlete to feel the correct sensation. Be creative, and devise your own drills or aids to help you teach the correct feel. Talk to another coach or to a high level thrower to find out what innovations they use in teaching or learning the throw.*



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<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>School Director</i>
2/1-3/08	Georgia State University Atlanta, Georgia	Ian Dube 404-376-8308
2/8-10/08	St. Paul's Episcopal School Mobile, Alabama	Paul Brueske 251-461-2180
2/8-10/08	Maryville High School Phoenix, Arizona	Wendy Truvillion 602-764-2013
2/9-10/08	US Olympic Training Center Colorado Springs, Colorado	Troy Engle 719-866-2022
2/29-3/2/08	St. Louis CC—Florissant Valley St. Louis, Missouri	James Gillespie 314-513-4284
3/14-16/08	Robert Morris University Moon Township, Pennsylvania	Michael Smith 412-262-8513
7/11-13/08	Truman State University Kirksville, Missouri	Tim Schwegler 660-785-4342

***For more information about the  
USATF Level 1 program and to register  
for a school, please visit our website at:***

***<http://www.usatf.org/groups/Coaches/education/level1.asp>***



## CLASSIFIED ADS

### **USA Track & Field, Summer Internship Program**

*USA Track & Field is the National Governing Body (NGB) for track & field, long distance running and race walking. Our NGB provides leadership, vision, development and opportunities for participation for individuals in the United States, from the grass roots level to the master's level. Our efforts to efficiently provide services to a national constituency are greatly dependent upon volunteers and a national office staff located in Indianapolis, Indiana. With regard to our national office staff, there are a number of internship opportunities available each year.*

*If you are preparing for a career in sports, we encourage you to consider an internship position with USA Track & Field. We believe you will find this to be a good educational experience and a great launch into a career in the sport industry.*

*To read a description, click on the department title below.*

*We look forward to hearing from you and wish you the best of luck!*

#### **Summer Internship Application Deadline - March 15**

##### [USATF Internships Application \(PDF\)](#)

- [Business Operations](#)
- [Elite Athlete Services](#)
- [Elite Athlete National Teams](#)
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*Note: All interns with USA Track & Field receive a stipend and/or school credit as well as parking assistance.*



## CLASSIFIED ADS

### **Head Men's & Women's Track & Field Coach, Williams College**

*Williams College invites applications for the position of Assistant Professor (three-year renewable appointment) of Physical Education and head Coach of Men's and Women's Track and Field. The appointment will begin with the academic year 2008-2009. Responsibilities include coaching indoor and outdoor track and field, recruiting qualified student-athletes, budget administration, supervision of assistant coaches, teaching Physical Education classes and duties as assigned by the Chair. Application deadline is March 15, 2008. Applicants should submit a letter of application, resume, and the names of three references to: Harry C. Sheehy III, Chair Department of Physical Education, Athletics and Recreation 22 Spring Street Williamstown, MA 01267*

*The department invites application from candidates with a Bachelor's degree; Master's degree and previous college coaching experience preferred.*

### **Assistant Women's Track & Field Coach—Indoor & Outdoor, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania**

*NCAA Division II; Regular, Full-time, initial appointment; 1-year renewable.*

*RESPONSIBILITIES: Assist head coach implementing a competitive NCAA Division II program and all phases of recruiting, organizing, budgeting, managing, planning and travel arrangements; assist with the in-season and out-of-season player development; duties are performed within the framework of the PSAC and NCAA rules and regulations; promote good public relations; other athletic related duties as assigned.*

*QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor's degree required, experience in playing at the collegiate level preferred; computer knowledge/abilities required; knowledge of PSAC preferred; demonstrated excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills required; applicants will be required to successfully complete an interview and/or demonstration.*

### **Instructor Coach, Sullivan County Community College**

*This tenure track position requires teaching in the Physical Education Studies and Recreation Leadership: Sports Management programs including, but not limited to the following classes: Fitness/Wellness, Selected Lifetime Sports, Intro to Physical Education, Sports, Recreation & Leisure, Sport & Event Practicum, Weight Training, Basketball, and Softball. In addition to teaching responsibilities the Instructor is also expected to participate in the coaching of one of the College's varsity teams. The successful candidate must have coaching experience in at least one of the following sports: for men – baseball; for women –volleyball or softball; for men and women – cross country or indoor and outdoor track. Send cover letter, resume and names, addresses and phone number of five-(5) professional references to: [ssmart@sullivan.suny.edu](mailto:ssmart@sullivan.suny.edu). For more information and job descriptions, please visit our website at [www.sullivan.suny.edu/services/humanres](http://www.sullivan.suny.edu/services/humanres). A master's degree in a related field and a minimum of two years of teaching experience are required, preferably at the college level. A Bachelor's degree and significant professional or coaching experience may be considered. Individuals whose primary experience may be in another sport are encouraged to apply.*



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**Some News from Gill Athletics, the presenting sponsor of USATF Coaching Education**

*Product of the Month*

*PowerMax Half Rack Lifting Station*  
*#WE900*



The PowerMax Half Rack is a versatile rack that also saves valuable gym space. Constructed from 2" X 2" X 11 gauge steel tube with a durable powder coat finish. The rack has eleven positions spaced 6" apart. Each position is clearly marked with a numbered decal. It comes with two bar rests and two safety spot bars, both of which have 1/4" thick polyurethane pads it keep from damaging your bars. The rack features two chin up bars with a thick and thin grip. Also includes twelve numbered weight horns and two bar holders. It is recommended that the Half rack be anchored to the floor. Ships unassembled. 92" H x 52" W x 60" L

## Used Equipment Available

The following equipment used at major national meets (USATF National Meets) is available at a reduced cost for you. Contact Mike Cunningham at 800-637-3090 x116 today!

Item #	Description	Quantity	Catalog	Your Price
<b>Electronics</b>				
UE39837	Double Unit Aluminum Tray (holds 2 units)	3	\$145.50	\$117.00
UE39838	Performance Indicator Cart (max capacity 2 trays)	2	\$509.00	\$406.00
UE39820	Countdown Timer/Wind Indicator	4	\$718.00	\$539.00
UE730U	Ultrasonic Wind Gauges	4	\$1,559.00	\$1209.00
U39820	LCD Countdown Timer/Wind Indicator	1	\$766.40	\$479.00
<b>Pole Vault/High Jump</b>				
U66702	Weather cover for Maximus	1	\$1,582.00	\$1235.00
U731109	PV Standard/Cage Door Pad	2	\$254.00	\$197.00
U724	PV Standard Settings Display	1	\$430.00	\$315.00
U950	Telescoping Crossbar Placer	12	\$156.00	\$117.00
UWE305	Chalk Container	2	\$144.00	\$108.00
U768	Aluminum Pit Cart	2	\$2,195.00	\$1594.00
<b>Starting blocks, hurdles, carts</b>				
U4060	Collegiate Aluminum Hurdle (41")	1	\$157.00	\$122.00
U416	Essentials Starting Blocks	7	\$54.00	\$40.00
U414	All Surface Starting Block	13	\$72.20	\$57.00
U730165				
05	False Start Bracket for Fusion blocks	18	\$12.00	\$9.00
U924	Scholastic Starting Block Cart	2	\$600.00	\$400.00
U733631	Gill Flight Hurdle Cart (47")	19	\$274.50	\$213.00
U935	Discus Cart	2	\$670.00	\$519.00
U936H	Hammer Cart	3	\$529.00	\$410.00
U934	Shot Put Cart	2	\$506.00	\$393.00
U925	Javelin Cart	3	\$714.00	\$554.00

## Used Equipment Available

The following equipment used at major national meets (USATF National Meets) is available at a reduced cost for you. Contact Mike Cunningham at 800-637-3090 x116 today!

### **Throwing Equipment**

	600g Gill Javelin			
U35441	40m	3	\$193.50	<b>\$145.00</b>
U780050	800g Pacer Astro 50m	1	\$275.50	<b>\$207.00</b>
	800g Gill Javelin			
U35250	50m	1	\$215.25	<b>\$161.00</b>
U780031	800g Pacer Astro 70m	2	\$303.75	<b>\$229.00</b>
U738940	4K Pacer Stainless Steel Hammer, 95mm	2	\$183.50	<b>\$138.00</b>
U735940	4K Pacer Stainless Steel Shot, 95mm	1	\$119.75	<b>\$91.00</b>
U735941	4K Pacer Stainless Steel Shot, 109mm	3	\$140.50	<b>\$107.00</b>
U3216	16 lb Indoor Hardshell Shot	1	\$71.15	<b>\$53.00</b>
U3516	16 lb Brass Shot, 110mm	3	\$123.00	<b>\$93.00</b>
U3958	35 lb Tungsten Orbiter Throwing Weight	1	\$1,408.00	<b>\$986.00</b>
U395810	Replacement 35 lb Tungsten Ball	4	1200	<b>\$893.00</b>
U3959	20 lb Tungsten Orbiter Throwing Weight	3	\$847.00	<b>\$593.00</b>
U395910	Replacement 20 lb Tungsten Ball	3	\$803.68	<b>\$503.00</b>

### **MISC-Aluminum, Weight equipment, etc**

U455	Guided Pit Leveler	2	\$271.50	<b>\$228.00</b>
U8540	Track Lane Gate	6	\$913.00	<b>\$730.00</b>
85640	Aluminum 4 Row Bleacher-15'	1	\$1,999.00	<b>\$1525.00</b>
8663	Pit Gargage, 663 and Smaller	1	\$15,000.00	<b>\$10100.00</b>
U730620	LJ Distance Marker (16'-30')	2	\$1,291.00	<b>\$1098.00</b>
U730640	TJ Distance Marker (37'-56')	2	\$1,708.00	<b>\$1452.00</b>
U730147				
L	Long LJ/TJ Mesh Sand Pit Cover-11'6"x32'	1	\$1,002.00	<b>\$777.00</b>
U95511	10' x 10' White Wall Panel	1	\$82.20	<b>\$64.00</b>
UWE525	Standard Plate Holder	4	\$77.00	<b>\$62.00</b>
UWT121				
3	Pro Power Bar 700 lb Black Oxide	1	\$151.50	<b>\$118.00</b>

These items are barely used! You may see a small scratch on a pole vault cross bar, or one or two spike marks on a pit, but there is absolutely no major wear and tear. I personally inspect ALL ITEMS before they are shipped out. This is an excellent way to get **big ticket items at small ticket prices!**

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#### Pulse Meter-Cyclometer #TA1253

**SBM 4000 Pulse Cyclocomputer with clock & odometer. Real time pulse & max pulse and 12/24 hr clock. For use on all bicycles and stationary exercycles.**

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