What’s wrong in this photo? Spot the technique error(s).
Of course, spotting errors is the easy part..

Devising and applying correction strategies is the real challenge.
**Associated Handouts**

- Presentation Details
- Hurdle Tags … Introducing Basic Skills *(sample)*
- Hurdle Drills / A Suggested Sequence *(8 sessions)*
- A Sample Session Series
- Tests: for athletes and coaches *(an example)*
- Speed Dynamics Video series … sheets to assist analysis of High Hurdles 1 and 2

**Other Presentations**

Sprint Hurdles – An Analysis
Female Sprint Hurdles
Why Drills?
Learning New Skills is Fun … Athletics
Coaching & Teaching Strategies
Pallikoodam … a School in India
Swimming – Introducing Skills
and others
This Presentation is comprised of a number of parts:

1. The Presentation.

2. The Handouts and supportive resources.

3. Direct demonstrations .. thanks are extended to the young athletes who offer their expertise and example.
   Contributors include: Courtney Schultz, Jacob Murrells, Libby Pellegrino, Brianna Chadwick, David Park, Sarah Park, Teaghan Bubb, Jessie Cantwell, Danielle Dillon, Tom McQuillan, and various other young athletes ..

4. YOU having-a-go at appropriate tasks.

   • Hear something and you’ll forget it.
   • See something and you’ll remember it.
   • Do something and you’ll understand it.
It is essential that correct sprint mechanics are established and practised before the introduction of hurdling refinements.

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**Improving my A-Skip**

“Toe Up — Heel Up — Knee Up”
“Step over the support leg knee”
Arms: approx 90°; hand back to hip
“Tall” .. be the tallest you can be
Lots of perfect practice: 10L / 10R

**Improvement is my aim**

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Hurdlers must bring Speed to the event

Fundamental sprint / running form drills are highly relevant see **Why Drills**
So, avoid part of the problem by learning correct skills right from the start.

Hurdling .. a top skill WOW !!

Hurdling Drills
- Lead Leg Wall Attack
- Trail Leg Hip Circles
- Marching Step-overs

Drill both sides of the body to equality.

Start each drill practice with your non-preferred side.

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Be **persistent**, and **NEVER** compromise on quality of execution

Compromise can cause catastrophes

**Hurdling Drills**
- **Starts**: various
- **Starts** ► H1
- **Drills Review**, incl. Slo Mo Certificate

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- Drill both sides of the body to equality.
- Start each drill practice with your non-preferred side.

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Quality is more important than Quantity.

That being said, remember ...

**Only** Plenty of Perfect Practice Produces Professional Performance
YOUNG athletes .. TRAIN SMARTER

(not harder)

(Have fun) .. Get as far as you can, on as little as you can
For young (all) athletes .. TECHNIQUE is everything

There’s plenty of time to train harder; beware of using all your training options too early
When “hard” training has yielded its return …

Athletes (young athletes) need skills to refine to continue their progression.

As coaches, we have the responsibility of empowering youngsters with skills they can refine, develop and apply …
Keep your program **simple** and **consistent** .. simplicity facilitates success

**NEVER** prioritise “**skill extension**” ahead of “**skill acquisition**”

**Fundamental** is proficiency with basic speed / running form drills,

  e.g.

  A-Skip
  Alternating Butt Kicks
  Fast Claw .... and others
What might be an appropriate sequence to introduce skills in hurdling?

The sequence offered is not “the” sequence .. it is “a sequence”

But, the moment we forget the experiences of ourselves and others

we are doomed to repeat mistakes

Hurdle Drills .. a suggested sequence

(Handout)

Sequence suggested
by
US Sprint/Hurdles Coach Loren Seagrave

Look for positives

Look for ideas

Learn from the experiences of others
(or, risk repeating their mistakes)
From my experience:

while the **vast** majority of young athletes will not reach “elite” performance levels .. **ALL** can drill efficiently, and, enjoy the self-esteem that skill acquisition offers.

Sure, some will take longer than others, but:

*Patience*

*Practice .. Perfect Practice*

*Produces*

*Professional Performance*
Let me stress again, NEVER prioritise “skill extension” ahead of “skill acquisition” .. too often, too many coaches and athletes rush on into increasingly complex skills before achieving mastery in circumstances of maximum distraction. (viz. competitive circumstances)

It may take 50 repetitions to form a basic habit

BUT

It will take thousands of carefully monitored repetitions to change that habit

What’s the message? .. What are the implications?
Always remember … PRACTICE makes PERMANENT
Encourage (and reward) the polite enquiring mind .. but, have an answer
So, where do we start?

**Sell the product** .. motivate, stimulate enquiring minds …

Young athletes want to learn new skills .. they will accept repetition if it is interspersed with new skills, fun, and recognition.

**Recognition? That’s where the cards / tags come in.**

- **Recognition Cards / Skill Tags**, can be collected and/or attached to bags. Be prepared .. once you start to give out cards/tags, you are committed to the procedure (and there is the *rewards-for-all* issue ..)

  - **Prepare** .. Think through your criteria for awards ..
  - **Be consistent** .. don’t compromise on quality !!

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**Learning Hurdle Skills**

[www.nwaswimaths.com](http://www.nwaswimaths.com)

**Hurdles .. Wow!!**

I want to do that .. I can do that

[www.nwaswimaths.com](http://www.nwaswimaths.com)

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_NWA_
Everything you do and everything you say will be dinner conversation in each athlete’s home over the next few days.

You will **not** be represented when the report is delivered.
• **Hear something** and you’ll forget it.
• **See something** and you’ll remember it.
• **Do something** and you’ll understand it.

So, let’s have a go

Keep in Mind:

1. Young athletes / parents do not expect performance from you.

2. Young athletes / parents expect, and are entitled to expect:

   2.1 Knowledge / experience.

   2.2 An ability to lead and communicate .. transfer of knowledge / experience.

   2.3 Observable and acknowledged improvement.
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**Improving my A-Skip**

“Toe Up — Heel Up — Knee Up”  
“Step over the support leg knee”  
Arms: approx 90°; hand back to hip  
“Tall” .. be the tallest you can be  
Lots of perfect practice .. 10L / 10R

Improvement is my aim

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**Butt Kicks**

- Right  
- Left  
- Alternating

Reminders  
Tall—Toes dorsiflexed—active arms—snap heel to buttocks

Fast “snaps”; slow forward progress

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**Fast Leg**

- Right  
- Left  
- Alternating

Reminders  
Tall—Toes dorsiflexed—active arms—knee lift until thigh parallel with ground  
Jog►FL►Jog►FL►Jog►FL...

Active foot should land just beyond support foot

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**Fast Claw**

Maximum of 6-8 calls (repeats)

“Preparation” = Tall — active knee to thigh parallel with ground - toes dorsiflexed - “claw” to ground beneath hips - lift heel of active leg to buttock - fast recovery back to “preparation” position - wait for command. Straight support leg - upright - heel lift.  
Commands by 3rd party.

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**B-Skip**  
.. a more complex drill

1. **Up** .. heel to buttocks (toe dorsiflexed);  
2. **Out** .. toe up (focus on heel extension);  
3. **Pull** .. ball of foot to the ground beneath hip;  
4. “**Tall**” .. correct posture; very slight forward lean.

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See Handouts for additional examples

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**Sprint (Running) Drills:** A possible skills sequence .. see handouts
Program Details:
- Athletes complete a drills / activity program (20-30 mins. duration) each designated week.
- Each program is reinforced by a card presented to all participants.
- Athletes are encouraged to collect cards that identify major skills / drills / technique cues.
- Special Bonus Cards / Certificates are presented from time-to-time at coach discretion.
- Cards recognise and reward skills (rather than performance).
- Teaching / coaching follows a consistent format.
- Homework sheets are available, as are test sheets; each completed (attempted) test rewarded by a special card. A review of drills is conducted in each session.
- Athletes only hurdle after exposure to all drills.
- Program duration: coach / centre discretion, but at least 6 weeks.

What is needed?
- 12-16 hurdles
- open space
- 2 coaches
- 3-4 adult assistants
- 1-2 demonstrators

Sample cards, certificates, and tests available

An eyeful is better than a mouthful

Sample Cards/Tags
A range of support video / DVD programs is available

An **eyeful** is better than a mouthful
A separate handout offers a sequence of drills that you can trial

Be patient .. Be persistent

NEVER prioritise “skill extension” ahead of “skill acquisition” athletes / individuals learn at different rates let this be reflected in your coaching / teaching

There is much more .. don’t complain that help not sought is unavailable
Russell Parsons, North West Athletics, 2/72 Hopwood Street, ECHUCA, 3564; 03-54-801-705 nwa@iinet.net.au www.nwaswimaths.com
From time-to-time, special awards and certificates can be presented to identify progress in critical skills. **Example:** *Slo Mo Drill*

**North West Athletics: Speed is the Key**
www.nwaswimaths.com

**Hurdle Drills: SLO MO**
Intermediate / Senior (Trail Leg)

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*Left Right*

5 5 = Excellent; “lookin’ good” .. “real good”.

4 4 = Very Good; Minor improvements in technique possible.

3 3 = Good; Some fundamental technique elements need attention.

2 2 = Fair; Improvement evident; more practice recommended.

1 1 = Early days; Practice regularly, the improvement will come.

*Russell Parsons / Noel Dillon*  Date: ______________________
Worth a look:  So you want to be a hurdler?
It is not possible for all youngsters to compete on the same level .. some win .. most lose

but

all can develop their self-esteem !

They can all drill together .. only those who do not try fail to learn the drills …

Consistent Cues and regular, appropriate rewards places the emphasis on technique, and, enhances appreciation of the demands of hurdling.
Is our aim?

Skill Acquisition and Self-esteem Enhancement, or,

Performance Success?

Competition Programs provide plenty of rewards for the winners.

Skill-based Programs provide all youngsters with skills they can develop …skills that can be extended when early maturation advantages are (inevitably) exhausted, and, skill acquisition skills that can carry over into other aspects of life.

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Butt Kicks
- Right
- Left
- Alternating

Reminders
Tall—Toes dorsiflexed—active arms—snap heel to buttocks

Fast “snaps”; slow forward progress

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Seated Arm Drill
- Sit tall; knees together;
- Preserve a 90° arm angle;
- Arm swing should not cross centre line of the body;
- Gradually increase tempo to maximum for 5-6 seconds.

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Commitment is a Skill

Commitment is a Life Skill

Skills can be acquired

Further sample skills programs are available in the handouts
Do **NOT** make competition outcome the only outcome that warrants recognition and reward.

**If** a sport wants to expand, it must prioritise and recognise / reward **SKILLS** (skill acquisition) **above**

or, at the very least, on the same level as

**competitive outcome**
Analysis of elite hurdlers is available .. but, let's start at the start …

teaching fundamental skills to young athletes starting out is a special skill

Renaldo Nehemiah (USA): 110H; Ginka Zagorcheva (Bul): 100H
Analysis by Russell Woodbridge, ATFCA3
Analysis available on separate sheets