



Training The High School Triple Jumper

By, Ryan Ewing

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Introductions

My name is Ryan Ewing and I have been coaching the long and triple jumps at Sun Prairie High School since 2008.

At the time of my hiring I knew nothing about the long and triple jumps and was simply hired because I was the only applicant. Being able to speak with you today as part of the “beginners series” is something I am extremely excited about! I hope to be as inspirational/helpful as past WISTCA presenters have been to me.



Introductions

Since the beginning of my coaching career I have had the pleasure of working with some extremely talented athletes, and have experienced a great deal of accomplishments along the way.

- New girls school record in the long jump
- I've coached 7 girls in the top ten for the long jump
- I've coached 4 girls in the top ten for the triple jump
- I've coached 2 boys in both the long and triple top tens.
- I've taken 4 different athletes to state.
- I created "long and triple" for coaches and athletes.



Long and Triple

Not knowing anything when hired I was completely bewildered at the tasks I'd just been hired to do. Without the help from both coaches and my own athletes things might have turned out very differently.

One of the most influential coaches I've ever met was at my very first WISTCA - Coach Mu. He saw that I was coaching at his alma mater (SP) and we struck up a conversation. Ten years later we are still collaborating and discussing the jumps. He has been a huge inspiration to me!



Long and Triple

Long and triple was built so that coaches like myself have somewhere/someone to turn to when they need answers. Everything on the site is free, and was put there so athletes and coaches alike can learn more about the jumps.

The website is still in its “infancy”. There is still much that needs to be added but I plan on doing that this coming season. We can come back to it later if there’s more time at the ending.

CLICK



The Triple Jump

When I first started coaching the triple jump I was very unsure of the mechanics and was extremely worried about athletes being injured due to the great impacts they were experiencing. Unfortunately for my athletes that fear drove my coaching for nearly 5 years....

Unlike the long jump (which I feel just about any athlete can do) the triple jump can be a game changer in your program. It's a jump that many misunderstand or are fearful of. My hope is that I can help you transform your program just like I have!



The Triple Jump

A few years back I decided to immerse myself in everything triple jump for an entire offseason and it completely changed the way I look at and coach the event!

Since that time I have had the most success in my career as a triple jump coach! My athletes are performing at the highest level I've seen in my ten years, and making gains I previously imagined were unattainable. All it took was me taking ownership of my shortcomings and giving my athletes what they deserve - a competent and confident triple jump coach.



The Triple Jump

All it took was finding the right drills that really “spoke to me.” The triple jump is an intricate jump that has a lot going on, but once you find those specific drills that really make sense to you it’s much easier to understand/coach.

Today we’ll go through those drills. I’ll show you the materials I use when coaching, and even talk about my schedule a little bit so you know how often to jump your athletes.



The Hop Phase

The hop phase is the first phase in the triple jump. It is the phase that sets up the rest of the jump and can determine your jumper's distance very early on. Without performing this phase properly many athletes will be unable to finish the jump correctly and will thus lose a great deal of distance.

When I first started I had no clue that this phase greatly differs from the takeoff in long jump. Many athletes were treating the two takeoffs the same; and in triple jump they weren't jumping up to their overall potential.



The Hop Phase

Here are two pictures that I think really illustrate the difference between these two jumps:



The Hop Phase



If you look closely at this image the jumper is pushing **outwards** and not driving his knee at takeoff. This is the proper technique when taking off in the hop phase.



The Hop Phase

In these photos you'll see a jumper that is pushing **out**, but they are also pushing **upwards** as well. This is the proper takeoff for a long jumper. You have to teach your athlete the difference first and foremost or their triple jumps will fail in the first phase.



The Hop Phase

The slight difference between using proper knee drive, and driving it too much can be HUGE in the overall result of the jump.

In connection with the knee and arm drives the athlete must also fight the urge to “kick back” during this phase. This is a biomechanical (natural) reaction in this phase, but must be avoided at all costs.

Demonstrate the “kickback” to show how that can greatly affect the athlete’s chest and momentum.

The Hop Phase

We as coaches need to help our athletes understand how to keep their momentum and speed throughout the entire jump for best results. The small drop in an athlete's upper body could greatly affect that speed!

With so many variables I aimed to find a drill that seamlessly taught all at once and in a simple way that all athletes could understand. That's when I found the "hurdle drill."



The Hop Phase

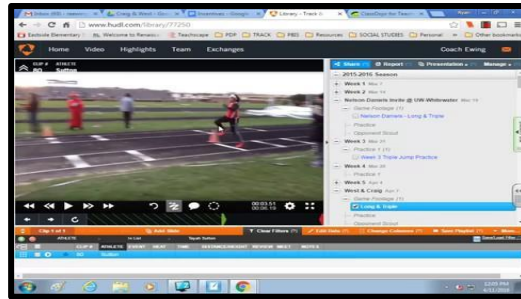
Here's the drill we use:



Demonstrate the progression kids normally need to go through to understand and perform this drill properly.

The Hop Phase

Below you'll find two videos of the same jumper. The first one is her first year tripling. This was also the year just before I started implementing the new drills that helped me to better understand the jump. The second video is her next year after trying the new hop phase drill.



← Start at 6:04. Discuss her proper leg motion to prep for the step phase.

The Step Phase

The step phase is by far the hardest of the three phases. This is where jumps “come to die” if you will. If an athlete can’t pull off a significant step phase they won’t be able to reach the “next level.”



The Step Phase

For as long as I can remember this phase has been basically looked at as a bound. This is true, but when people say “bound” I think they miss some extremely important details.

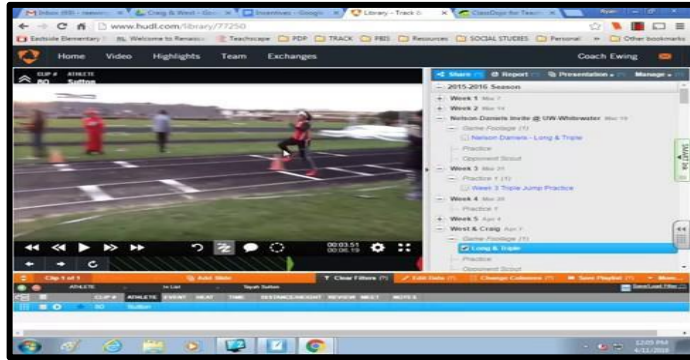
This phase needs to be **HIGHER than the hop phase**, and thus I refer to it more as a long jump takeoff than anything else. By doing this athletes make the connection that they **must** drive their arm and knee to get the proper height or their step phase will be underwhelming.

Remember this photo?



The Step Phase

I'm going to use the female jumper from earlier (hop phase), and another male jumper to demonstrate what this phase should look like:



The Step Phase

These two athletes are some of the best step phase jumpers I've ever coached, and are much better jumpers to comparable athletes because of this specific phase.

I've seen athletes have questionable mechanics in the hop and jump phases go to state because of their step phase. This is the phase that separates the average from the accomplished. The only problem is that most jumpers don't possess the needed leg strength to perform this phase properly...



The Step Phase

I've recently began discussions with my friend Coach "Mu" about this phase and have come to this conclusion - we need to be working on more **unilateral** strength than we currently are!

Unilateral is a fancy word for saying single-focused, and is something that many athletes don't often do. Most workouts use **bilateral** lifts where the person uses two legs/arms/etc. at the same time. A squat for instance will make your lower body more powerful, but how will it transfer to making a better "pop" in the step phase?



The Step Phase

Because of this I highly recommend that you visit Coach Mu's instagram account and watch the various videos he's uploaded dealing with one-legged box jumps.

Let's take a look at a couple!

<https://www.instagram.com/topflightone/>



The Step Phase

These athletes have experienced some wonderful growth under Coach Mu, and much of it is due to their dedication to the unilateral strength component. He does small amounts of technical training, and focuses on physically preparing the athletes for the “pounding” they will take during the season.

Their accomplishments have been nothing less than top-notch thus far, and for this reason I sincerely suggest taking a look at your strength and conditioning programs to include more **unilateral** strength training.



The Step Phase

Along with having the proper strength, athletes must know how to correctly perform the step phase. Below you will find the drill that I use most often:



The Step Phase

By making this drill an extension of what the athlete has already learned from the hop phase drill I have found so much more consistency and understanding amongst my athletes!

To help the athletes with the height needed in this phase all you need to do is simply raise the banana hurdles up to appropriate levels.

The hurdles I use I created a few years ago and are customizable for numerous different drills.



The Step Phase

The hurdle “plans” are on my website if you are interested. They are located on the resources page under “practice materials”.

For easy access I have included it [here](#).



The Jump Phase

This phase closely resembles the step phase in that the athlete needs to jump up and out with a proper knee and arm drive. There are subtle differences between them which I will show you in the drills video below.



The Jump Phase

Again, you'll notice that I used the banana hurdles for this phase, and had athletes do all other phases that preceded the jump phase for connectivity.

By doing it this way athletes get used to pulling off the entire jump while also successfully completing various other considerations that will be discussed once I'm done covering the jump/landing.



The Landing

The landing that I teach is the same in both the long and triple jumps. Athletes need to be patient in the air before performing a downward moving “arm sweep” that biomechanically moves their legs in an upward motion and helps them to avoid the sand for a longer period of time. The first thing that touches the sand is an athlete’s heel. This is followed by a “heel-to-butt transition” and an “arm lock”.



The Landing

There are many ways to perform a landing (like the “elbow dig”), but I have chosen the “heel to butt landing” because I feel it best connects to the other parts of flight/jump.

Landing drills should be something you work on quite a bit at practice. You can do this by doing short approach jumps which can also help a great deal with the technique of your athletes. In a recent conversation with a university-level jumps coach, the landing was brought up as his biggest concern with incoming Freshmen.



The Landing

Outside of the short approach jumps I mentioned I truly believe the “chair drill” is the best drill you can do!

The video I currently have up on my site is not the best representation because it was recorded right after introducing my athletes to this drill. They weren't very “crisp.” For that reason I have added my favorite chair drill YouTube video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZyrKyn-JqM>



Other Considerations

The Start

Did you know that an improper/inconsistent start is what leads to roughly 80+% of scratches?

For years I never made the connection between the start and board consistency. When I did make that connection I started using a drill I call the “5 cone checkpoint”, as well as, the “crouch start” and it changed the overall number of boards we “hit” dramatically.



Other Considerations

The Start Continued

Both the crouch start and “5 cone checkpoint” are things I don’t currently have videos of, but will be adding them this year (so check longandtriple.com regularly).

Click [here](#) to be taken to the start page for a visual (picture) of what a crouch start looks like.

Explain the 5 cone checkpoint in great detail.

Other Considerations

The Approach

The triple jump approach is a little different from the long jump approach in its intensity and overall control.

In the long jump you want your athlete to be running at their MAX velocity so that they utilize the most speed/force at the board when they jump.



Other Considerations

The Approach Continued

The triple jump has so many moving parts that it's hard (especially for inexperienced jumpers) to be good technical jumpers when approaching at their MAX velocity. For this reason, triple jumpers generally use a more controlled approach that might be at 80-90% of their MAX so they can perform the three phases properly.



Other Considerations

The Approach Continued

Special jumpers can control most/all of their jumps at top speed but I have found this to be extremely rare in high school aged jumpers.

I have an athlete right now that always approaches at MAX velocity and has a PR of 43'1. That athlete though, is extremely inconsistent and has little/no middle (step) phase. If I'm able to help him understand the appropriate percentage I feel he could jump 46+!



Other Considerations

Speed & Connectedness

Whatever the speed your athlete uses in his/her approach it is VITAL that they keep that speed throughout the entirety of the jump. Too often athletes “hit the brakes” in the middle of their triple jumps. When this happens they are rapidly losing distance from their total jump due to their forward momentum being changed.



Other Considerations

Speed & Connectedness Continued

Many times the “braking” happens because an athlete's toes are in a downward position. This is what the proper foot position looks like:



Other Considerations

Speed & Connectedness Continued

I suggest working on the phases as much as possible with your athletes to avoid this from happening. By working on the connections at low speeds you will help your athlete to better understand how to make those connections.



Other Considerations

Speed & Connectedness Continued

As well, you can have your athletes focus on one phase at a time and instruct them to sprint upon landing so they get used to the action of a quick/powerful foot contact.

Click [HERE](#) for YouTube video demonstration. The specific drill I'm referencing starts at :30.



Other Considerations

Speed & Connectedness Continued

Last but not least, have your athletes perform the following plyometric movements:

- Skipping for height
- Skipping for distance
- Bounding

There are more movements that could be beneficial but I find these to be the most important for “connectedness” in the triple jump.



Other Considerations

Practice Scheduling

Triple jump is such a hard event that I wanted to quickly go over what I do for practice.

First off, I try to do it before our practice time has officially started so that multi-event jumpers get to work on both long AND triple in one day. We generally have a flex time between the end of school and beginning of our team practice so I do it then. The kids LOVE it!



Other Considerations

Practice Scheduling

I do it in high quantities during the earlier part of the year (roughly 3 times a week) so that they athletes get used to the pounding.

During the early season I do a great deal of plyometric work and technical drills like the ones you saw with the banana hurdles.



Other Considerations

Practice Scheduling

Once we get to a point where athletes are competing regularly I greatly reduce the amount of time athletes practice the triple. It is simply too hard on their bodies to do in large quantities outside of a general track meet.

I reduce it to once a week during this time, and I try to make things as low-impact as possible (short approach work, drills on roll out mats, etc.).



Other Considerations

Single vs. Double Arm Movements

In the triple jump you will notice two different styles of jumpers when comparing arm movements. Some like to simply use one single arm movements while others like to use both arms to aide in explosiveness.

In my experiences the single arm approach is the best for a high school athlete. I have had athletes try the double arm in the past and it really messes up timing and rhythm.



Other Considerations

Single vs. Double Arm Movements

I'm not saying that you shouldn't teach the double arm technique - I simply believe it's more developmentally correct for high school aged athletes.

Unless you have a really special athlete that doesn't have much else to work on in his/her jump I'd work on the single arm technique due to its biomechanical connections to leg movements.



Other Considerations

Single vs. Double Arm Movements

For low impact days you can even do a “walking triple jump arms” drill.

I’ll demonstrate now.

This drill is one of my athletes favorites when their legs aren’t at 100%, and one I feel is crucial in their overall consistency!



Conclusion..Kind Of...

This concludes the portion of this presentation where I discuss solely triple jump.

From here I'd like to head back to longandtriple.com to show you some great resources that I hope will help you along the way this season (and beyond).



Forum Page

Since this is a “beginner’s series” presentation, I wanted everyone here to leave feeling like their questions were answered!

For this reason I have created a “forum” page on my website for coaches and athletes alike to use when they have questions or simply want to start a conversation regarding the long and triple jumps.

CLICK



Forum Page

I'd like you to use the index cards located throughout the room to write any/all questions you might have regarding triple jump (and/or long jump). I will take those questions and answer them to the best of my abilities as quickly as I can on the forums page for you to see.

The forum page is a resource I think could evolve into something really special for all coaches/athletes to learn from!



Other Resources

Beyond the forum page the resources are still plentiful on longandtriple.com!

I'd like to take some time to go through the site with you to show you all I've added for you to use.

CLICK



Zenith Camp

Each year the Sun Prairie pole vault coach and I run a camp called "Zenith." At this camp we have a large number of athletes working on pole vault, long jump, and triple jump. Along with training in those focuses athletes will also get instruction in sprinting, visualization, video breakdown, etc.

Zenith begins this coming Sunday but I will not be in attendance until next weekend. Here is the link if you are interested:

<https://sites.google.com/view/zenithjumps>

CLICK



Contact Me!

We've gone through quite a bit today. You might not have a question now but if any do arise please use the contact information on the next slide and/or the contact form on longandtriple.com to connect with me.

I want each and every one of you to be the best jump coach you can be and will give you as much time/information as I can to help you achieve that!



Contact Me!

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