



TRACK TALK

Athletics South Newsletter

July 23, 2009

Issue 12



ATHLETICS SOUTH INC.



2009 SOUTHERN ALL STUDENTS
TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS
SUNDAY 4TH OCTOBER, 2009

AT THE DOMAIN ATHLETICS CENTRE

Program to commence at 8.30 a.m.

More details to be provided at a later date.



HAPPY AS PIGS IN MUD

by Lynne Lyden, Photographs by Peter Turnock

After the continual rain of the previous couple of weeks Athletics South athletes were pleased to awaken on Saturday 25 June 2009 to clear skies and even a peek of sunshine. This was to be the start of a great run at Smith's apple orchard, Grove. The Grove run is a favourite run on the Athletics South winter calendar and it was TMA's turn to mark the course.



As TMA members travelled the Southern Outlet up over the hill from Longley to Huonville they encountered thick fog and the view from the top of the hill out over the valley and orchard area was totally fog bound.

On arrival at the orchard the hardy crew of course markers Bob Robertson, Bob Weldon, Danny Byas, Mick & Jenny Stevenson, Peter, Lynne & Patrick Lyden pulled on their gum boots and rain jackets and headed out onto a course anticipated to be mud, glorious mud. They were not disappointed, the track was up to ankle deep with water in some places and there was a thick layer of goeey, slimey mud each side and down the middle. The apple trees has recently been pruned so were not the eye hazard that they had been in the past, however there were numerous sticks to be removed from the track along with a few blackberry bush remains. At one of the corners tractor ruts were so deep and slippery that some of the mosquito-sized runners could have vanished off the face of the earth.



Back at the start the young magpie tribe had applied their war paint (mud) to their faces and most were already well covered in mud. Tim Coad (ES) had already had a fall, grazing his knee and covering him from head to foot in mud.

Footwear was the topic of discussion in the waiting line for the toilet. Spikes, football, touch, soccer, hockey, orienteering and bush walking footwear were the order of the day.



Having the advantage of marking the course the TMA members told every one that it was best to run straight through the puddles as they had a firm base, but no most people pussy footed, slipped and slid through the worst of the mud with many coming off second best. Jason Allie (ES) had a fall that left him scratched and torn to the extent that the side of his singlet was only held together by the hems. Bec Sansom and Richard Welsh (NS) both took multiple tumbles. **This may be the time to remind athletes to keep their Tetanus shots up to date!**

After the race the most heard exclamation was “Wow, that was great!” There were many smiling faces, most of the athletes really enjoyed the muddy challenge and were happy as pigs in mud.

Peter Keenan had the urn fired up for runners and supporters to enjoy at hot drink while they socialized and listened to the results. As is the custom Mr. Smith had a couple of bins of delicious apples for sale and these were nearly empty by the time everyone left.

A great morning! Many thanks to the Smith family for allowing us access to this terrific course once again.





AT MEDIA RELEASE—11 JULY 2009

TASMANIAN'S SHINE IN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Tasmanian athlete of the year, Tristan Thomas, has become the World University Champion in the 400m hurdles.

Thomas, who has been the form Australian athlete on the track in 2009, clocked 48,75 sec, the second fastest time of his career in his pet event.

It was Australia's third gold medal at the 2009 World University Championships, in Belgrade.

With just five weeks to go until the world's best assemble in Berlin, Thomas is demonstrating ominous form ahead of his first world championships campaign.

Whilst at the World Youth Championships in Sudtirof, Huw Peacock has placed 5th in the final of the hammer. After qualifying 10th for the final, the TIS athlete launched a mammoth 70.66m, setting a new personal best and Tasmanian under 18 record in the process.

CONGRATULATIONS TO HUW AND TRISTAN FOR THEIR
RECENT PERFORMANCES AND
GOOD LUCK TO TRISTAN AND DONNA MCFARLANE IN
THEIR EVENTS AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN
BERLIN IN AUGUST.



COACHING COURSES

The ATFCA and AT are conducting a Level 1 Coaching Course for aspiring coaches and a Level 2 Course for those wishing to upgrade their qualification from Level 1 to Level 2.

The **Level 2 Course** commences with theory sessions on:

- ⇒ Monday 27th July from 7—10 p.m. in the DAC Function Room and,
- ⇒ Wednesday 29th July, same time and place.
- ⇒ The event specialisation component of the course will be conducted on Sunday 2nd of August at the DAC.

Event specialisations this time around are Sprints, Hurdles & Relays, Jumps & Middle Distance/Walks. Presenters for the course include Darrel Harington, Damian Lawler, Mike Pace, Rosemary Coleman, Darren Alomes, Rex Morris and Steve Lance. Daniel Coleman will be lending his expertise and experience to the Walks sessions.

The Level 1 Course will also be conducted over two evening sessions and a full Sunday. The dates are:

Monday 17th August 7—10 p.m. In the DAC Function Room

Tuesday 18th August same time and place.

Sunday 23rd August at the DAC.

Enrolment information can be obtained from Richard Welsh at the AT Office, by phone (6234 9551) or email richard@tasathletics.org.au.

Information about the course can be obtained from Darrel Harington, 62487145 or dgharington@ozemail.com.au.



NATIONAL RELAY PROGRAMME – 4 X 100M

This paper is an abridged version of an article presented by former National Event Coach Cliff Mallett. The original paper of 10 pages is available. Please contact the editor if you would like a copy.

Introduction

The aim in the sprint relays is to get the baton to the finish line as soon as possible within the rules of the IAAF. This necessitates fast sprints speed and fast, effective and efficient baton exchanges. Hence, the focus of training is twofold:

- a. To improve individual running speed of the five or six team members, and
- b. Maximise the speed of the baton through the exchange zone.

The fastest team is not always the team who has the fastest sprinters. It is how the members of the team unite in the quest to achieve a common goal and maximise the abilities of all team members who are often victorious. Victory is not always associated with winning, it is about maximising performance of the team. Maximising the potential of a team requires overcoming a number of obstacles, this is the challenge for all teams.

The window for improvement for many teams is the speed of the baton exchange. Arguably the baton exchange is one of the most difficult movement skills to execute in any sport. How many skills involve passing and non-visually catching a stick at 30-40 kph? Despite the complexity of the baton exchange well-drilled cohesive teams can develop excellent baton skills and consequently fast relay times. Lots of high quality practice can only enhance the performance of sprint relays teams.

The purpose of the paper is to describe and outline the rationale for the push pass technique of baton exchange. In addition, some useful drills are included that will facilitate the development of efficient baton exchange skills.

Since the 1990's the Australian national relay teams have adopted the "push pass" method of baton exchange. I will outline what is the push pass method, why it has been adopted as the national method of baton exchange, and how it can be practised.

General concepts associated with 4 x 100m relay racing

Lane Discipline

- This refers to the important of runners keeping to the correct side of the lane preventing collisions, enhancing the quality and speed of the baton during the exchange zone.
 - The first and third runners should run on the inside of the lane, even after exchanging the baton. Receive and race with the baton in the right hand.
 - The second and fourth leg runners on the outside of the lane, even after exchanging the baton. Receive and race with the baton in the left hand.
-



- At all times during the 4 x 100m race the baton should be in the middle of the lane.

Exchange or Free distance

- This refers to the distance between the incoming runner and the outgoing runner when the baton is exchanged.
- The greater the distance between the two runners when the baton is exchanged, the faster the baton gets to the finish line.

Racing your partner

- To promote the fact that the 4 x 100m is about the speed of the baton, and in particular the speed of the baton through the exchange zone, the concept of racing your partner through the exchange zone is a useful strategy.
- The goal of the incoming runner is to race the outgoing runner to the end of the exchange zone.
- The goal of the outgoing runner is to run away from the incoming runner.

What is the best combination?

The selection of the best team may on occasions require some runners to race in an unfamiliar leg or one in which they had little experience. In teams the common practice has been to have the fastest runner run the last leg. Often this is not the best position for the fastest runner. The tactics employed in selecting the most appropriate team combination is contingent on the mix of individual talent within the team.

A couple of points to consider when training for a team:

- Athletes should practice in various positions, especially in training, and low level competitions,
- Some athletes are often superior on a straight and others superior running the bend and others are as good on either bends or the straight. As a general rule athletes should train for either the bend legs (i.e., first or third) or the straight legs (i.e., second and fourth), although it is suggested that athletes practice and compete in all legs,
- The constraints of time necessitate that the personal coach should conduct much training for relays,
- Relay training once a fortnight provides each athlete with the opportunity to practice his/her skills. This type of session can be fun and at the same time still allow the athlete to develop acceleration and speed qualities.

First Leg

- Sprint approximately 100-110m – bend only
- Good Starter

Second Leg

- Sprint approximately 120-130m – mostly straight
- Often more suited to the 200m type runner
- Skills at both receiving the baton and passing the baton are essential



Third Leg

- Sprint approximately 120-130m – mostly bend
- Often more suited to 200m type runner
- Skills at both receiving the baton and passing the baton are essential

Fourth Leg

- Sprint approximately 120m – mostly straight
- Remained focus under pressure

Responsibilities of the runner

Incoming runner

- The responsibility for the exchange is with the incoming runner
- Ensure you are in the correct lane
- Know where the exchange zone is and where to pass the baton in the zone
- Lane discipline
- Race the outgoing runner to the end of the exchange zone – maintain speed through zone
- Call for target (e.g., hand, stick)
- Wait for the hand to present
- Spot the target and push the baton into the hand firmly (approximately 1.5 to 2m between incoming and outgoing runner)
- Know the emergency the command (i.e., WAIT!)

In training and competition the incoming runner plays a vital role in providing feedback to the outgoing runner. This is because the outgoing runner cannot see what his/her hand is doing (non-visual exchange). If the hand is not steady, is not flat, is too high/low, and/or poor lane discipline it is the responsibility of the incoming runner to provide feedback to the outgoing runner.

Outgoing runner/Receiver

- Locate your lane and exchange zone, correctly placing your check mark as soon as permissible; clear the lane of all other check marks
- Lane discipline
- Remain focused and be patient
- Move as the incoming runner hits the checkmark
- Use the same starting position
- A consistent acceleration pattern and speed is imperative
- Run away from the incoming runner
- Wait for call (e.g., hand)
- Present the incoming runner with a high, flat, steady target and wait for the baton to be passed
- Take baton from incoming runner



Where do I place the check mark?

Competitors are allowed to place one check mark within the designated lane. Ensure that you can clearly see sight the checked mark from your sighting position and that competitors in the adjoining lane does not impede your vision.

How far from acceleration line is the check mark? The following suggestions are a guide:

Men:	7.00m – 10.00m	approximately 24-32 shoe steps
Women:	6.50m – 8.00m	approximately 22-30 shoe steps
Junior Men:	6.50m – 8.00m	approximately 22-28 shoe steps
Junior Women:	5.00m – 7.00m	approximately 20-26 shoe steps

The above are guidelines only, and will most likely need to be adjusted.

What is the adopted method of baton exchange for Australia?

There are three popular methods of baton exchange;

- Up Sweep Pass
- Down Sweep Pass
- Push Pass or Push Forward

The three methods all have advantages and disadvantages. The author argues the critical thing is perfecting the baton exchanges at maximum speed irrespective of the baton exchange method.

Why the Push Pass?

There are several reasons the push pass has been adopted by Athletics Australia as the method of baton exchange.

1. The forward push of the baton from the incoming runner is more natural than either sweeping the hand down or sweeping the hand up.
 2. The shortest distance is in a straight line. In comparison with the up sweep and down sweep methods, the push pass achieves this aim.
 3. Sighting the hand of the outgoing runner by the incoming runner is difficult especially when running at speed. The up sweep and down sweep provide a smaller target for the incoming runner to target. The vertical hand position of the push pass method provides a larger target for the incoming runner to sight. It presents as a flat target.
 4. The vertical hand position used in the push pass is more natural compared with the horizontal position adopted in the down sweep.
-



How to execute the push pass?

The push pass has similarities to both up sweep and the down sweep methods, and is designed to maximise the speed of the exchange. There are two key differences in the push pass compared to the other methods. First, the incoming runner passes the baton forward in a straight line towards the target hand. Second, the hand position of the receiver, provides two variations; being hand in a horizontal position as per down sweep method and hand in a vertical position, Australia has adopted the vertical position.

Incoming Runner:

The push pass method requires the incoming runner to extend his/her arm forward in a straight line towards the hand of the receiver. The shortest distance is in a straight line. Eyes are focussed on the hand of the receiver.

Coaching Cue: Push or Push-press or Push-snap

Outgoing runner/Receiver

Extend arm back naturally leading with the elbow. Position the hand vertically, such that the thumb is pointing down towards the ground and the fingers are horizontally pointing out/away from the body at approximately shoulder height. The hand should be flat and as large as possible without being stiff/rigid. A baton may bounce from a rigid hand. A soft hand upon being hit by the baton will respond quickly by grasping the baton.

Coaching Cue: Thumb down, finger out

How do you judge the performance of a 4 x 100m relay team?

Typically, relay teams are judged by their finishing positions and then the times that they run. However, does a first place finish accurately and validly reflect the performance of the team. It is suggested that in addition to evaluating a team performance by their placing in a competition another appropriate measurement of a team's performance is whether the team has produced the target time. One method of evaluating a relay team's performance by McDonald (1996) that has merit is the Relay Score system.

The Relay score

1. Add the times of the four individual runners who compete in the relay race.
 2. Deduct from the total time in step 1, from the relay time.
 3. The relay score is the difference between the relay performance and the sum of the four individual runners.
-



The rules of competition

The baton must be carried by hand throughout the entire race. If dropped, it must be recovered by the athlete who dropped it. S/he may leave the lane to retrieve the baton provided that, by doing so, s/he does not lessen the distance to be covered. Provided this procedure is adopted and no other athlete is impeded, dropping the baton shall not result in disqualification. In all relay races, the baton must be passed within the take-over zone. The passing of the baton commences when it is first touched by the receiving runner and is completed the moment it is in the hand of the receiving runner only. Within the take-over zone, it is only the position of the baton which is decisive, and not the position of the body or limbs of the competitors.

Concluding Comments

The responsibility for much of the fine-tuning of the baton exchange is with the athletes. The two athletes who are working to problem solve need to help each other by providing constructive feedback. Although a video camera is very useful in assisting a coach with accurately observing the baton exchange, a coach cannot possibly see everything. A useful strategy to develop cohesion, effective problem-solving and consequently maximising performance is to involve all members of the team to assist in providing feedback and constructive ways in which to improve the performance of the team. The success of the relay team is contingent on the healthy respect for all team members – including reserves – by the coach and all athletes in the team. An effective team does not require you to be best friends with all members – you don't even have to like each other. The most important thing is to have a common goal to achieve and work cohesively with your other team members and coach to achieve that goal. As in all team events you are only as strong as your weakest link.

Selected Articles – Relays

Mallet, C. (unknown) National Relay Programme - 4 x 100m

Mach, G. (1991) The 4 x 100 metres relay with push-forward pass. http://www.athleticscoaching.ca/UserFiles/File/Sport%20Science/Theory%20&%20Methodology/Speed/Relays/TMREL_MACH_THE_4_x_100M_RELAY_WITH_THE_PUSH.pdf

Darren Alomes



WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE FLU

How do I know if I have H1N1 Influenza 09

The symptoms of H1N1 Influenza 09 (previously known as Human Swine Flu) are similar to those of other types of flu. Key symptoms are fever (high temperature, usually 38°C or above) with a cough and/or sore throat.

You may also feel very tired and achy, have a headache, runny or stuffy nose, diarrhoea and/or vomiting. Illness caused by H1N1 Influenza 09 can vary from mild to severe.

How should I care for myself?

Get plenty of rest.

Drink plenty of fluids, such as water.

Take pain relief to help ease symptoms. Paracetamol is recommended, but should only be taken as directed, to help ease symptoms and control your fever. *Children and teenagers should not take medications containing aspirin as this has been known to cause Reye's syndrome.*

Note, antibiotics do not work against viruses such as influenza. However if you develop complications from flu, such as bacterial pneumonia, you may need antibiotics.

Eat a healthy diet with fruit and vegetables. Try frequent small meals if you don't feel hungry.

Who is at risk of severe illness from flu?

People who are at risk of severe illness include:

- pregnant women (particularly in the middle and later months of pregnancy)
- people with chronic respiratory (breathing) conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- people who are very obese
- Indigenous people of any age
- people with other chronic conditions, including heart disease, diabetes mellitus, metabolic diseases, chronic kidney or liver disease, haemoglobinopathies, immune system suppression (for example due to cancer treatment, HIV/AIDS or medication) or chronic neurological conditions.

If you are at risk of severe illness, seek medical care early if you get sick.

Smokers, people who have sleep apnoea, women in the first three months of pregnancy and children under five may also be at risk of severe illness and should seek medical advice if they get sick with flu symptoms.



Protect yourself and others from flu

There are simple things you can do to protect yourself and others from flu.



1. **Cover coughs and sneezes.** If you don't have a tissue, use the inside of your elbow. Put used tissues in the rubbish straight after use (don't keep the flu in your pocket!).



2. **Wash and dry your hands often,** with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand rub. Flu viruses can survive up to 48 hours on surfaces and can spread through hand contact.



3. **Keep your distance.** The flu virus can spread easily from an infected person even before they realise they are sick. Try to keep a large step from others at work and in public.



3. **Know the signs of flu:** sudden onset of fever, cough, sore throat and body aches. Flu makes you feel sick all over, while a cold is generally focussed on your head and throat.



4. **Stay home if you have flu symptoms.** Help protect others, especially those at risk of severe illness.

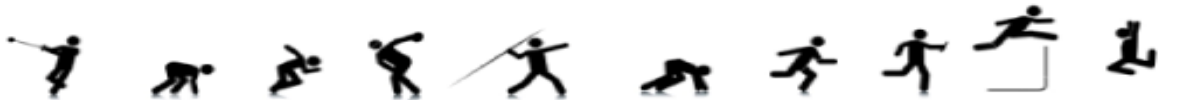


REMINDER

Athletics South has booked the Domain Athletics Centre for training, Monday and Wednesday 5-7 pm and Sundays 10-12 pm until the end of September. Athletes are reminded that they need to be registered to use the DAC facilities.

So whether you are participating in cross country runs, winter throw series, or simply rocking up to the Domain to train, you must be registered.

Register on-line at www.tasathletics.org.au or see your club representatives at the cross country events.



WINTER THROWS SERIES

Athletics South has sanctioned the following winter throws meets at the Domain Athletics Centre, all throws will be offered.

As ever, any help with setting up and running of the events is greatly appreciated.

10—12 Sunday mornings

- July 26
- August 23
- September 27

Reminder—athletes must be registered to compete.



What lies before us
and what lies behind us
are tiny matters compared
to what lies within us.



If you have any news, pics etc. email me at moleary@blundstone.com.au.

THANKS TO CONTRIBUTORS,

Darren Alomes, Richard Welsh, Damian Lawler, Darrel Harington, Lynne Lyden & Peter Turnock.



WINTER COMPETITION SPONSOR



SUMMER COMPETITION SPONSOR