“POMONA” SHOT PUT DRILLS

Jeff Donnel
Head Track Coach/Throws Coach
Topic Outline

- Introduction
- Philosophy
- Basics
- Off-Season
- Early Season
- Mid-Season
- Peak at League/State
DISCLAIMER!

• This is how I do things. I am very fortunate to have great people to work with, in a unique situation. I am not smarter than anyone in this room, and (in my opinion) if you think you are smarter than anyone in this room than you needn’t be here. Also, if I offend you, your system, your school, or whatever, I apologize in advance.

• Please ask questions AT ANY TIME! In my opinion there is no such thing as a dumb question when it comes to helping kids. I will not hide anything from anyone even if it moves your kid ahead of mine (except maybe this year since my son is one of my throwers and if your kid beats him I hate you).
Introduction

• Throws Coach for 25 years (Standley Lake, Alameda, Dakota Ridge, Pomona)
• Head Coach at Pomona for the last 8 years
• 13 50’ boys, 3 40’ girls
• 4 State Champs (Gordon Stant*, Shawn McGovern, Emily Hunsucker, Jake Moretti)
• 25 individual State Qualifiers (10 of those more than once), 40 state placers (both events)
• Assistant Football Coach in the fall at Pomona
Philosophy

1. Recruit talent out of the halls. Talk to other coaches, watch other practices, get in good with your football coach!

   a. Football/club – Don’t let them tell you a kid can’t throw in the spring due to football/club. If they do, they are wrong, but be ready to be flexible early on.

   b. Don’t be fooled by the numbers earlier. I have been very fortunate to have some very talented kids throw for me.
Philosophy

1. Every one can play this game.
   a. Our throwing (and track) team does not have cuts. I have coached state champions and kids that had not one athletic bone in their bodies. They all don’t get equal attention always.
   b. Alex Oshmayanski – graduated from CU in 2 years, was a doctor in less than 3 and couldn’t throw up. But he was fun to be around.
   c. Have fun. There are times to work and times to play – make sure they understand when and where.
Philosophy

1. Don’t be a loner.
   a. At Pomona we always have at least 2 throws coaches. This year we have 1 full time and two part time and one other helper (former throwers welcome).
   b. Talk to other coaches. Most of us will be glad to help you and share knowledge.
   c. Bob Stecklien, George Osborne, Guy Thurston, Chad Keopke, Tim Armstrong, Dave Evans, Kris Lettow and too many others to even mention. Go to clinics, or if you are like me – YOU TUBE.
   d. Use video in practice and meets.
Basics

• We are gliders at Pomona. It is more of a function of the nature of our school than whether it is a better technique. Because most of our athletes have winter obligations it is rare I can find someone to put in the time to get good at it.

• The weight room. I am blessed to be a part of a school that has a great weight program and coach. On the boys side, this makes my job easy. On the girls side, well that’s different. Off season and in season lifting is a must for the girls. Personal training is recommended.

• Cleans or High Pulls, Core, Squat, Bench, Military Pops, Tri’s

• Break throws into small components and do drills on those components and focus on proper body position. Try to avoid bad habits.
Off-Season (Winter)

• Experienced Throwers
  • Lift, Lift, Lift
  • Agility (jump rope, stairs, dots, short sprints, plyo’s)
  • Review basics
    • Grip, release, power position, hip drills, very little throwing...

• New Throwers
  • Lift and Agility
  • Teach grip and release (if they can keep the elbow up and put the shot from the get go, life is easier everywhere else – hard to do without hips, so we use soft balls to start kids out).
  • Stress perfect form – be in control.
  • Power position and stress turning the foot in the middle.
Early Season – Thru Spring Breakish

• We start the first day going over grip and release. It’s boring for experienced guys, but if we can’t do the basics right, nothing else will work.
• Hip drills (towels drill, Juergen Twists– turn and arch, basic power position for both, bag punches)
• This is the whole first week. Little throwing, lots of drills.
• Agility/Condition twice a week
• Introduce glide drills (jump and turn – sit in a chair)
• Everything is slow and methodical
• Goal Setting! 3 personal, 3 team. Give state qual standards.
Early Season

• First meet, no one does a full throw – our goal is to approach a PR out of the front before we can glide. Experienced kids get anxious so we give in a bit depending on the size of the meet.

• In fact, we won’t let a new kid glide until we are satisfied with their progress out of the front – for some that isn’t until April.

• By the end of march, they should be doing full glides in practice.

• For experienced throwers, we set a goal to PR by early April. The earlier we qualify, the more we can try to hit a big one.

• Start them young on the proper way to prepare to compete. We don’t just sit around. Short sprints, explosive movements between throws. Also, don’t PR in warm-ups. Proper rest the night before, nutrition, and dress for the weather!
Early Season

- Drill Work
  - Grip and Release drills
    - Grip/neck placement/elbow angles
    - Little flickies and super flickies, ground pounds, front facing lunge punches
  - Power Position drills
    - Good PP form – foot angle, bend, 90/10 weight distribution
    - Down and back
  - Hip Drills
    - Arrow concept (separation)
    - Juergen twists, towel drills, wall drills (anything to teach the activation of the lower body first over the upper body)
    - Stop and pop
Early Season

• Drill Work
  • Glide Drills
    • Jump and Turn, Chair sits – Pit sits
    • Gather, Sit, Kick! (and pull foot along)
  • Transition Drills or Right Leg Drills
    • Wide Base Drill
    • Stop and Pop with a glide
  • Reloads
    • Focus on hitting a good position – drop the shot.
  • Block arm/Strike arm - Chin up chest up bag drill with partners
    • Repetition for muscle memory
    • Block arm, elbow the short mugger
Mid Season – Thru April

• We try and throw a lot during this time.
• Reloads
• Video time both in practice for immediate feedback and after meets in the classroom.
• Train through meets (don’t ease off the day before). Also, do not alter their lifting schedule. In other words, if they throw after a heavy squat day, so be it. Every ounce of strength built now, pays off in May.
  • There are exceptions for some meets...
• Start giving them practice goals
  • Hit this and we go home!
Mid Season

• Drill work
  • Reloads
  • Right Leg Drills (Wide base drills)
  • Focal Points to help stay back
  • Weight vest glides (around the track – brutal but funny to hear them complain)

• This is the time that we become problem solvers
  • I think this is the fundamental key to success
  • Use the video
  • Create drills as you see fit (a lot of the stuff we do comes from the internet, other coaches or just making stuff up)

• Focus on the mental preparation for competing:
  • Visualization, and don’t solve problems at a meet. Pick one tweak and fix that. Fix other problems in film and practice. Sometimes the best coaching is just being positive if things are going well (or if they aren’t).
Late Season – Peak at State

• Taper off throwing and lifting*
  • Throw and lift heavy early in the week, try to get legs back
  • Glide to PP with out throwing a lot
  • Often will try to get the whole week off of state from lifting, but it isn’t critical

• Will only take 6 to 10 full hard throws in practice
  • Simulate meet conditions
  • Will still do drills to solve issues
  • Focus on perfect reps. Make them compete – give them a mark to hit.
A Little More on Philosophy

• Be an active thrower!

• I go to way to many meets and see kids just sitting around until they get their name called.

• We expect our kids to be active in between throws (short sprints, explosive movements). If they aren’t sweating a bit, they aren’t ready to compete.

• Many throwers by nature are lazy, big kids. Approach this piece by talking about being a competitor.

• You will notice we don’t talk much about exchanges at the end...
QUESTIONS?