



# TECHNIQUE

## THE HURDLES

### COACH ANDREW BLANKS

Coach Andrew Blanks' name may not be a well-known but two of his pupils shared the spotlight last summer in Athens in the 400m hurdles final. Coach Blanks is the only high school coach to have two finalists share the track in the same Olympic race: Bayano Kamani who represented Panama and Bennie Brazell- USA. Both are recent graduates of Coach B's program at Westbury High School in Houston, Texas where they were both Texas State Champions and Texas State Record Holders in the 300m hurdles. Kamani was also the State Champion in the 110 hurdles. Coach B is the Texas guru of the hurdles!



This is his second visit to NIN as a clinician and he promises that he has some new tips and tricks up his sleeve.

# Five Frequently Asked Questions

Answers From Andrew Blanks

## 1. How to correct athletes who jump over the hurdles.

One of the most common problems encountered by most hurdle coaches is athletes who **jump** over the hurdles trying to make sure both legs are clear.

You correct it by teaching them in a slower manner, at a lower height, how to actually step over the hurdle. Place hurdles a certain distance apart and have them walk over them. You can also have them get down into a hurdle stretch and lean into a complete hurdle position and show them that in this position you can get over the hurdle with only a minimal amount of clearance room. Some young athletes believe that they have to have a great deal of room between them and the hurdle in order to clear it. Not true.

## 2. What is the correct position of trail leg and foot on approaching the hurdle.

If the trail leg or the toe is down ninety percent of the time the hurdler is going to hook the hurdle and hit it, catching the foot on the hurdle and sometimes falling over or pulling the hurdle completely over and having it pop up into the air. But if they place the leg in the proper position where the toe is up and to the side and not straight down then clearing the hurdle is no problem and you can do this without having to jump up into the air.

## 3. What are correct arm motions.

Most inexperienced hurdlers feel that if they throw both arms up into the air like a bird that it is going to help lift them up over the hurdle. So they throw both arms up and try to come over the hurdle and then get back into running position which just slows them down, cause problems and sometimes even injury.

Correcting this is relatively easy. First you teach them to walk properly. Right arm, left leg, left arm right leg. Show them how to move in a steady, rhythmic movement. Then as they are walking teach them to swing the arm in the proper position and proper technique of folding the lead arm in a 45 degree angle, back, pulling it forward under the chin, bringing it back, pulling it forward under the chin. At the same time swinging the trail leg arm completely toward the back and then raising it forward just past the ear. Swinging it and raising it. We use to say, "Open the door, close the door, open the door, close the door." Have them walk rhythmically, teaching them rhythm. This is part of the mechanics of going over the hurdles and running between them. Hurdling is running a rhythmic race.

## 4. How to come down off the hurdle

Coming down hard, stomping the ground does not help at all. You have to teach them that certain parts of the foot are the only parts that should come down. Not the heel or the middle part of the foot but coming down lightly on the ball of the foot so that you can continue to run. And they do not have to be 50 feet over the hurdle in order to run! Some people feel that when they come across in the hurdle position they have to go so far between or so far over the hurdle that when they come down instead of being three steps from the next one they're almost two. Now they're running into the hurdle and feeling like they're getting too close.

## 5. The hurdler who floats the hurdles

The floater! This is the hurdler you have to work with on "quick feet." Getting him to get the foot back on the ground as quickly as possibly without forcing it there. A floater is going to be higher over the hurdles than the regular quick hurdler because he is trying to clear. The reason for floating is "making sure that I clear the hurdle." Rather than clearing the hurdle - making --sure-- that-- I --clear-- the --hurdle which is a floating and long gliding action. He is a gazelle and an antelope rather than a road runner. You have to combine the road runner and the gazelle. You want the take-off of the gazelle but you want the quickness of the roadrunner all in one beautiful, well calculated rhythmic motion.

# DRILLS

### HURDLE WALKOVERS



### FENCE DRILL



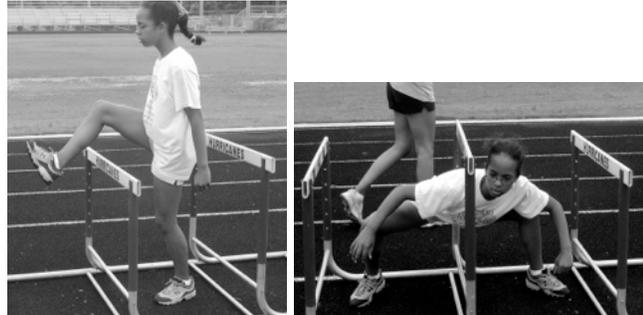
### PARTNER WINDMILLS



### SINGLE LEG WINDMILLS going under each hurdle)



### OVER-UNDER (The "Slip 'n Slide" is a variation –



### OVER then BACK



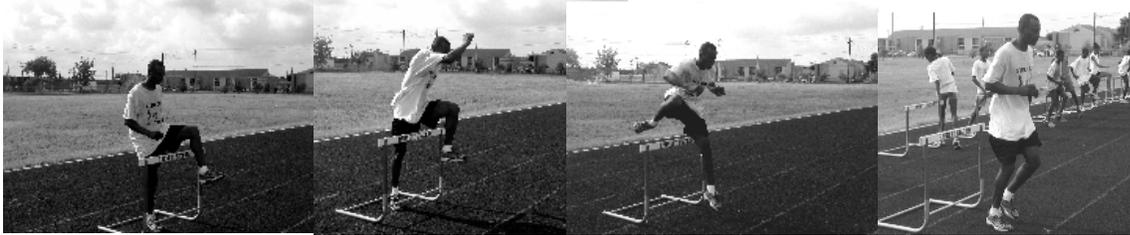
### SIDE DRILL



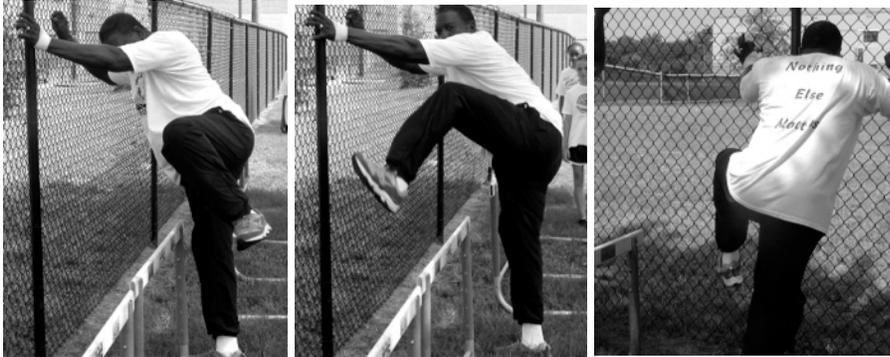
### HURDLE SLIDE



## HURDLE POP-DOWNS



## SUPPORTED ROTATORS



## STRETCHES

### KNEE HUGS



### BUTT BREAKERS



### BLEACHER L-STRETCH – 3 POSITIONS



