

2012 New Balance Nationals
The Weight Throw-Learn by Doing
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Weight throwers, whether 3 or 4 turn throwers, must develop a set of skills that at first may seem unnatural. These skills include the wind, turns and the release. They must be broken down and taught separately. The turning motion of the left foot (heel, side and ball of the foot) is an unnatural motion that must be developed first. The turns are the first important skill that must be introduced to beginners. Most athletes are more comfortable with pivoting in basketball. This often makes teaching the proper turning technique in the weight throw a challenge. Athletes also have trouble differentiating from the wide right leg of the discus when executing a turn. In order to develop the parts of the throw, it is necessary to incorporate a series of drills to teach weight throw specificities. The following is a teaching progression for teaching the turns to a beginner.

Teaching the Turns

1) Position drills Position 1, 2, and 3

- a) Position 1- turn to 90 degrees keeping the body weight on the back foot
- b) Position 2 - from position 1, turn to 270 degrees (position 2) by doing a heel turn on your left foot.
 - The key to this movement is to pick up the right foot quick and get it down quickly.
 - We need hip shoulder separation when we land at position 2.
 - All the body weight needs to stay on the back foot.
- c) Position 3 – from position 2 turn to 0 degrees in the ring or back to the start
 - This is the work phase of the throw. This is where all the acceleration takes place in the throw.

2) Multi-turns

- a) Complete 2 turns by hitting all three of the above positions.
- b) Complete 3 turns by hitting all three of the above positions.
- c) Complete 4 turns by hitting all three of the above positions.

Once the turns are introduced and understood it is now time to teach the winds. The winds are the beginning of weight's acceleration. There is usually one wind, or complete revolution of the weight, before the turns begin. The winds must be performed with the same rhythm as employed in all the turns of the throw. Since the position of the low point is so crucial, the wind plays a key role in the success of the throw. When winding the athlete draws the weight by

lifting the elbow. Athlete forms a window as the ball starts to pass over the midline of the head. The ball comes off of the right ear as the athlete prepares to straighten the arms to connect with the ball. When the ball is on the right side the majority of the athlete's body weight is on the left leg. On entry the plane of the weight should not be excessively steep but more horizontal. The following is a teaching progression for teaching the winds to a beginner.

Teaching the Winds

Use the verbal descriptors (1) sweep (2) curl and (3) twist to learn the winds.

1) Winds

- a) Start with the weight in your left hand pendulum it up to your right hand which is straight out in front of you.
- b) With both hand turn the weight to your right hip still hold it high. Do not pass your right hip.
- c) Sweep the weight back in front of you and curl the left bicep.
- d) When your hands are high over your head comb your hair and twist your shoulders to the right.
- e) Sweep the weight back to in front of you.
- f) From this position you can either start the throw or a second wind.

The final part of the teaching progression is the release. Accelerate the ball each turn and the orbits will increase in steepness and the release will take care of itself. Once the thrower has placed his right foot on the ground on his final turn, he is executing the release. The moment the weight leaves the hand is the end of the release; once the weight is gone, there is no further way to influence the flight. The release should be the longest application of force during the whole throw. During the release, the forces should be the highest of all those encountered during the throw: if the throw has been done correctly, the release is the moment where the weight attains the greatest velocity, so it will also have the greatest centrifugal force. In the release, the power is created from the lift with the legs. In the turns leading up to the release, the thrower is trying to keep the left side locked (keeping the angle of the hip and knee joints constant). However, on the release the thrower wants to use the legs as leverage to send the weight on its trajectory path.

Teaching the Release

- 1) Medicine Ball Release Drill-Block at ninety degrees, lift, eyes to the sky
- 2) Wind and Release Drill-Perform a wind and work on delivery mechanics