Name/Title: Olympic Sprint Training

Purpose of Event: Working with a partner, the students will observe and analyze their partner while they run fast, and teach each other up to eight cues to improve speed and technique.

Prerequisites: Knowing what the ball of the foot is, what relaxed running means, and how to use a stopwatch.

Suggested Grade Level: 9-12

Materials Needed: Reciprocal task sheets, stop watches, pencils.

Description of Idea

- Students partner up with one other classmate.
- Each group of two gets one pencil, one stopwatch, and a task sheet for each student.
- Students decide who the "coach" is first, and the other partner is the "athlete".
- After properly warming up, students time each other 3 times sprinting 40 yards, preferably on a track or marked field, and record each time on their task sheets.
- The "coach" observes the "athlete" run a number of times. Each time, the "coach" watches for one item from the checklist. For example, watch whether the head moves side to side or stays steady. Go down through the checklist. If any of the items are not done correctly, the "coach" tells the "athlete" what to do to correct the problem. It is important that coaches say what the athlete does right before saying what needs to be fixed.
- The coach and athlete should take turns, although it may be alright to let each pair come up with their own rotation.
- Once the group has completed the entire list, have them run for time again to test whether their speed improved.

Teaching Suggestions:

Emphasize practicing one of the items at a time

If students finish early, or run with perfect technique, have them make up their own checklist for sprinting, walking, jogging etc...

If you do not have enough stop watches, ask students to use their own watch. Students without a watch can pair up with someone with a watch.

If you have access to a video camera and TV/VCR with jog shuttle (slow play), it makes it more fun when students get to watch themselves run in slow motion.

You need to limit the timed run to 3 trials...they tend to keep timing themselves without
working on technique.

Most of the time, kids times will get worse. Try timing a longer distance. Many times this happens because the kids are thinking too much, and consequently run too tight or rigid. If this is the case, emphasize running relaxed.

For homework, have the students write up their own checklist, or describe their feelings as to why they did or did not run faster.

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