



The Javelin

By Mark Mirabelli Throwing Specialist

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One of my favorite events to coach is the Javelin. It is exciting, explosive, and fun. In order to throw far, the athletes must understand that the javelin is a straight line event and therefore must be throwing a straight line in order to travel far. The speed and the natural elements play major roles in achieving this goal.

As a HS coach try to make the event fun by implementing a step-by-step approach. Speed, Endurance and strength are necessary factors which should be incorporated in your workouts throughout the year. The following is an outline of drills that have been very successful for me over the years as a HS coach and Javelin Specialist. I hope these teaching methods will help you along with your style of coaching in developing an elite thrower.

Grips:

There are three styles to position your hand to hold the javelin, American, Fork, and Finnish style. Use whatever grip the thrower feels most comfortable with. Have the experiment using all three. The Finnish grip seems to be the one I prefer because it seems to generate a better balance release off the finger tips.

The Carry:

The horizontal over-the-shoulder position, is clearly the most popular as it allows an easier withdrawal motion of the javelin when coming into the final 8 steps.

Withdrawal:

Before we discuss the mechanics of the withdrawal, it is Important to bring up the rhythm of the throw, which is critical to success. As the right handed thrower hits his/her mark for the withdrawal final 8

Step pattern for the drive to the front of the toe board. All my throwers when they withdraw will hit the checkpoint 1, 2, 3, 4 **Float 5, 6, 7, 8.**

Remind the thrower to accelerate when they hit the checkpoint. Keep the Javelin above the shoulders and the left side closed. Toes are 45 to straight when you float on the #5 Step

Drills:

Drill Progression of teaching the Javelin throw

Open Field Runs: just running with the javelin for 40 yards 4-6 times as needed

- "A" Skips (short skips with good leg lift and relaxation with upper & Lower body
- "A" Skips with withdrawal keep hips forward for 4 count withdrawal 1-2-3-4-repeats
- Crawls (legs) Right Leg for 4 count and left leg for 4 count see PowerPoint
- 6 steps fast (good knee lift) withdrawal for six steps

One-Step Pulls: feet should be forward not out to the side! Withdraw the javelin so that the wrist is above the shoulder and the tip is close to the eye and cheek bone. Make sure the throwing wrist is facing upwards and that the throwing arm is above the shoulder and the left arm is elevated above the shoulder too!

- Place your right foot at 1 o'clock and keep the left side shoulder closed so that both shoulders are parallel to the javelin.
- Push forward with the right foot while striking the left plant heel and base of the foot.
- Pull the javelin over the top leading with the armpit-elbow-release javelin.
- Complete 2X10 or more

Three Step Pulls: Walk-in

- Right foot outwards as in the one step pull
- Keep the javelin long
- Left-right-left steps

- Pull the javelin over the top and release (armpit-elbow-release)
- FLOAT Repeats (see video)
- **Three Step fast walk-in with a float 2x10**
- **Focus on a strong left foot drive so you can get the right foot out there quickly**

Eight Step Pulls:

- Run in place . . . withdraw the javelin. When you hit your second checkpoint the throwers right foot will strike the mark in turn the thrower will withdraw the javelin maintaining speed with emphasis in driving the hips ahead of the shoulders.
- The important thing to remember is that the thrower must increase his/her speed to the front and not decrease.
- The progression count after the withdrawal is 1-2-3-4-5-6 (which the crossover 6 is the plant, 7 throw, 8 recover.)

Remember that we are always teaching the javelin from the front to the back of the runway, Repetition is the key to being a successful and consistent thrower. Drills are needed to perfect each learned position and must be done daily

The Approach: (easy way to get your thrower consistently hitting his/her marks)

1. Take 5 giant steps back starting with the right leg; place marker at this check point.
2. Sprint back 5 strides and place another marker at the 5th step which will be your right foot.
3. Face forward towards the direction of the throw.
4. Carry the javelin flat and above the shoulder start with the right foot, run to the 1st checkpoint; your right foot should hit this mark; at this time the javelin should be withdrawn and your speed must increase into the final eight steps.
5. You will most likely go over the foul line. Measure the distance you went over that line; that will be the distance you will have to move back your 1st check mark and your 2nd; continue with your run through until your approach is right. IT works!!!

Helpful Drills: (these are just a few)

1. Body alignment-walk drill: walk and withdraw the javelin keeping the javelin above the throwing shoulder.
2. A-Skips Run and withdraw (develop rhyme)
3. B-Skips
4. Hip-Drills with PVC
5. Drive leg (See DVD)
6. Drive leg crossovers - #5 step is crucial for setting up the 6th step (**the plant & block**)
7. Hill Drills
8. Over the tube
9. Over the garden hose

Upper Body Plyometric: (All drills are on the Javelin DVD)

1. Straight arm pullovers
2. Bent arm pullovers 2k-4k med balls
3. One step pullovers
4. 3 step pullovers
5. 8 step pullovers
6. One arm and one step throws
7. Three step one arm throws against the wall/net 1k ball or javelin balls 800g

Notes: PowerPoint examples of Med-balls drills (lots of drills on my DVD)

You can purchase the Mark Mirabelli DVD Throwing Series: www.mmtrackandfield.com

Join my Facebook page at the Mark Mirabelli Throwing Series, ***like*** my page and receive weekly drills in the throws.

ANALYSIS of AKI landing on the right foot:



As he lands, he is leaning back. To maintain a good position, he does this with his left arm



He is doing all he can to stay back, even though he was flying down the runway.

