

MY COACHING VIDEOS



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Championship Relays Don't Just Happen!



I look at relays as 10, 8, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Finals 4x100

1. Methodist 45.65
2. Wartburg 46.58 8
3. McMurry 46.75
4. Emory 46.87 5
5. Wis.-Eau Claire 47.11
6. Texas Lutheran 47.35
7. St. Thomas (Minn.) 47.41
8. Rhodes 47.51

Finals 4x400

1. Wartburg 3:40.95
2. Illinois Wesleyan 3:44.88
3. Emory 3:46.35
4. Mount Union 3:47.80
5. St. Thomas 3:48.08
6. Wis.-Eau Claire 3:48.19
7. Wheaton (Mass.) 3:48.62
8. MIT 3:48.77

4x100 Relay Formula for Success

- The development of athletes in their individual events
 - Hurdle Races: 100/110, 400
 - Sprint Races: 100, 200, 400
 - At times jumps (depending on the athlete)

Each one of these hurdle/sprint events presents opportunities to prepare for a successful relay

2nd Key Factor in Developing a Successful Relay

- Successful baton exchange in the zones
- Great baton passing efficiency
- Participant Cohesiveness (Trust)
- Confidence (Attitude)
- Discipline (Faith in the ability to get out and to finish)
- Chemistry – all 6

Timeline

- Identify 8 total athletes
- The week after indoor national or over the next 5 weeks I will evaluate 2 relays through practice and meets
 - Mixing and matching the athletes up in different positions 1,2,3,4 legs
- Week 5 usually falls on Kansas Relay's weekend, I have narrowed that number from 8 to 6

- Identify 3 potential curve runners
 - Who have the best block start on the curve
- 3 potential straight away runners
- 1 of the 6 is my lottery pick, will be identified from the 6 total

Attributes of a lottery pick –

- My lottery pick can run any leg asked of them at any time
- Mentally can make the adjustment

1st Leg

- Great starter
- Great curve runner (with blocks)
- Great curve runner out of the blocks with a baton in their hand
- Live for making up the stagger or maintaining the stagger

2nd Leg

- Power runner/Endurance sprinter – the 2nd runner is at their best at top end speed
- 110H/100 M hurdlers have been great 2nd leg runners
 - They are used to running in a head wind

3rd Leg

- Also great curve runner, can maintain and extend the lead
 - Solid mentally
 - Love to compete
 - Not necessarily my fastest runner

Anchor Leg

- 4th runner is my lottery pick
 - Stronger finisher
 - Believe in their top end speed, free from breakdown
 - Loves to win
 - Handles pressure situations well

Week 5 to Week 6

- Drake Relays weekend – will have finalized my top 4 with two alternates included in all training, as well as other meets.
- It is my job to make sure that one injury doesn't take away from 3 other athletes.

Exchanges

- I have coached both downsweeps and push pass exchanges
- Downsweep – receiving arm extended, but hand level is just above hip height. Hand is almost like a V, and baton is ready for landing between the thumb and first finger.
- Push Pass – the arm is extended out parallel to the ground and the hand is open with the thumb pointing down.

Key factors on the baton exchange and lane position

- 1st leg will lead off with the baton in right hand, and will stay on the inside/middle at the exchange.
- 2nd leg runner receives the baton in their left hand and will stay on the outside/middle of the lane.
- 3rd leg runner receives the baton in their right hand. This exchange is crucial as the outgoing runner is on the inside, and the 2nd leg runner is on the outside/middle. Usually the 2nd runner may be covering more ground so this connection is key. My second leg, has power, speed and endurance.
- 4th leg - my Anchor takes the baton in the left hand and stays on the outside/middle when receiving the baton. The anchor leg has to have the ability to find a way to win, either from behind or the ability to extend the lead (running against the clock).

Steps for 4x100 Relay

- Steps – Don't over think, every coach has in their minds what works best for the Incoming runner & outgoing runner, 24 – 22 – 20
- Adjustment for early season to the end of the season will always have to be made
- Weather will also become a factor with steps.

Technique for 4x100 Relay

Technique for the outgoing runner -

- Just like block starts, I teach driving or pushing out from the mark and not up and out
- Slightly bent at the hips or crouched
- Feet staggered (what feels right for them)
- Feet and toes pointing forward
- Head slightly turned to identify there mark
- Incoming runner's goal is to run down the outgoing runners back, identify the target upon the voice command stick.
- Note: I coach my athletes, that the incoming runner is to only give the command stick when they are ready to deliver the handoff.
- Outgoing runner must give a good target by getting hand up, it helps when keep elbow straight.
- In case the hand off is unsuccessful, depending on steps, runner should have rest of zone to work through – don't give up if 1st hand off is unsuccessful, teach them to react-retract-and redeliver
- Outgoing runner must also be conscious of the exchange zone, know when to slow down to make connection

4x100 Drills

Standing Handoffs

Jogging Handoffs

Solo Exchange Takeoffs

Knee to Mark Takeoffs

50% Handoffs

Full Handoffs

4x400

- Identify 12 athletes over a 6-week period
- Like 4x100, I will evaluate 3 relays through practice and weeks, mixing and matching athletes up in different positions
- After 6-weeks will begin to narrow list from 12 athletes to 8

Formula for Success

Formula 1 –

Evaluate all 8 runners by their performances in their individual events

One of the best pieces of advice that I received from one of my mentors, Mark Guthrie, was never get caught up in what happens in the beginning of the season.

Formula 2 –

Evaluate which runners best respond to mental demands of the 4 different legs

- 1st leg – has ability to keep us in the mix, to put us in the heart (center) of the handoffs, making the exchange first
- 2nd leg – has ability to maintain or gain off the 1st legs energy; has to have ability to understand the importance of an aggressive cut for positioning
- 3rd leg – most coaches put slowest leg in this position, I like my 3rd leg to be my 2nd to 3rd fastest leg; I believe in running the 4x400 out of the way of traffic; problems occur with traffic, being bumped, cut-off, etc. This leg needs to be able to pull away from the field or put is back in contention.
- 4th leg – This is my anchor, the anchor is all about confidence (lottery pick), my anchor has to be my gutsy one. If the 4x400 comes down to the anchor leg, I want to know that my athlete is going to fight, free from breakdown. This is the type of athlete who wants to be put in this position.

Formula 3 –

Type of handoffs

- Open handoff – eye contact with incoming runner and baton
- The outgoing runner must force the incoming runner to run through their backs
- The 4x400 handoffs can make or break you
- Spending time on 4x400 exchanges are essential in having a successful 4x400

Formula 4 –

Other factors that make a great 4x400 Relay:

- Mental aspect
- Relay Competition - not afraid to know that week to week will be challenged to earn a top 4 spot
- Wartburg Relay Rule – at all times secure the baton. We don't let the baton go, unless it is taken from us.

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