**ELEMENTARY HIGH JUMP**

The high jump becomes a very technical event as an athlete develops his/her skills and experience. They in elementary schools is to keep it enjoyable and accessible for all the students. As the students develop their skills and recognize their abilities you will have an opportunity to get more technical with the more proficient jumpers. You can accomplish this with a group of athletes of varying abilities.

The most important aspect of high jump is safety. The following are essential:

1. Make sure the crash mats are set up properly.
2. If they are a little narrow then move them to the left while all the jumpers approach from the right side, then move them to the right side while all the jumpers approach from the left side. Place some flat gym mats on either side of the crash mats in case a jumper rolls off.
3. Place the standards so that the flanges that hold the bar face towards the middle.
4. Tell the jumpers that the next jumper waits until the one ahead is completely off the mats.
5. Instruct the jumpers to take of slightly before centre. This will aid their jump as their momentum will take them over the lowest part of the bar.
6. If a student consistently jumps late he/she may have to be told to stop jumping, otherwise a serious injury could occur.
7. Occasionally mop in front of the mats to prevent slippage. Sweep if you are outside. A wet surface must be constantly monitored for safe run-ups.
8. DO NOT allow assistants sit on the mat where a jumper can strike them or the bar may strike them when it is knocked off.

**Clothing**

The students will jump their best with shorts or leggings. Pants/jeans are way too restrictive for students to life their legs up.

**Meeting**

Tell your students that your goal for each of them is to jump their personal best or “p.b.” You can guarantee three things:

1. They can all high jump
2. They will jump different heights
3. They will all miss the bar sometimes

**Warm-up**

Have everyone job six or eight lengths of the gym. Try the ABC’s of track:

1. Walk one or two lengths raising one knee, then the other higher than your hip
2. Skip one or two lengths raising the free knee as high as you can
3. Same as B except after you raise your knee then stretch your foot out, then lower it to the floor.

If you have a stage and students can get a heel up on the stage have them try to SLOWLY lower their head as close to their knee as possible.

*Coaching Hint: Watch the jumpers from different points of view-from either side, from the front.*

**The FLOP**

I completely change my coaching of the Flop a few years ago. I have found this progression gets everyone learning the techniques faster.

After you have set up the mats use cones to make a circle that is slightly pushed in on the sides approximately twelve steps out from the bar. If you were to observe from the ceiling you would have the mats at the top and two half circles of cones meeting 12 steps straight out from the centre of the bar.

There is no bar at this point.

1. Have the students jog around the circle two or three times counter clockwise. Then have them jog clockwise the same number of times.
2. Next have them jog counter clockwise under control and jump off of their left foot, landing on both feet on the floor beside the centre of the mats. Then continue running the circle. Do this two or three times. Then have them jog clockwise, jump off their right foot, land on both feet on the floor at the centre of the mats and continue jogging.
3. Have them decide which take-off felt better. Most right-handed people prefer jumping/taking off on their left foot.

*Coaching Hint: At this point, in a P.E. class, everyone is moving and there is little standing around*

1. First with the athletes who take off their left foot (they run counter clockwise) have them jog around the cones, jump off their left foot, turn their right shoulder towards the left and land on their back in the centre of the mats. Tell them to leave from the side of the mat, not the front. Repeat with the jumpers who run clockwise and take off their right foot.

*Coaching Hint: Jumpers must make a habit of leaving from the side (not the front) of the mat*

1. Watch for those who jump off the wrong foot. Have them join the jumpers coming from the other direction. Repeat this as often as necessary until the vast majority are jumping safely, landing in the middle and on their backs.

*Coaching Hint: Some students have a difficult time determining their take off foot, especially Tykes. Be patient. Another technique for those who are not sure is to have them run from the side towards a basketball hoop and jump off one foot trying to touch the net. They will naturally choose their take-off foot.*

1. Put the bar on just above the height of the mat. Return to step 4.

*Coaching Hint: When you put the bar on take time to show the students how it is lowest in the middle, much lower with bar at Bear Creek Park. Tell them to take off their take-off foot before the centre. Also emphasize one more time that the falling jumper does not begin his/her run until the person in front has gotten off the mat.*

1. At this point you can begin to work on some of the important techniques. Have them point their take-off foot slightly toward the centre of the bar. A person jumping off their left foot should drive their right knee up and when they have cleared the floor turn their right knee and their right shoulder to the left. If a jumper turns and lands properly their legs should be pointing towards the centre of the run-up circle. Have the students land on the mat high on their shoulders.

*Coaching Hint: Jumping off of two feet is illegal. You will see some students at the end of their run-up almost stop and jump off of two feet. Look carefully. Their backs are towards the mats before they leave the floor. The error they are making is they are actually stepping away from the maps on their final step. Bing the jumper to the bar. Have them stand with their take-off foot pointing at an angle towards the mat and get them to raise their right knee high in the air. BE PATIENT!*

1. How much you raise the bar and at what increments will depend on you and your athletes, particularly how old they are. I have found that the most class efficient way is to have all students who are jumping one height do their jump, then all students who are jumping the next height jump, etc. Recording can get somewhat confusing but you will get on to it. It is important to give them all equal numbers of jumps.

*Coaching Hint: You might have some “naturals” in your class. Use them as demonstrators for your class and suggest to other teachers that they may want to have them demonstrate for their students.*

**Getting Your Mark**

This takes time. You might want to save this for an extra-curricular practice.

1. Have your students pair up. Have a piece of chalk handy.
2. Have your students place their take-off foot where they will take off from the bar and then turn around with their foot in the same spot but facing the other way.
3. Have the student take 12 bounding steps, following the cones in a semi-circle and have their partner mark with the chalk where their take-off foot lands (even the number of steps) Twelve is not a magical number. They may prefer 8 or 10. They can chalk in their name on the floor.
4. They will place their take-off foot at the name/mark and bound back 12 steps with a jump at the end. They may be right on, short, too far or even a while step out. Now they can adjust their starting point. The key is that they must approach the same way.

*Coaching Hint: In practice they could use a piece of tape but check with the custodian if you can leave this on the floor.*

**In Summation:**

Keep it fun. Celebrate when they make it over. Tell your athletes to focus on their p.b (personal best). That way they can all get a sense of accomplishment when they improve it. Remind them that some in the group will stand out and everyone should celebrate their achievements.