Films made for the IAAF and widely used in Coaching Courses in the past have been of 3 distinct types:

1) those of a commemorative and promotional nature, such as the World Cup series, films of the Olympic Games and video cassettes of the World Championships;

2) simple but effective silent films consisting of ultra slow motion shots of the World’s best performers (such as the Montreal Olympic Films produced by Helmar Hommel) which require analysis and commentary from an experienced athletics coach;
3) more advanced technical films in which the commentary and analysis is contained within the film itself, such as the biomechanical films of the Prague European Championships by the Czechoslovakian Film Company.

This new series of films opens up new ground. The aim is threefold:

1) to show teachers and coaches how to present athletics techniques in an interesting and stimulating way;
2) to motivate boys and girls to take up the sport;
3) to teach the essential basics of the events.

To achieve these aims, the same format has been used for each film: the coach is a former (in one case a present) Olympic Champion or World Record Holder, who also has a wide experience in teaching and coaching, and the film shows him taking a group of boys and girls through the various learning stages, from the warm-up to the complete activity, with "voice-over" commentary providing additional explanation where necessary. The boys and girls are genuine beginners, which makes it all the more impressive to observe the improvement brought about by good coaching, even in the short time it took to make each film. The direction and camera work are imaginative and stimulating, and each film is enlivened with shots of present day World Class performers. The emphasis is on the educational aspects of athletics, showing how skill learning can be fun, and honest effort can bring enjoyable satisfaction.

At present 8 films have been completed and it is planned to finish the series with the following: the Shot-Put with Parry O'Brien, the High-Jump with Dwight Stones, Road Running with Joan Benoit, Relay Racing with David Hemery and a general film on conditioning with Lynn Davies.

To give a clearer idea of the series we give below synopses of 2 of the films.
HAL CONNOLLY
Olympic Hammer Champion

1) The Hammer Throw with Hal Connolly.
Location Los Angeles, USA

Connolly is a former Olympic Champion and 6 times World Record Holder at the event. He has spent the last 20 years developing his most effective teaching technique. The film begins with Connolly putting the youngsters through a warm-up routine and then giving them a brief description of the equipment used, the basic rules of the event and the very important safety precautions to be taken. A demonstration is then given by Connolly, filmed first in normal motion and then in slow motion. Then, to emphasize the need for strength in the legs and lower body, the boys are put through a series of various jumping and hopping exercises and then throwing exercises with medicine balls. The boys are next shown how they can get their first feel for the event by using simple equipment such as brooms, wooden clubs or medicine balls encased in plastic nets. First they are taught how to start and then continue the swing, and then they are allowed to make a throw from two swings, stressing straight arms and progressing from the wooden staff or broom to the medicine ball in the net. They are then shown a simplified form of "shuffling" turn, with the emphasis strictly on the correct positions of the head, arms, trunk and hips. Each boy is then taken individually and given correction and encouragement.

The group is then introduced to a proper lightweight hammer and taken to the hammer circle and coached individually by Connolly, first at two swings followed by a standing throw: then, after being introduced to the basic footwork, they are shown a throw first with one turn, then two turns, and lastly three turns. Finally each boy attempts two swings and a one or a two turn throw. The element of competition is now a powerful motivating force and the boys show regular improvement, as they begin to get the feel for the event. A good demonstration of hammer throwing is then given by the Japanese hammer champion and the film concludes with
shots from the 1984 Olympic Final and a few more words of advice and encouragement from the coach. Connolly’s performance is first-class. His expertise, enthusiasm and rapport with the youngsters bring out all the fascination and challenge of this much neglected event.

Filming time - 26 minutes.

2) Long Jump with Lynn Davies.
   Location - Watford, England.

Lynn Davies is a former British Commonwealth, European and Olympic Long Jump Champion. His training as a teacher of Physical Education showed in his capable and stimulating handling of a novice group of boys and girls. The Davies approach is a practical and realistic one. He concentrates upon the real essentials for successful long jumping — speed of approach co-ordinated with power and accuracy of take-off, and he purposefully simplifies the flight pattern so that it will not hinder mastery of the more important phases of the event. The emphasis is merely on a good body extension and effective landing position.

Davies’s lively manner keeps the film moving along briskly, from specific warm-up and mobility exercises to the development of a consistently accurate approach run and a powerful and efficient take-off. The boys and girls, meanwhile, are kept aware of the whole activity by demonstrations from a good class athlete, while several shots of Olympic Games finalists serve both to enliven the film and to keep the picture of the complete jump before the viewers.
The film includes examples of the various types of jumping, hopping and bounding exercises that help to develop the leg power needed for the event.

The film continues its logical development from the take-off to a simple flight pattern and landing and, finally, the boys and girls put it all together with several full approach jumps.

As in the other films in this series, the basic, realistic and educational approach to the event is all the more impressive coming from such a superlative athlete and excellent teacher.

Filming time - 26 minutes.

ATHLETICS FOR FUN is initially available as eight 26-minute films or videos, with a further five films (as well as a comprehensive book of the series), to follow.

Rediffusion Films in association with Eddie Kulukundis presents a Worldmark Production, ATHLETICS FOR FUN. Produced by Drummond Challis — Written and Directed by Tony Maylam.

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