Sprint Training (Volume 1 and 2)
High Hurdles (Volume 1 and 2)
by Speed Dynamics

1 Sprint Training

This is the first video film to furnish such a wealth of information about speed and speed related topics. The philosophy expressed in the film takes the view that commonly accepted ideas about the vital importance of heredity are invalid and inhibitive. Speed can be trained like any other biomotor ability. Viewers are encouraged to learn how and when speed should be developed and how to control speed training throughout the various phases up to the ultimate target performance.

Information is given on the latest research findings, and hints and drills are provided to help the progressive development of speed. The simple language and logical reasoning make it easy to follow the film.

A large range and variety of exercises are demonstrated and explained for all the nine areas, into which speed training is divided. Faults are pointed out and the key elements emphasised to help the coach concentrate on the most important phases and develop effective ways and means of training athletes for speed. The great number of exercises may be too much for the not so experienced coach to take in. Some of them are not very happily demonstrated and could well have been omitted. It is also possible to identify too many faults in the mechanics of movement, without any comment being given.

However, all the exercises reinforce the theory. They leave no doubt about their importance in achieving the aims and goals of the appropriate phases.

The long spoken sections tend to become rather tiring and hard to follow. The information given is important but could well be summarised or presented in a more visual way. Another possible criticism is that the videos are much too long. This makes it difficult for the lecturer to find the section he needs and even more difficult for the viewer to maintain concentration right to the end.

The part concerned with contrast (resistance and assistance) training could have been dealt with in greater detail. This might help to clarify much of the current misunderstanding of this training form.

However, the recapitulation of the different areas and factors covered does help to restore the level of understanding of the theory.

The filming could have been improved by varying the perspective. For example, the 'toes up' and 'knee drive' could have been shown more clearly by means of close-up shots, to train the 'coaching eye' to focus on key phases.

The charts shown in the film demonstrate very clearly the new approach to sprinting. An interesting point is the focusing on the nervous system as the main factor influencing speed development, and its importance in planning training for any sport.

2 High Hurdles

This video follows on naturally from the first video, and excellent use is made of the sprint exercises demonstrated in volumes 1 and 2 to point out the commonalities and differences between sprinting and hurdling.

The main focus is upon the nervous system and ways in which it can be reprogrammed, especially concerning the choice of hurdle height and spacing during practice.

The fluent transition between sprinting and hurdle clearance is well demonstrated and there is good progression from the teaching of beginners to the coaching of elite performers. The mechanics of take-off, clearance and landing are very clearly demonstrated and explained.

Again, some criticism may be made of the part of the video devoted purely to 'theory'. A video is not really appropriate for this kind of instruction,
which could be conducted better in a classroom environment. It is a pity, also, that the lower back exercises were shown without any commentary on the necessity of performing these exercises in the proper way, so as to avoid the risk of injury. There is always the danger of coaches and athletes blindly copying these exercises without a knowledge of the proper safeguards.

However, despite these few criticisms that may be taken into consideration for a future new edition, it is great to have these videos available. On the whole, the clarity, simplicity of treatment and the broad choice of possibilities offered make them very worthwhile for any coach who wishes to update his theoretical background and discover many new and interesting exercises to enliven training sessions for the sprints and hurdles.

Reviewed by Ralph Mouchbahani