THE 200 SPRINT

There is no set build for a sprinter, who can be of any size or shape.
The athlete should however possess **good overall strength** as well as the **ability for quick fluid movement** and a **short reaction time.**

Because the 200 is **an anaerobic event**, the oxygen **demand** of the muscles is so **high** that it **surpasses** the athletes **cardiovascular system** to supply an **adequate** amount of **oxygen** to the muscles. This means that when the race is over the athlete will be **in "oxygen debt"** and will be **gasping for air.**

In order that an athlete is prepared for this **overdrawn oxygen supply**, there should be a training programme of **aneroebic endurance conditioning**, as well as **sprint drills** to develop **power , good sprinting and "bend"technique** and **fast reactions.**

The **overall concept** that the athlete must grasp is that **maximum sprinting effort** must be carried out whilst **staying as relaxed as possible.** This is the aim of all the training that the athlete undertakes in the summer and in the winter months.

The athlete must be able to **last** a full 200 metre race. There is no way that she/he can run the full distance **"flat out".** There must be a period of **relaxed "coasting"** without losing too much speed. How to do is problem. ??

WARM UP

Before each training session or competition the athlete must carry out **a full warm up.** If the athlete has two or more races per meeting, then an **abbreviated** warm up may be arranged. for the second and subsequent races.

The **warm up** should be carried out in **comfortable flat shoes.** Initially a slow easy relaxed jog should be **'enjoyed'.** This may be 800, 1200 or a 1600. depending on the athlete's level of fitness. **A full range of exercises** should be completed ,**easing out and stretching all the main body parts** (neck, shoulders, upper body, hips, upper leg, lower leg and ankles).

Now we are ready to carry out our **sprint drills** .These have **interesting titles** like "High knee marching with extension of lower leg" ."High knee skipping with lower leg extensions" "High knee running with lower leg extensions" "Seat kicks" "Sprint arm action" and "Distance hopping bounding" etc. etc. **We can work on these FUN drills when we have gained a reasonable level of fitness.**The athlete will **select** their own **personal sprint drills** and work them into their own warm up routine.

Now is the time to **spike up** and run a few **rolling sprints** to almost complete the warm up.There should be about **4 runs** -each **slightly faster** than the one before. The **final one** should be nearly **max effort and be run round a bend.. Starting blocks** should now be set up and a few sprint starts completed to ensure that you have about **8 minutes rest** before **race time.**

THE STARTING POSITION

I will use the terms **medium start** and **bullet start**. You will find that the perfect starting position is yours alone, not one out of a text book. Practise and refine your starting position until you are happy with what you have achieved. The front block should be about 45o and the rear block should be as steep as you can handle.

On your marks position for the **medium** start is where the rear knee is positioned against the other leg instep: the hands are some distance in front, and behind the actual start line.The athlete should then **rock** forward allowing the arms to **swing** forward of their own accord to the ground.so that the fingers /thumb fall to the ground where they are comfortable.. Arms should be **shoulder width apart**, and the shoulders should be **ahead** of the hands. This will give an approximation to the correct position. The head is **not** thrown back, but positioned naturally, the eyes should be directed at a point on the track **just ahead** of the start line.The breathing should be **regularly steady**.

On your marks for the **bullet start** is the same as above except that the **feet are placed closer together**, the front foot being **further** from the line than in the medium start

Now we have decided on the appropriate starting position there needs to be a process **to get into the blocks**. for the serious **on your marks** situation. Over a number of years I have found this little dance move to be particularly effective--When the starter **gives the command**, the athlete should **pitter patter** with **small fast strides** to a position just in front of the start line. Then **wind** the body backwards into the blocks, **flicking** the legs out and **coiling** the body into a **good block position** ready for the next command..On the starter's **"SET"**, the athlete **rocks** further forward over the hands, at the same time **raising** the hips **without** any jerky movement. The **rear leg** will not **completely straighten**, and the **hips** will be very slightly **higher** than the **shoulders**. The **rear leg** is kept relaxed, and the athletes weight is **equally supported** by **arms** and **legs**..Both feet are **firmly** in contact with the blocks. The athlete's **back** and **head** form a **straight line** and the **vision is forward** and towards the ground.

THE GUN

At the sound of the starters gun the athlete should aim at **running away** off the blocks, working the arms **vigorously** to **counterbalance** the **explosion** of the legs. The body will be **inclined forward** for some eight metres, then the athlete will assume a more **upright** stance, so that by **40 metres** the athlete is **thoroughly** upright and **going for it**

THE PICK UP

As soon as the gun has exploded and the sprinter is in **full flight** every effort must be made to reach **maximum speed** as **soon** as possible. The arms will be working **extensively** and the **knee lift** will be increasing. The **transition** from the starting position to sprinting speed is almost complete.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

Once the sprinter is **moving at speed**, she/he must continue working the arms. The **faster** the **arms** are moved the **faster** the **legs** will follow. The forward movement of the arm should see the hand reach **shoulder height**, and should be carried back a short distance behind the **hip** in the **backward swing**. With the **arm** action maintained at a **high level**, the sprinter must aim at **maximum speed** of **leg** movement. The **knee lift** will be pronounced, and the feet should point straight down the middle of the lane. Obviously in reaching this state of **forward acceleration** there have been a few things to remember, but **most importantly** the .concept of **RELAXATION** is essential. **Relaxation at speed is one of the great secrets. Tensing up** comes from **trying too hard**, and is like running with the brakes on – **futile and inefficient**..

The sprinter must **isolate** her/him self mentally from the rest of the race, and from the other competitors. The body should become a **focus** controlled by **the mind**, running at **top speed**, unaffected by outside influences. Your performance in your individual lane is your sole concern, **DO NOT be distracted** by anything or anybody outside your lane area.

THE FINISH

Approaching the finish line the athlete will continue aiming at **rapid rate of leg action** and maintaining the **relaxation at speed** .(No head thrown back or heroic facial expressions.) Sprint **straight** through the finish to a point some 10 metres beyond the line, and decelerate gradually. If you are involved in a **close finish** then **thrust** both arms behind , and **drop the head chest** down towards the finish line. on the **penultimate** sprinting stride. It may well be that you will not be able to recover your **balance** after such a **manoeuvre,** but if you gain the decision who cares? A few bruises and track burns are surely a badge of track honour.?

REFLECTION

Looking back over these notes I realize that I have gone into quite a lot of detail, and in so doing I may have turned off the younger athlete who has become lost in all the words. I hope this is not so, but if it is please come and see me and I will break these seemingly complex tasks down into more manageable bites so that sprinting progress can be made in an easier manner. Thankyou.

Mike Marston