

still allow a wide range of athletes the ability to compete successfully. The emphasis for Level 4 will be on the first half of the vault. We hope the run and preflight of the handspring without a horse will improve. If we can get our Level 4 athletes to do this successfully along with a tight, locked out finish lying position on stacked mats, they will be on their way to developing good vaulting technique.

In competitions, the judges will evaluate the run for the first time. The actual speed will not be evaluated, but the judge will determine if the athlete maintains an accelerated run through to the hurdle. The judges will also be looking at positions on the board as part of their evaluation. The preflight of Level 4 should improve greatly.

If we start at the beginning competitive levels to work on the run, hurdle and board positions with tight, straight shapes and a good block off the horse, we will provide our athletes strong basics, allowing them to become better vaulters in the future.

VAULTING DRILLS FOR LEVEL 4 VAULT

General for most drills:

- 1 Tight, straight body position is required.
- 2 Arms should be stretched and by ears.
- 3 Underarm circle preferred method of arm swing.

RUN

- 1 Practice running in place, in front of a mirror or facing partners.

- 2 Run Races with your athletes: Against the clock or against each other.
- 3 Run full speed and hurdle into a pit or onto a chalked area or onto a spring board.
- 4 Game for 2 athletes. One runs and hits a board while the other athlete runs the same distance but does not have a board. The object is to get the athlete on the board side to beat the athlete that does not have to hit the board.

HURDLE

- 1 Practice the hurdle from a short run, medium run and then long run—hurdle over a sting mat to a chalked area.
- 2 Practice the hurdle from a short, medium & long run onto a spring board.
- 3 Hurdle and practice the under arm circle to a board.
- 4 Underarm circle drills on trampoline—every jump the athlete does an underarm swing.

BOARD DRILLS

- 1 Using a 3-5 step run, hurdle to board and stretch jump up to stacked mats.
- 2 Dive rolls over foam onto stacked mats.
- 3 3 board drill: hurdle to first board, stretch jump to second board, and stretch jump to third board and jump off. Emphasize arm circle and tight body.

PREFLIGHT

- 1 Handstand work—every athlete needs to learn a stretched fully extended position.
- 2 Tight body drills—lying on back, lying on stomach—coach should be able to lift athlete at toes and whole body should come off the floor as a unit.
- 3 Lots of board work: do dive rolls, front flips, jumps and, of course, thousands of handsprings.

BLOCKING DRILLS

- 1 Standing shoulder shrugs—arms by ears and then stretch shoulders to touch ears
- 2 Blocks against wall—tight body with arms by ears, touch wall & block off—do sets of 10-20.
- 3 Using small panel mat, from a push up position on floor, block to push up position on mat—panel should be at 2-4 inches high.
- 4 Handstand blocks: ³/₄ handstand and then pop to a stretched handstand.
- 5 Handstand blocks on a tumble track—see how many times the athlete can block in the handstand.

These are just a few of the thousands of drills you can use to help your athletes to improve their vaulting for the 2001 season. Good luck and if you have any questions, please email me at AmTwist@aol.com ■

