



YOU are the difference

Junior: hard to define
the concepts/expectations are
for coach consideration;
Junior: perhaps 11-16 years.

Russell Parsons, OAM, ATFCA4, ASCTA (Bronze),
North West Athletics, 2/72 Hopwood Street, ECHUCA, 3564; 03-54-801-705;
nwa@iinet.net.au www.nwaswimaths.com

*"You can't put in what God left out" (Chariots of Fire) ... but, the success achieved by most great athletes is based on **patient progression, lot's of hard work, and attention to detail.***

The *Good* Footballer

Generally turns up on time to training.
Generally trains regularly, but seeks opportunities to minimise personal discomfort.
Does the training program set by the coach.
Tries hard when challenged directly, but does the minimum amount of work they can get away with.
Appreciates encouragement. Tends to rationalise personal performance in relation to team performance.
Dreams of glory.
Socialises well with the team and club.

The *VERY GOOD* Footballer

Always turns up on time to training, with all necessary equipment.
Looks forward to training; trains regularly; seeks to maximise their efforts most of the time.
Listens carefully to and does the training program set by the coach.
Understands the team plan and personal performance responsibilities.
Tries hard on most occasions, and seeks opportunities to do that bit extra: *Hard at the ball.*
Listens to advice. Is willing to try new ideas and expand skills.
Generally maintains an appropriate pre-match and post-match routine, including rest, diet, and stretching.
Seeks to refine strengths and develop weaknesses.
Is capable of analysing personal performance.
Encourages team mates. Understands he has role model responsibilities. Socialises well.

The *GREAT* Footballer

Always turns up on time to training, with all necessary equipment.
Looks forward to training; trains regularly; seeks to maximise their efforts on all occasions..
Listens carefully to and does the training program set by the coach.
Demands an uncompromising level of excellence to get the maximum out of every session and match experience.
Listens to and applies advice; seeks to learn something from every person or situation.
Perseveres to achieve improvements in skills: *Hard at the ball.*
Provides positive feedback to the coach on session details and competition plans.
Understands and applies personal responsibilities in relation to the team plan.
Prioritises team goals ahead of personal glory.
Maintains a record that analyses personal and team performance.
Has and maintains a constructive pre-match and post-match routine, including rest and recovery, diet and stretching.
Does something (active or passive) that contributes everyday to performance progression and appreciation of the sport.
Does not just hope (dream) things happen, but makes them happen.
Encourages team mates, all the time. Appreciates and accepts responsibilities as a role model.

If you want to be the best footballer in the AFL,
**YOU should first strive to be the best footballer in your training group ..
in your team .. in your club .. in your league.**

There are a great many other character traits and behavioural patterns that can be associated with success.
Each team and each athlete has to balance and work within a set of personal constraints that cannot be addressed effectively by any single list.

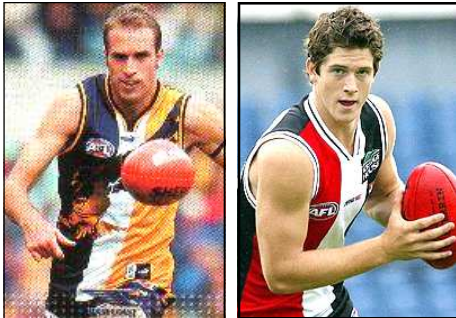
BUT, think ... what did **you** do today (if fact any day) that was a conscious and deliberate attempt to enhance your performance, and, your team's outcome?

**Champions demonstrate differences: the different things they do, and,
the things they do differently**

Let's apply these concepts to part(s) of a Training Session (example only)

Players and Coaches might like to add comment (expectations) in the respective categories

Activity	Good Footballer	Very Good Footballer	Great Footballer
Warm-Up	Arrives on time (or nearly) Jogs 1 lap Joins in kick-to-kick and/or handball drills	Arrives on time Jogs 2 laps .. movement variations Stretching Kick-to-kick / handball drills Non-Preferred kick/handball practice Encourages other team members	Arrives early Jogs 2 laps .. movement variations, incl. specific drills and stretching. Gradual drill / skill progression: kicks and handball Communicates encouragement, especially to younger team members
Key Drills & Skills	Listens and does the drills, with special effort on those that best display personal skills. Generally tries hard when pressed, but, readily accepts rest options.	Listens. Attacks drills with speed and aggression; seeks opportunities to do more than the minimum. Applies personal training error penalties and some extra practice of non-preferred skill options.	Listens and applies drills with speed, aggression and attention to detail. Applies personal training error penalties (e.g. push-ups, sit-ups, speed/movement drills) and extra practice of non-preferred skill options. Works hard to improve weaknesses and enhance strengths. Minimises rest; sees practice as a chance to extend skills and take chances. Trains at a greater than match intensity. Seeks feedback; analyses performance and acts on appropriate advice.
Warm Down	Jogs a lap and goes in.	Jogs; a few extra kicking sets; warms down gradually.	Jogs, practising non-preferred skills, e.g. bouncing and ball control skills.



Potential .. is what you are capable of doing
Motivation .. determines what you do
Attitude .. determines how well you do

An interesting project is to honestly and privately take the
Commitment Assessment Survey
 (available on request)

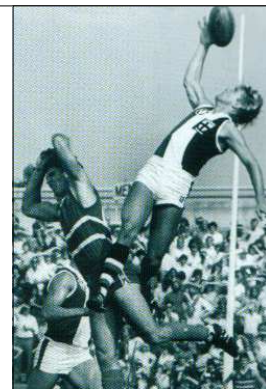
Muscles strengthen and grow while they are being rested, not during vigorous exercise. **Rest** (recovery) is the athlete's **most important training session**

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Every athlete is an experiment of one
 Size and age have little to do with becoming a great footballer ... time will bring progression if the athlete adopts the **attitude** of a great footballer
 Seniority has nothing to do with age ... it is a state of mind
Train your body and your brain
The harder and smarter you train ... the harder it is to surrender

Speed / Movement Drills in AFL Football

An Introduction: Junior Development



AIMS:

- Enhance the athlete's capacity to be in control of their intentions and reactions;
- Improve movement efficiency, speed, co-ordination, and balance;
- Improve confidence;
- Improve strength and power through ranges of motion specific to AFL expectations;
- Improve capacity to deliver movements (planned and unexpected) on both sides of the body;
- To enhance preparation for the potential movement demands of AFL;
- To provide interest variety in the training regime;

Resources:

All athletes to have access a football (or soccer / netball) throughout the session.
Witches hats.
Skipping Ropes.
Whistle.

Time on Task issues are critical ... while individualised extension, correction, and development of skills is a critical aspect of all training plans, a minimum of "down time" or single athlete drill execution is essential. Assistants can draw out players who would benefit from specific attention.

Drills may occupy a segment(s) of a session, or, be the focus for a greater proportion of session time; it is recommended that drill exposure be brief, specific, regular ... **programmed into the warm-up / warm down phase of training sessions.**

Examples only
Don't try to achieve too much too quickly
Quality more important than Quantity
Do not prioritise "skill extension" ahead of "skill acquisition".

If a drill challenges delivery of a movement or skill on a single side of the body (e.g. speed running / ball bounce), both sides of the body should be drilled equally ... it is strongly suggested that practice should commence with drills on the non-preferred side. We enhance our abilities more through development of our weaknesses, than by excessive repetition of our strengths.

Different activity emphasis (intensity):
warm-up cf. **warm down**
(not always appreciated)

Accurate Demonstrations VITAL: An Eyeful is Better than a Mouthful
All Drills and Tasks

Athletes (we all) learn errors as quickly as correct movements .. so, learn correctly first.
It takes about 50 repetitions to establish a habit .. it can take 10,000 repetitions to change a habit.

Session 1: (15-20 Minutes)

Cones 30m apart; jog/run bouncing / handball (preferred/non-preferred) ... evaluation of group and individual skills.

AFL Football is an "open" task .. contact .. **brief** explanation (closed v. open)

Drills often practiced/developed in isolation .. Need to increase capacity to deliver movement in "open" situations

- **A-Skip** (hands on hips)
- **A-Skip** (hands on head)
- **A-Skip** (football above head; straight arms)

A-Skip
Toe Up-Heel Up-Knee Up: Step-over the Knee of the Support leg; active landings

Brief outline (1 minute, no more) of fundamental rules:

Shortest distance between two points is a straight line

Long Levers move Slow(er) .. Short Levers move Fast(er) .. (relate to speed goals)

Speed is the Key .. in AFL, 15m speed is critical .. achieve maximum speed in the minimum number of steps .. 3-4 steps

Get to the ball first .. shoulder in front .. we are dealing with small distances but significant advantages

- **Running-the-Boards** (learn); then, **A-Skip** ► **Running-the-Boards** ► **Sprint** (15m) .. with/without ball
 - **A-Skip** (football above head) .. Review
 - **Butt Kicks** .. Right / Left / Alternating ... *fast "Snaps"* .. with / without ball
- Cones 30m apart; jog/run bouncing / handball (preferred/non-preferred)
Group / Individual re-evaluation
- **Fast Claw** ... group drill; fence / partner support
 - **Review:** Coach discretion

Co-ordination
is
Critical

The Training Plan is flexible .. better to have a plan that can be adapted, than have no plan at all.

Coach(es) can and should consider:

WHY DRILLS? and
Standard Strategies



Why Drills?

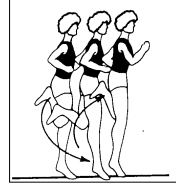
Russell Parsons, OAM: North West Athletics
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1. To practice **YOU** being in command of your intentions and reactions.
2. To provide interest, variety, and fun.
3. To improve technique: including rhythm and co-ordination.
4. To improve balance and flexibility (drill both sides of the body to equal efficiency).
5. To improve strength and power through ranges of motion specific to your sports(s).

*Self-esteem is developed through confronting challenges ...
and, developing skills to achieve positive outcomes*

6. To focus on and understand aspects of your event; drills are the key to technique improvement and refinement; the establishment of the correct *dynamic stereotype*.
7. To expand your confidence in your potential as an athlete and as a person.



Muscle Memory and Skill Acquisition

When we learn a skill, it requires **repeated** and **continuous practice** before it becomes “**automatic**”.

An **automatic skill** is a movement we can do without thought.

Walking is the obvious example. From our early years repeated practice day in, day out, result in our arms and legs eventually co-ordinating into an efficient walking action.

Think about the almost countless arm movement variations you can perform while walking.

Simply: your muscles develop a (correct) “*muscle memory of walking*”. Your (mind and) body is free to focus on other tasks, and, develop a muscle memory of those tasks.

Like walking, running / sprinting / hurdling (examples) are acquired skills that can become automatic when our body develops a “*muscle memory of running / sprinting / hurdling*”. This takes time and is **strongly dependent** on **regular**, ever-improving practice.



“We are what we repeatedly do ... excellence can become a habit”

Learning new skills is FUN !!

- **Think** about your sport .. each sport reflects the sum of a series of movements; each movement can form the basis of a drill. Drills enhance movement skills: speed, co-ordination, and confidence .. as such they address issues that contribute to improved performance in **all** sports.
- The range of drills is almost endless, but pure fun; variety and enjoyment aside, drills should be specific to the movements you wish to enhance. There are **basic drills**, but a multitude of **sports-specific drills**.
- **Drills** should be **precisely planned** and **perfectly executed** .. **repeatedly**. You have to demand precision, but also apply persistence.
- While in many instances walking through a drill is a good basic starting point (i.e. teaching the mind and body what is expected), some drills are easier to do at a moderate tempo, e.g. many athletes find A-Skip easier to accomplish than A-Walk.
- Athletes should be encouraged to “feel” the movement, and associate the correct feeling with the correct movement. Remember, the athlete can “*feel*” the movement .. the coach can only see it. But, the coach by providing positive, corrective feedback, can assist the athlete to refine his/her feelings.
- Where appropriate slow the movement down ... complete with eyes closed ... learn to read your body.
- We learn incorrect responses as easily as correct movements. **NEVER** practice errors. **Do not compromise on quality** .. aim on **every** occasion aim to practice a drill perfectly.
- **End** each training unit with a **successful outcome**, e.g. a perfect drill performance, and, (if appropriate) include the drill into the complete movement pattern to demonstrate your mastery and appreciation of its role in the skill you are refining.
- *You can't put in what God left out* (Chariots of Fire), but **drills** offer us an opportunity to refine and expand our skills, and, accumulate self-esteem ... don't miss the opportunity.

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2/72 Hopwood Street, ECHUCA, 3564; 03-54-801-705 nwa@iinet.net.au
www.nwaswimaths.com

It takes only 50 repetitions to establish a “habit” ... up to 10,000 repetitions to change the habit

Session 2: (15-20 Minutes)

Cones 30m apart; prone start – ball at 5m – pick-up – bounce – around cone – bounce – ball down; repeat 6-10. (Handball / kick practice, espec. non. preferred)

- **Review: A-Skip / Butt Kicks / Running-the-Boards;** Coach Commands. *Shortest distance between two points is a straight line / Long Levers move Slow(er) .. Short Levers move Fast(er)*

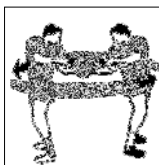
- **Torso Circles** .. ball held overhead in a straddle stand position; move the ball above the body in large clockwise circle x 5 .. then reverse the movement; as the ball moves, arch the back and simultaneously bend at the knees.



- **High Step Karioka** .. ball .. arms extended .. lead off left leg - lead off right leg; walk, then faster; 4-6 repeats over 15m

- **Rocky Half Twists / Rocky Full Twists**

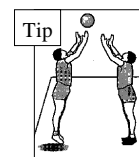
Straddle stand position; back to partner, an arm's length away; ball extended out from chest. Keep feet and hips (relatively) stationary .. twist and pass (R to L; L to R). Variations: Full Twist; Kneeling; Seated.



- **Review: A-Skip / Butt Kicks / Running-the-Boards** .. variations; possibly Double A's (as a challenge)

Fast Claw

Introduce: **Tip Drill:** Straddle stand position (with partner / wall); tip the ball back and forth while jumping in the air. Variations: solo against a wall; partners move laterally. Practice for next session.



Sports can learn from each other

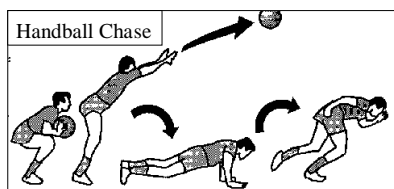
Cones 30m apart; prone start – ball at 5m – pick-up – bounce – around cone – ball down ... repeat
Build towards speed work .. Standing starts (15-20m) off alternating first steps; reaction starts.

Session 3: (15-20 Minutes)

Review: A-Skip / Butt Kicks / Running-the-Boards .. Coach Commands
100 Handballs .. Right / Left .. 5 Push-Ups by both for any drop
Torso Circles / Karioka / Tip Drill

- **Squat, Handball, Fall, Chase & Recover:**

Straddle stand position; squat down, extend legs, handball away (approx. 15m) .. drop and execute a push-up .. Chase and recover the ball .. sprint on for 15m, bounce .. handball or kick to partner / target.

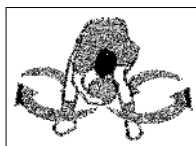


- **Quickstep Ladder** .. various (separate sheet)



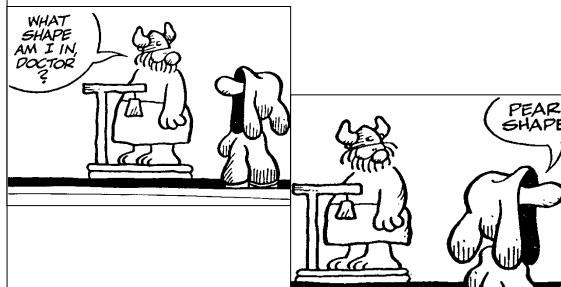
- **Resisted Starts** (Sprint to 10m .. Pick up ball .. Sprint 10m, bounce .. alternate with partner)

- **Figure Eight Drill (between legs):** Straddle stand position, bent at the waist, holding the ball behind one leg with two hands; pass the ball around and outside the legs in a figure eight pattern. Set targets (complete figure 8's); increasing speed.



- **Review:** re-evaluate co-ordination; **positive, corrective feedback.**

By Failing to Prepare



YOU are Preparing to Fail

North West Athletics, 1996

Stretching is very important; warm-ups should be highly individual yet have a core content that the group can complete ..

AGILITY and CO-ORDINATION (Latif Thomas: www.completespeedtraining.com)

(RP: Graphics added and minor alterations)

'Agility' is one of those words that covers a variety of skills. When people talk about agility, most often they are talking about an athlete's ability to make cuts and quickly change directions.

The way I see it, the primary component to improved agility is through the development of CO-ORDINATION.

Before you start putting athletes through complicated drills that have them going in ten different directions over the course of a 30 second time period, you must take a step back and address their level of coordination.

Even the best athletes have co-ordination problems.

The thing about co-ordination and agility is this:

The earlier you address it, the better the long term results.

If athletes don't begin developing their coordination until their mid-teens, they will be limited in the amount of progress they can make.

That's why I like to get kids started as early as possible, preferably before they hit puberty.

I'm not saying a 17 year old can't improve her agility and coordination to a significant degree, but the if she started when she was 8, she'd be much better off.

OK, here is what to do...

STEP 1: Improve your athletes' coordination

My favorite way to both expose an athlete's lack of coordination and also develop it is through the use of an **agility ladder**.

You can do an infinite number of drills that focus on single leg movement, double leg, linear, lateral, backward movement, change of direction - the list goes on and on.

All of these movements will help address the types of movement they may see in their competition.

As we get those down, we implement the traditional cone drills that allow for more instruction on movement patterns that are more applicable to game situations.

But like everything else, technique is the most important skill to both teach and learn.

As I've said before, I even use agility work with my track (straight ahead) athletes during the pre-season as well.

Why?

When athletes are uncoordinated, in order to maintain balance and keep the athlete from falling down or getting hurt, the brain has to work harder.

In order to compensate for all the extra math that the brain must do instantaneously and on the fly in order to coordinate the movements of all the active muscles in the body, the body must slow way down.

This is why athletes often look like they are stuck in the mud during agility drills.

Well, sprinting is a highly technical activity as well. So if athletes don't improve coordination and agility, their brains will have to slow the limbs down during sprinting to compensate.

So, like with flexibility, athletes aren't being held back because of some innate lack of ability, but simply because they are only operating at 50% of their true ability.

By applying these (and all the other skills we've gone over so far) they can operate at a much higher percentage of their true ability.

At your next practice, set up some cones or a few agility ladders and try these techniques out. I think you'll be surprised at how much difficulty even the most accomplished athletes have at performing these exercises correctly



Potential: is what you may be capable of doing; **Motivation:** directs what you do;

Attitude: determines how well you do.

STEP 2: Correct body position

One of the reasons that athletes have a tough time changing directions on the fly is simply because they are out of position.

So here are two things to teach your athletes when doing agility training, especially when doing cone-type drills:

1. Keep your balance.
2. Push away from the ground when planting.

Applying force in the opposite direction that you want to go is the best way to change directions quickly.

In your Complete Speed Training program, I show you exactly how to teach these skills and what errors athletes typically make.

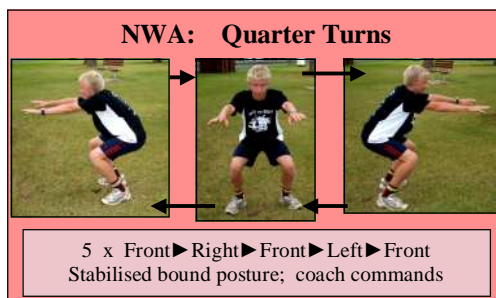
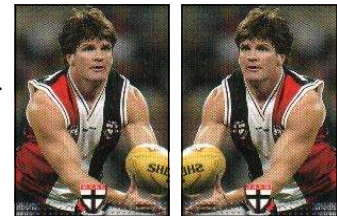
As with most things, it is much better shown on video/DVD than in written format.

STEP 3: Work both sides of the body equally

Athletes always prefer to start or focus on one leg over the other.

So, I always make sure I do an equal number of efforts starting with left leg or moving to the left as I do to the right.

We have to turn weaknesses into strengths and this is a glaring example of that fact.



Always start a drill or activity on your non-preferred side ... **why?** Think about it.

If your coach calls a halt to the drill,
you will at least have practiced each side equally,
perhaps more so on your non-preferred side.

Focus on improving your “weaknesses”, not just trying to enhance your strengths.

Quality is more important than quantity

The Mirror Test

All that matters is that you can look in your mirror,
and honestly tell the person you see there,
you have done your best.

Skills are Everything

Coaching should incorporate
a strong skills focus,
in particular
with youngsters

Agility—Co-ordination Drills

If you want to improve ... work on the things that you are so good at:

Ladder Drills: Single Step .. Double Step .. Breakdowns .. Laterals ..
Ali Shuffle .. Ins & Outs .. Icky Shuffle ... forwards and **backwards** .. etc. etc.

Don't just do the things you can do .. accept the challenge ..
explore improvements

DVD support is available .. separate files

