

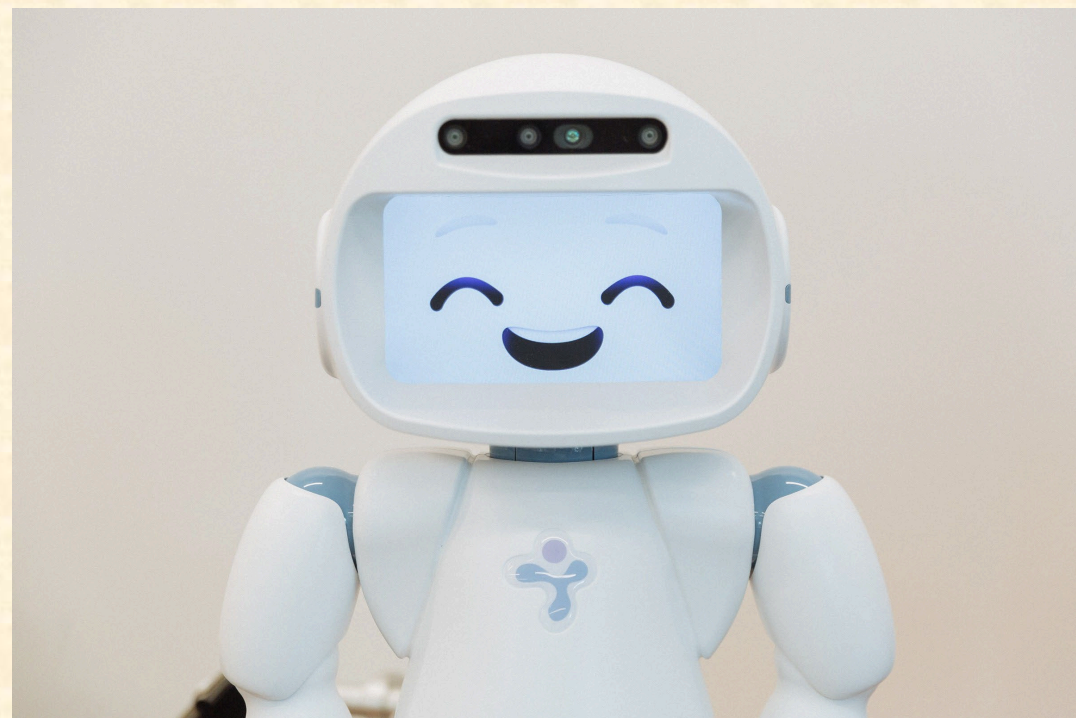
Blocks: Unconventional Approach

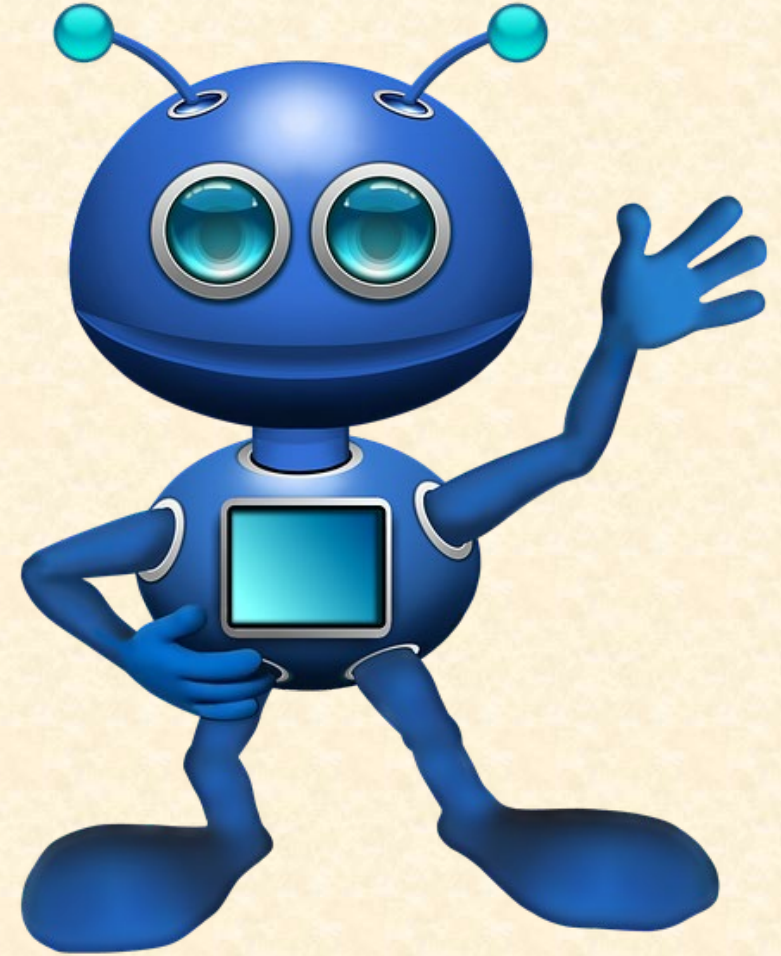
Derrick McKenzie

402-659-7526

dmckenzi@nebrwesleyan.edu

Director of XC / Track and Field @ Nebraska Wesleyan University





OVERRATED?

- PR Using Blocks (FR-JR)

- 21.84
- 48.22
- 1 x NCAA All-American

- PR Without Blocks (JR-SR)

- 21.49
- 47.12
- First time without blocks in the open 400 ... 47.83
- First time without blocks in the 200 ... 21.49
- Never ran in the 48's again
- 4 x NCAA All-American (400 / 4x4 – Leadoff)

Make it Make Sense

I would rather
develop/have...

Explosive, powerful,
and twitchy athlete **vs**
a technical robot

How To Go About Blocks - NWU

What We Are

- Power Development
 - Resisted
 - Bounds-Standing Long Jumps
 - Hurdle Jumps-Depth Jumps-High Box Jumps-Horizontal Box Jumps-Hills
 - Med Ball Throws / Tosses
- Daily Acceleration Work w/o blocks
- Wall Drill – maybe the only drill we do
- Cones to stay straight
- Strength Training

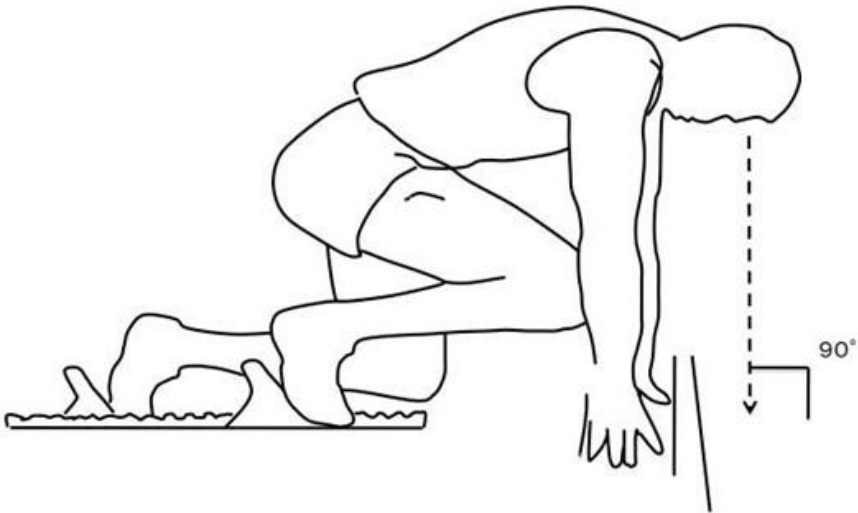
What We Are Not

- Heavy on block work
- Drill and Kill
- Acceleration Pattern / Tape Drill
 - Unless we are hurdling

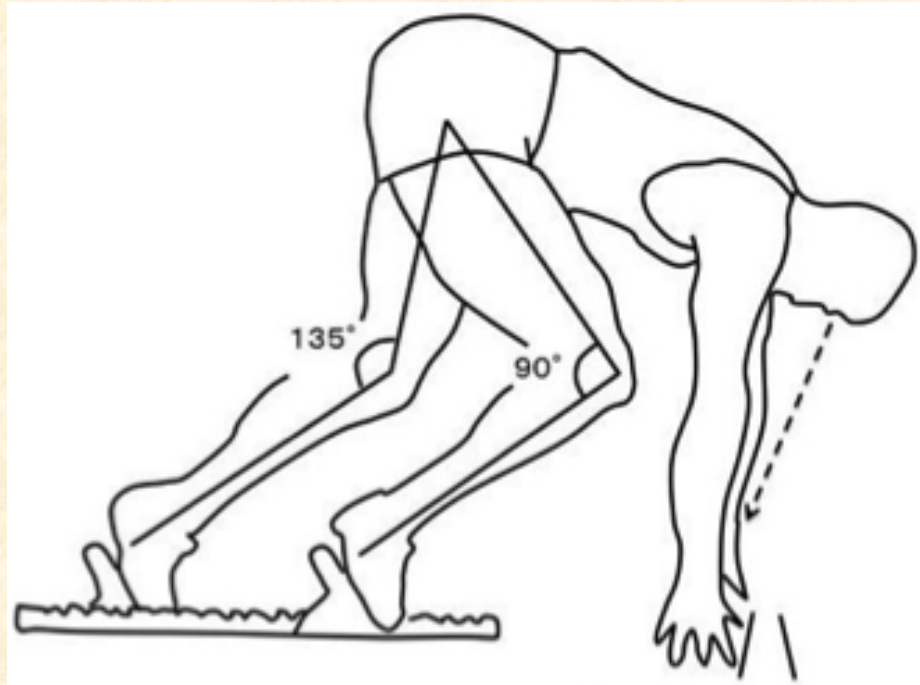
While We Are Here

4 Checks Before Set

- Parallel
- Perpendicular
- Pads
- Shoulders over hands



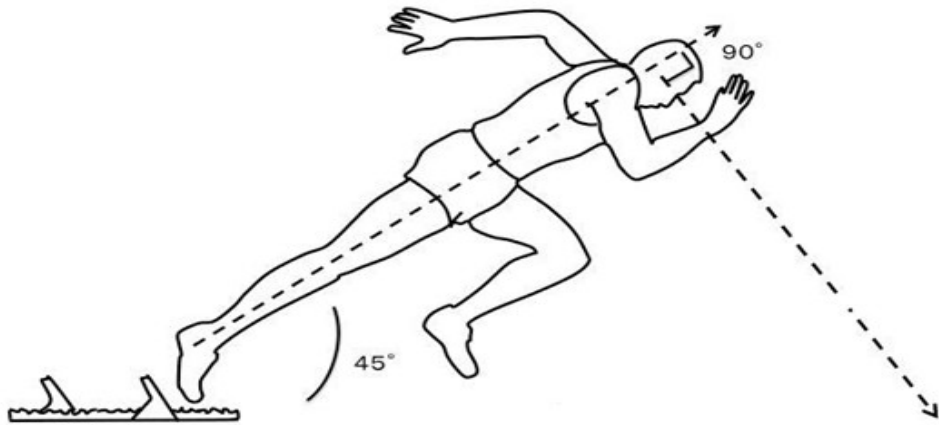
While We Are Here



3 Checks On “Set

- Hips
- Head Alignment
- Eyes

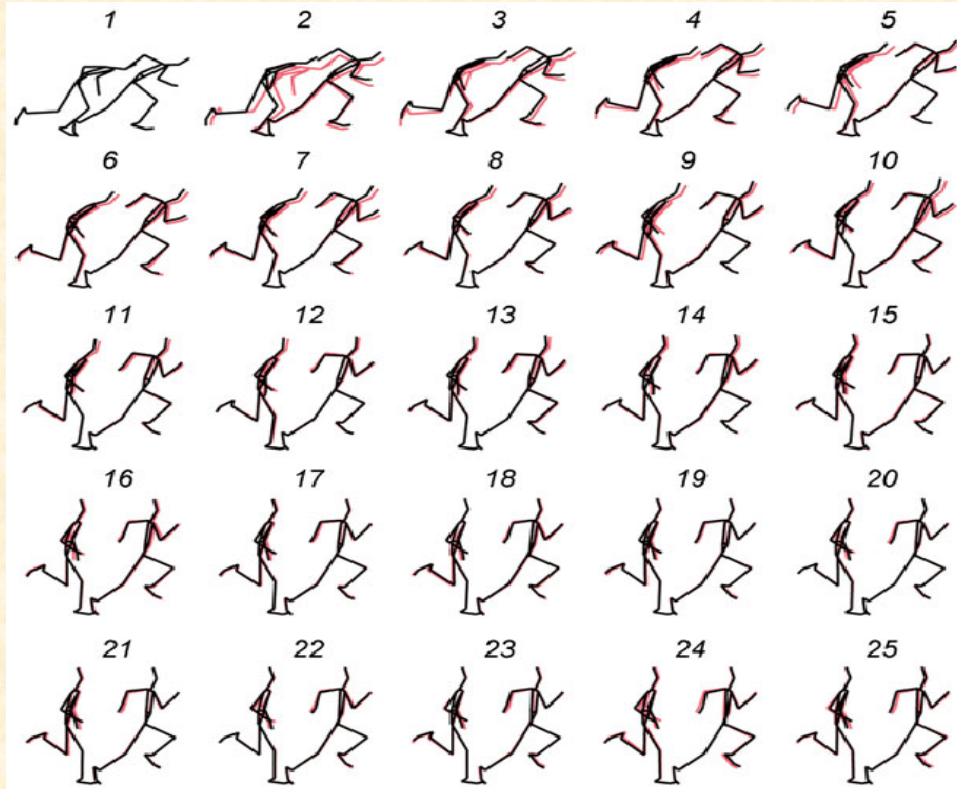
While We Are Here



3 Checks “Block Clearance” (Besides an explosive push)

- Powerful Rod (Ankle-Hips-Spine)
- Air time
- Hard Z – applying force backwards

While We Are Here



As we accelerate...

- Powerful Progression
- Heel recovery starts below opposite knee
- Foot strikes behind COM in beginning – gradually coming underneath
- 0-15 strides (15-30m) ... depending on ability

Favorite Cues/Drills

Cues

- PUSH! PUSH! PUSH!
- Fighter jet analogy
- Explode off the blocks
- Drive/Punch knee through wall
- Tear back the track
- Patiently and powerfully push up to top speed
- Trim Grass
- Drive “Out” and ”Up” – Never “low”

Drills

- Wall Drill
- Walk up
- 3-5 punches
- Med Balls – Bounds – Resisted - Jumps
- Cones – stop the speed skaters
- Every stride, rep, run, in flats or spikes - we focus on “pushing out the back”
- Block Work
- 3-6 reps ... 20-40m
- 2-4 weeks without doing any block work ... still run fast





Basic Sprint Mechanics

- *Relaxed Aggression (Rage) – Fast and Relaxed
- *Run Tall – Hips Tall
- *Stay Square (No Shoulder Rotation)
- *Arms “Down The Track”
- *Arms 90 degrees
- *Hands: “Cheek to Cheek”
- *Heel to Glute









Questions??