

WORKSHEET 4

Common approach problems

<http://trackandfield.about.com/od/highjump/p/High-Jump-Approach-Technique.htm>

The biggest problems in the high jump always occur during the approach, on the ground. They never really occur up in the air, unless you're totally sitting over the bar. Once you leave the ground your flight path is set. You can move yourself very little in the air. So usually, when athletes make mistakes over the bar I don't look at what they did there, I look at what they did during the approach.

The three biggest mistakes athletes make on this approach happen in what I call the transition point. I'm running, I'm developing speed, I'm coming out strong. Step four (in a 10-step approach) is good, strong running. And then it's time to start our curve. Steps five, six and seven is where approach problems happen.

Problem number one, the majority we see: Most boy high jumpers have played basketball, they've played football – wide receiver, running back – they're in a speed type position. Their whole lives everyone's been taught to run post patterns, flag patterns; they run down and they cut. The biggest problem we see in the high jump is that transition step, especially the boys, between steps five and six. They cut off the whole turn and run a direct, straight line at the pit.

Second biggest problem: The athletes get ready to start their approach and they're going through all of their stuff, whatever they do – and whatever they do is fine, as long as they do the same thing all the time – then they start looking at the bar. So instead of running the first five steps absolutely straight, they start to cut in, and eventually they takeoff at the middle of the bar, which carries them over a higher point on the bar. Remember, the middle of the bar is about an inch, inch and a half lower than the ends. Also, if you run straight, then you don't have a turn to establish rotation in the air, and you can't get up and over the bar. It's a flat jump in the air.

Third problem: Athletes, once again, are ready to start their approach and they start running and they feel tight. So they swing all the way out to the right (or the left if they approach from the left) and they come in, again, in a straight line. So now there's no turn at all. There's no turn to set up the rotation, so it's a long jump-style jump.