

## Training Guidance for Coaches – Jumps

This guidance has been developed to raise awareness and help identify the potential hazards a training session presents and examples of how to mitigate the risks of accidents and injuries occurring. 'It is the responsibility of all coaches and athletes to ensure that all training sessions are conducted in a safe manner' (UKA Code of Practice, 2022).

### What are the Hazards and who might be harmed?

'A hazard is something with potential to cause harm to an individual. This can be an object, an activity, a medical condition (diagnosed or unknown), environmental conditions and even substance abuse' (UKA Code of Practice, 2021).

Whether a coach is familiar with a venue or using a facility for the first time, hazard identification and applying control measures to mitigate risk will form an integral part of session preparation, planning and delivery. Pre-activity, during activity and post-activity checks should be made to ensure the environment is safe for all users. An athletics training facility is a dynamic, changeable environment often comprising multiple user groups with differing needs and objectives. When coaches work together and communicate well this is beneficial to the safety, well-being and enjoyment for all athletes, coaches, and event disciplines.

### What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is an inspection which is carried out to identify any hazards which may occur during an activity. The purpose is to identify, assess and determine the level of risk or likelihood that the hazard could cause accidents and injuries.

It is best practice to conduct a risk assessment as part of club activity, both generally to cover all areas of the clubs training and competition activities at all venues, as well as a specific event group risk assessment. Once in place the risk assessment can act as a reminder and check list when conducting all aspects of training.

Some of the common Hazards include

- Slips, trips, and falls
- Collisions with others
- Equipment
- Environment.

### Pre-session Preparation

- Athletes and Coaches
- Equipment
- Environment (facility, weather)

### Athletes & Coaches

Prior to a training session, it is important coaches\* are aware of any issues which may affect an athlete's participation specifically in relation to their health and well-being. Understanding their readiness to participate by possessing relevant knowledge regarding pre-existing medical conditions, existing injuries, impairments or illnesses. Similarly, this information would be useful

for clubs to know about all coaches and volunteers. It would be best practice to have access to essential emergency first aid equipment and have appropriately trained personnel available at the venue during training sessions.

[\\*Data protection Act 2018](#)

To conduct training sessions all coaches must possess a valid UKA licence to coach to coach jumps and be operating within the code of conduct of the coaching licence scheme. With regards to the jumping events, coaches are required to complete an additional education module for Pole Vault and Triple Jump at Coach Level before coaching these events.

If an athlete is training alone only prescribe session content appropriate for lone training, no vaulting or activities considered high risk. Keep to track based running and light conditioning work. Communicate with the athlete (or parent if U18) before and after the session to clarify session content and check on health status pre and post session.

In addition, to help with both the quality of coaching provision and to ensure the safety and welfare of participants, the athlete to coach ratio should always be manageable and within the recommended guidance.

The pre session briefing is a great time to make sure all athletes and ANY support coaches are clear regarding the session content, their individual roles and responsibilities and that safety is always adhered to by everyone. Before the session begins, check athletes have the correct clothing and footwear appropriate to the activities and weather conditions. (Spikes, trainers, weather appropriate clothing).

Summary of notable hazards.

- Safeguarding
- Athlete overload

## Equipment

Before using any equipment, whether it be competition based or non-competition-based training aids, a thorough inspection should be completed noting any damage including general wear and tear. If any items are deemed unsuitable for use, put them to one side and report to the club and or facility. As a control measure a repair may be needed ensure the safe and effective use of a piece of equipment.

Examples of equipment to be checked.

- Stands – fully adjustable, stable, option to weigh down if required (elastic bar)
- Crossbars – undamaged (smooth and straight with no rough edges or visible delaminated ends), secure end supports on both sides
- Elastic bar – ensure from a SAPCA approved supplier with flexible and visible elastic, foam pieces are intact.
- Poles (PV) – correctly taped, undamaged (clear of deep scratches and cracks) with securely fitted and correctly sized pole bung.

## Environment (facility, weather)

### Facility

Prior to the session thoroughly check the activity/training areas (runways, pits), landing areas and surrounding spaces (grass spaces, surrounds) for debris, trip hazards, standing water etc. An element of preparation may be required to ensure the safe use of competition-specific jumps areas.

- Runways – check the integrity of the surface; wear and tear patches, surface is even, clear of debris, and that the end of the runway is visible
- Raised runway or downhill ramp – check fixings are secure, and the runway is stable
- Sandpit – may require digging/turning over, raking, watering, edges visible. Remove any hazardous objects. Animal faeces, deceased animals or broken glass should be reported to the facility for safe removal
- Take off boards and blanking boards – firmly fixed and stable, flush with the runway
- PV plant box – clearly visible and flush with the runway, check for any damage
- Landing area (mats, protective covers) – ensure they are securely fastened together with no gaps and covered with a spike proof wear sheet. Check under rain cover / wear sheet before use
- Surrounds – impact absorbing material or additional matting, clear of equipment and debris
- Check all landing areas (mats, sandpit) for any objects and remove immediately.
- Manual handling - landing area covers can be heavy and require more than one person to remove them safely to avoid injury. Likewise, take off boards, blanking boards, raised or downhill runway and digging/raking the sandpit require manual labour, anyone carrying out these tasks should be fit and competent to do so to minimise the risk of injury.

### Weather

When training outside the weather conditions will have an impact on the session, equipment, and facility. Surfaces can become slippery and present a slip and fall hazard on approach and take off. Excessively wet landing mats combined with cold weather can lead to athletes becoming very cold and uncomfortable. With younger children this can become a welfare issue, especially if the athletes do not have wet weather clothing.

Similarly, during very hot and sunny weather shaded areas (umbrellas, dugouts) should be available to minimise time spent in the sun. Athletes will need to bring ample fluids for hydration, sunscreen for protection and dress appropriately. To ensure athletes do not become overloaded, session content will need to reflect the conditions and be adjusted according.

During high winds the safety of vertical jumping events needs to be carefully considered. If deemed too windy, these events should avoid take off skills and stay grounded during the session.

### Environment; Summary of notable hazards.

- Slips, trips, falls
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Safeguarding
- Manual handling

## During the session

Training sessions can be very busy during peak times. Often different groups of athletes will share the same facilities and equipment. Communication between coaches is important to aid the efficient running of a session and to minimise the risks of accidents occurring. Athletes have a responsibility to adhere to track and field usage guidance and to look after all their belongings. When equipment is not being used, it should be stored in a safe place or returned to a designated storage area. Loose personal belongings (bags, shoes) poles and other non-competition training aids (take off boxes, mini hurdles, trampettes) all pose a trip hazard.

### *Athletes*

- Keep activity areas clear, well managed with consistent communication and clear instruction to athletes about when it is safe to jump can help minimise the risk of collisions with others
- Always ensure the activity is appropriate to the athletes age and stage of development, including technical and physical levels of competence
- Technical progressions should be equally appropriate and regressed as necessary to minimise the risk of injury from poor technique (take off, landing)
- Ensure that all equipment used is appropriate for the athlete's level of ability (poles, take off boxes)

### *Weather*

- Monitor the weather and visibility. During floodlit sessions ample lighting is essential to maintain visual of the runway, take off area (board/box) and landing area (mat/pit). When low light levels affect visibility stop the session.

### *Landing areas*

- Throughout the session check the landing area mats remain securely fastened to avoid injury from athletes falling or stepping into unseen gaps
- Sandpits need to be regularly raked and the edges swept clear and visible. When sand is pushed towards the end of the pit, rake or drag sand towards the take off area and level off. Sand should remain level with the edge of the pit
- Store any rakes and brushes away from the pit and runway to avoid trips and falls
- Surrounds should be kept clear, with additional matting repositioned as appropriate
- Ensure any landing area covers are clear of the landing area and surrounds. Covers on the floor pose a trip hazard when exiting the landing area. Pit covers should be positioned well clear of the sandpit / landing area to avoid collisions during run throughs or when exiting the landing area.

### *Runways*

- Keep the runway and take off areas clear of equipment and other debris to minimise trips and falls
- Any items used for check marks should be placed adjacent to the runway to minimise tripping hazards
- During inclement weather remove standing water and ensure the take-off areas (including take off boards) aren't too slippery.

### *Stands & crossbars*

- Monitor the stability of the stands, particularly when using elastic bars. To avoid stands falling onto the athlete, use elastic bars with caution and ensure the stands are stable with a weight appropriate to the height of the bar, angle and speed of approach of the athlete.
- During failed attempts crossbars can fall onto the landing area or on top of the athlete. Ensure athletes are aware of potential collisions with falling crossbars during PV and HJ and how to minimise the effects
- Crossbars and PV Poles can become damaged and even break during a trial. Discard broken equipment away from the activity area.

#### Summary of notable hazards.

- Slips, trips, falls
- Collisions with others
- Equipment failure
- Environment
- Athlete overload

#### Post Session

When the session has concluded, check all equipment for damage and report or make minor repairs as necessary. Return all equipment to storage and put away safely ready for next use. Report any notable damage and put equipment no longer fit for purpose to one side with a note and report the damage to the facility operator. Tidy landing areas and prepare for next use, recover with help from others (manual handling) to prevent weather damage. Ensure all metal covers are fastened together and brakes applied.

During the post session debrief with athletes check everyone is healthy and report any accidents or injuries to the club or facility operator as appropriate. For safeguarding and welfare reasons, ensure all young athletes have been collected before departing the venue yourself or make sure a club representative or welfare officer is present until all club training has concluded, and everyone has departed from the facility.

#### Other

- Ensure training is supervised by a qualified professional (qualified and licensed coach)
- Training prescription should be age-related and not age- determined. Prescription should be based according to biological status, training age, motor skill competency, technical proficiency, existing strength levels, and psychosocial maturity.
- Regardless of training mode, training volume and intensity shall not be increased at the expense of technical competency.
- Remind athletes to ensure they are hydrated before the session starts and have access to a drink and refuelling either before, during or post session
- Anticipate potential risks of injury, taking measures to eliminate or reduce them, and alert participants to these risks, including recommended coach : athlete ratios
- Ensure athlete can hear instructions (use of headphones whilst training)
- Coaches shall achieve and maintain professional certification(s) with continuing education requirements and a code of conduct.

- Coaches must operate within their scope of practice; responsibilities and knowledge and understanding of jumps training
- Athletes must be made aware of both track and gym discipline and etiquette when using the facilities
- Ensure equipment is wiped clean after use
- Athletes and coaches should always be informed of the correct mode of dress required for coaching sessions.
- Clothing should not be so loose that it obstructs movement, nor should it be so tight that it restricts movement.
- Clothing should insulate / aerate the athlete comfortably.
- All jewellery and watches should be removed prior to the session commencing.
- In the event that an athlete wishes to wear different clothing in accordance with their religion of cultural traditions, this should be discussed and a suitable outcome agreed on, resulting in maintaining respect for the individual's beliefs at the same time as enabling safe participation.
- Glasses should be with plastic or unbreakable lenses, ideally secured with a headband.
- Coaches should ensure that athletes wear appropriate footwear.
- Footwear should provide good traction.
- Footwear should provide good support and appropriate cushioning for the activity being carried out.
- Laces should be well tied and there should be no obstruction such as loose tongues of shoes.