

How to Start an Effective High School Throws Program



By Mike Curry
Head Coach & President
Golden State Throwers

What do you have at your disposal & what can hold you back?

- Field availability?
 - Share with other "spring" teams?
 - Random events
 - Other fields too close?
- Implements?
 - Correct weight shot put/discus
 - Practice implements
 - Competition implements
 - Cones, mini hurdles and other drill equipment
- Weight room availability?
 - Some schools have teams sign up for spring time in the fall
 - Weight room equipment?

What do you have at your disposal & what can hold you back?

- Ring set up?
 - How many rings do you have?
 - What is their proximity?
 - How large are the sectors?
 - Legal cage/net?
- Supportive administration?
 - Make friends with the AD and Principal
 - Make friends with the ground keepers, custodians and security
 - Keep good communication and work with teachers

What do you have at your disposal & what can hold you back?

- Over aggressive spring football – Old School Coaches
 - Taking up the field in the spring during track times
 - www.trackingfootball.com/interesting-football-facts/
 - Prove to the football coaches you are not the typical lazy throws program
 - DO NOT give in!
 - A productive hand in hand track/football program works wonders (Vacaville)
- Head Track Coach that understands all events and athlete types
 - An understanding that throwers cannot be trained like runners
 - Coaches meetings and good communications are key here
 - Involve your head coach with your plan and progression

What is your vision?

- What level of program are you trying to build?
 - Are you just trying to help out?
 - Competitive program
 - Elite Program
- Building a family unit
 - Make sure you teach your throwers to support each other
 - A good throws unit will develop lasting friendships
- Are you actively recruiting?
 - Football and Volleyball teams
 - PE classes – Talk to the teachers
- Where do you see your program in 3 years?
 - Plan ahead, how far do you want to take this?
 - Reassess, when goals are met, reach for bigger goals

What is your vision?

- What are your personal coaching goals?
 - League Champion? Section? State? National?
 - Athletes into college programs?
 - School Records?
- What training are you planning to acquire to meet your goals?
 - Clinics
 - Personal coaching
 - Online education
 - Fellow throws coaches
- EXPECTATIONS!
 - High expectations = high results, Low expectations = Low results
 - Building self esteem in your athletes is essential
 - Athletes can raise the level a competition. If the expectations are high then the athletes will usually put in the extra work to exceed their goals (Golden State Throwers)

Building a good high school throws program

- KNOW THE RULES!
 - Some of the coaches out there really have no clue
- If possible make friends with the football and volleyball programs
 - Let them know of your plans and how you can help improve your mutual athletes
- Early season conditioning
 - Early conditioning should be focused on work ethic
 - Should be focused on core, weight lifting technique, drills and cardio
 - This part of the program should be about 90 minutes and tough
 - This is where you will find the athletes who do not want to work
- Have a plan for you and your athletes
 - Set goals for the throws team and individual goals
 - Set PR goals

Building a good high school throws program

- Keep a good set of attendance rules and practice rules
 - A common conception is just because its track the rules are lax
 - Make out a rules contract and have the athletes and parents sign it
 - Cut the horse arounds
- Pick your Team Captain well
 - This is not a popularity contest. The most popular kid is likely not going to be a responsible choice. A good GPA student with a passion for the throws will be
 - Make your team captain into a "student coach" Eventually other throwers that have been on the team for a while will all be able to coach
- Respect
 - Make sure your athletes understand and respect authority
 - Respect of the rules on and off the field
 - Respect of the officials
 - Respect also includes humility
 - Lead by example - All of the above goes for the coach as well

Building a good high school throws program

- Develop a team warm-up that your team captain can lead
 - This includes a good flexibility plan
- Weight Room/Conditioning plan "in season"
 - Have a workout made up that can be done in 30 minutes
 - Find maxes
 - Include Olympic lifts
 - Work with football if possible to create a good lifting program
 - Do agility drills, cones, ladders, dots ect.

Building a good high school throws program

- DRILLS, DRILLS, DRILLS!
 - Drills are the absolute foundation to a successful thrower in ANY event
 - Drills should be done every practice day
 - Make a set of drills that can be completed in 10 to 15 minutes every day
 - Your captain should lead all drills
 - Spend the time with each thrower to perfect the drills
 - Be a perfectionist. Remember if someone is doing the drills incorrectly they will be practicing for failure
 - Drilling or throwing with your head down is always a bad idea
- Try to spend time with all of your athletes equally
 - This is a tough one to keep track of time on but all you hard workers need you!
 - Every coach has their favorites. You will not be able to get away from that. However you can spend decent time with every athlete

Building a good high school throws program

- Weather conditions
 - Unless deemed unsafe yes athletes throw in bad weather
 - If the weather is unsafe (lighting) go indoors and do extra drills
 - Wet surfaces – Yes your athletes will likely run into a wet surface in a competition somewhere. It's good to train them for it to prevent injuries
 - Wind Throwing – Train your athletes on how to throw in all directions of wind
- Safety!
 - A good way to get a program shut down fast is injury through lack of safety
 - Make a set of ABSOLUTE rules around the ring and throwing areas
 - Make sure the ring surface is good
 - Make sure the net/cage is in good repair
 - Document EVERYTHING!

Building a good high school throws program

- Invitationals – not everyone goes.
 - Your throwers have to understand in this day and age that this is not t-ball, not everyone gets to go and it's hard to get "trophies/medals"
 - The ones that go should be the ones that work the hardest and throw the farthest. Usually these are the same individuals
- Throw your own intrasquad meets
 - On bye weeks and or even spring break have a team competition.
 - The will keep you athletes active and interested from holes in the schedule if your team does things for the runners i.e.; distance carnivals Throwers and field events often get left out

Building a good high school throws program

- Manage your athletes at meets
 - Train your athletes to know when their event starts and what flight they are in. They should be getting loose they flight before they start
 - STAY OUT OF THE SUN!
 - Eat a good breakfast early
 - Small snacks not large meals during competition
 - Don't run around, stay rested.
 - Have your athletes write down the results in their journal.
- Copy results from the official's sheet
 - People do make mistakes on data entry, placing and sometimes even lose the result sheets
 - Use your phone and take a picture of the final results
- Make ALL of your athletes responsible for the implements at meets
 - Shots and discus are lost all the time. Every athlete should keep track of them and the team should all be equally in charge of them

What gets an athlete into a college program?

- GRADES! GRADES! GRADES!
 - To a college coach a 2.0 GPA is the same as a broken leg. They will likely not be interested. The student will wash out the first year in college and most colleges won't take them in the first place
 - 3.0 or above GPAs are much more attractive
- Good SAT, ACT scores
- Skill – Can your athlete display skill in drills and throwing techniques?
- Potential – Does your athlete have the potential to compete at the college level?
- Citizenship – this one speaks for itself, no one wants a screw around or a punk
- Communication and Confidence
 - Speaking to a recruiter on an adult level
 - Knowing how to ask for help when needed
 - Knowing how to communicate problems vs complaining
- Respect – covered above
- Work Ethic

What gets an athlete into a college program?

- Knowledge of coaching
 - By now your athlete should know how to coach other athletes and communicate his knowledge well
 - Coach ability
 - Organizational skills - Your athlete should know how to
 - Know rotational Shot Put!
- Hammer Throw!
 - Having a hammer athlete out of high school is a HUGE advantage. The college will have a scoring athlete immediately
 - The CIF does not do high school hammer. The USATF does!
 - There are not a lot of states in the USA that do hammer at all, yet most colleges do
 - There are a lot of scholarship opportunities for hammer

What gets an athlete into a college program?

- Weight Throw!
 - The door opener to the mid west and east
 - A lot of colleges outside of California have winter programs that include the weight throw
 - This is another event the CIF will not do
 - Weight throw events
 - Simplot
 - CA indoor State meet (exhibition event)
 - MAKE YOUR OWN!
- Javelin

Change the Culture

- If you don't like how things are then change them!
 - Thrive on the word "NO"
 - Many throws programs have died simply because people give up without a fight.
 - When someone says "no" or "you can't do that". Find a way to do it anyway
 - Have your own vision and push until it gives
 - Networking
 - Find people who are supportive and sympathetic to your cause
 - Build a networking team out of these active people
- Build your own family of throwers and culture
 - After a few year the kids you've trained will come back to you
 - Set special events each year and invite your "alumni"
 - Build with people you trust and you have raised
- Avoid the "Interlopers" People who would circumvent your program
 - Sometimes people with their own agenda will want to circumvent or be a part of your program if it's successful. Avoid them at all costs!

Golden State Throwers (GST)

- Inspiration
 - Ed Burke – 1984 Olympic Team Flag Bearer



Golden State Throwers (GST)

- Humble beginnings
 - Learning to throw Hammer on the Green Dock
 - No coaches in high school or college
 - Masters track education



Golden State Throwers (GST)

- Use what you have, be resourceful
 - Because there is no money, no field and no implements is no excuse
 - Figure it out, use what you can make
- Your work ethic and ability to listen and filter
 - A good coach is always learning no matter what stage of their career they are in
 - Always listen to everyone and filter the information you need
 - Your work ethic will be obvious to everyone around you
 - Your passion for the sport
 - Honesty and character – stay humble but strong

Golden State Throwers (GST)

- Building GST
 - How did we set ourselves apart from other programs?
 - Grades – GST has a 3.0 minimum GPA Requirement
 - Commitment to year around practice
 - Expectation of excelling
 - Skill
 - Athletes have the ability to coach
 - Respect for those around you, Parents, Coaches, Officials, The National Anthem and Flag

Golden State Throwers (GST)

- Structure
 - Grass roots
 - Get community involvement
 - Private property
 - Insurance
 - Pool of coaches
 - People that can donate time off and on
 - Board of directors
 - Filled with friends you trust brought up in your system
 - Use the internet
 - Website goldenstatethrowers.org
 - Athletic.net account
 - YouTube channel
 - Other web areas

Golden State Throwers (GST)

- Team friends – that donate time
 - Physical Therapist
 - Web Developer
 - Strength and Conditioning coach
 - Networking people
 - Legal advice (from a lawyer that you trust)
 - Tax accountant
- Media involvement
 - News Papers
 - Radio
 - TV spots
 - USATF publications

Introductory Drills – Shot Put/Discus

- 5 Rotational Shot Put/Discus Drills
 - Fence Kick
 - Clock/360
 - Wall/Spiderman
 - Wheel – with/without broomstick
 - Scale Throw/Bow and arrow

Introductory Drills – Hammer

- 9 Hammer Drills
 - Murofushi wind drill
 - Wind drill
 - Heal toe/shadow drill
 - Continuous Turns
 - Wind Turns
 - One arm drills left/right
 - Gyros
 - Countering gyros
 - Release/touchdown drill



Mike Curry

Golden State Throwers

(916) 897-4998

www.goldenstatethrowers.org