

Chapter 7

High School Diving – A General Overview



A New Diving Coach?

Here are some helpful tips to get you started on the right path to becoming a successful diving coach. The following are some of the best available aides for any diving coach:

BOOK – *Diving Illustrated* by Hobie Billingsley

VIDEO – *Diving My Way* by Ron O'Brien

CLINIC – Diving Safety Certification Course conducted by U. S. Diving

For additional help, don't forget that, like swimming coaches, most diving coaches are in the profession for the sport and will be glad to give you any help they can. All you have to do is ask. A starting point might be through your state coaches association, your area U. S. Diving chairperson, or NISCA's Diving Chair at www.nisca.net.

Beginners Guide to Coaching Diving

Bob Leiber, Spring Independent School District – Spring, Texas

Frequently swim coaches are expected to coach divers despite knowing very little about the sport, except that it is one of the events in a high school swimming meet. In many meets a coach can rack up a lot of points if they have divers. Diver's coaching each other are some help, but a knowledgeable coach can help a lot.

The first area to have your divers work on is flexibility. A diver cannot efficiently get into a tight tuck or pike position without hip flexibility. Hurdler stretch and any others that will stretch the hamstring and lower back are fine.

Sitting on the feet (in the tuck position) will stretch the instep so the divers will be able to point their feet. Shoulder flexibility will help the diver to line up for straight entries.



After stretching, I have my divers work on abdominal and calf exercises. The abdominal work is to strengthen their midsection and to improve their somersault ability. The calf exercises strengthen the legs so the diver can stand correctly on back take-offs. Any type of leg lift and crunch will work the upper and lower abdominals. Doing heel raises on a step, one leg at a time will strengthen the calf muscles. Practicing handstands is a good exercise to strengthen the arms and shoulders while also teaching the diver where vertical is.

Both strength and flexibility drills reduce the chance of injury and can be done on the pool deck and not interfere with swim practice.

Safety

The most important thing to remember when coaching diving is the safety of the athlete; U. S. Diving requires that coaches **MUST** pass a safety certification course every four years to be eligible to coach on the deck of the pool for practices or competition. This is highly recommended for high school coaches as well. Diving is an extremely safe sport with an unparalleled record of no catastrophic accidents in the United States during the 100 years it has been in existence. However, divers need to be warned of the hazards involved in the sport and especially in regards to specific dives.



Forward Take-Off

Using safety as a foundation, begin the season practicing the basics. No matter what the level of expertise of the coach or diver, time needs to be spent on the approach and hurdle.

It is hard to do a good dive without a good take-off from the board. The forward approach can be started with three or four steps, but must end with a hurdle initiated from one foot. The key points are balance and rhythm

Using a 1-step approach, practice the hurdle doing front jumps. The point of emphasis should be body alignment, arm movement, rhythm, and the lifting of the knee in the hurdle. The body should remain in a vertical position with the center of gravity passing over the balls of the feet, and the lower back having little or no arch.

Practice the approach and hurdle doing front jumps in all three positions (tuck, pike, and straight,) progressing to the back dives and inward dives.



The purpose of the hurdle is to set up the take-off. It puts energy into the board maximizing the height from the jump. The approach and hurdle can be practiced first on the deck. If a large mirror is available the divers can get immediate feedback during practice by seeing what their approach looks like. When transferring to the board, start with a one step approach. By starting this way, the diver will not be confused about which leg to hurdle with. After the diver becomes comfortable with one step, have them work on the four step approach and hurdle. All take-offs should be practiced with feet first entries, not dives.

The biggest mistake made by beginning divers is not learning the proper approach and take-off, learning to jump vertically as the board bends. The greater the board flex, the more difficult it is to keep from landing in the middle of the pool.

Back Take-Off

The back take-off is similar to the forward take-off, in that the arms have similar rotation, the body alignment is the same; rhythm and balance are the key points

In the starting position the feet should be close together with about $\frac{1}{2}$ of the foot in contact with the diving board. The center of gravity begins over the balls of the feet and shifts slightly toward the heels during the arms swing. The arms should be fully extended over the head at the end of the take-off. This should be practiced using back jumps, progressing on to back and inward dives.



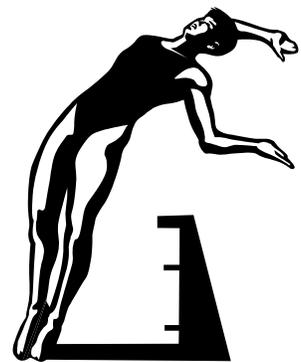
When the forward take-off and back press are performed under control, the diver can progress to learning the required or compulsory dives.

These dives are:

1. Forward dive
2. Back dive
3. Reverse dive
4. Inward dive
5. Twist dive

Learning these dives in the tuck or pike position provides the diver with the foundation needed to move on to the optional dives. Required dives with a high degree of difficulty will be worth more than many optional dives new divers may perform. This is why it is important to work on these dives.

Once a diver learns a full list of dives, every practice should include three of each dive, but always being open to work on new dives. For championship meets a full list is: a required and an optional dive from each of the five groups plus one more from any of the groups, making eleven.



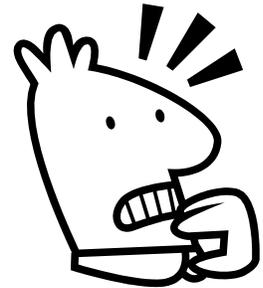
Divers will often try to avoid the dives they are weak on. Give them an order to follow and don't allow them to do more than three of their favorite dives.

If you have a 3-meter board available, include work on line-ups from this board. A line-up is having the diver stand or sit on the end of the board and fall off, lining their body as tight and vertical as possible. This exercise allows the diver to work on perfecting entries without the difficulty of the dive.

Another area that is very important for learning divers is in the line, waiting to use the board. Instead of joking and playing around, the divers should be helping each other and practicing the movements and corrections before it is their turn. These forms of visualization can double the efficiency of every practice.

Overview

Progression from the basic dives to the more advanced dives is up to the ability of the diver and the judgment of the coach. If there is any doubt as to whether or not a diver should move on to a more difficult dive, the coach should proceed on the cautionary course. The diver's opinion should be considered as to progressing to a more advanced dive since the "fear factor" will definitely be involved in the learning process.



During the season, taking time to review the basics is an excellent change of pace. Divers often get so mentally tied up with the dives they are doing in competition, they forget to think about the basics.

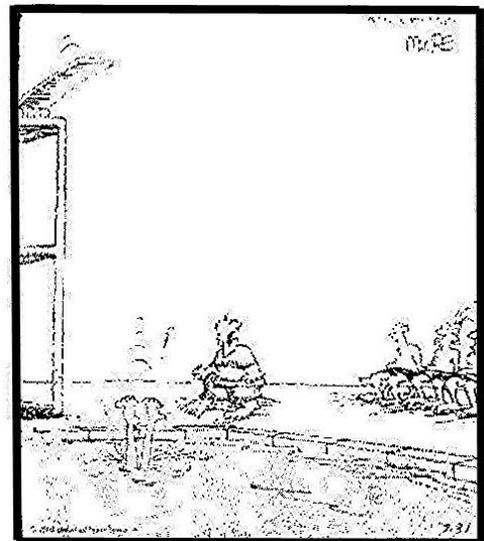
Here are some ideas about diving workouts during the season. Adjustments will be needed due to the amount of pool time available and the abilities of the divers.

1. Rotate the order in which dives are practiced
2. Don't spend too much time on any one dive.
3. Remember the "fear factor" is always present.
4. Basics are always important.
5. Incorporate some fun into every practice.
6. UGLY is a bad 4-letter word.
7. FORM is a good 4-letter word.
8. Divers are always cold.

For a more detailed progression on learning dives, read Ron O'Brien's book on diving, "*Diving My Way*." The book is written more for coaches than divers. An excellent video is also available to accompany the book.

Also, attend as many clinics as possible. Everyone has little secrets that will help you get past many of your difficulties.

Good Luck!



"Markovich! Last warning. . . Stop whistling like a falling bomb every time someone dives."

Resources

Section 7-1

Sample Diving Workouts (Dive List)

Diving Workout #1

- Monday
 - Front Jumps (long series)
 - Back Jumps (long series)
 - Front Dive
 - Inward Dive
 - Back Optional
 - Reverse Optional
 - New Optional
 - Single Series

- Tuesday
 - Back Jumps (long series)
 - Front Jumps (long series)
 - Back Dive
 - ½ Twist Dive
 - Twist Optional
 - Inward Optional
 - Front Optional
 - Single Series

- Wednesday
 - Front Jumps (long series)
 - Back Jumps (long series)
 - Inward Dive
 - Reverse Dive
 - Front Optional
 - Back Optional
 - New Optional
 - Dual Meet (1 set of required, 1 set of 5 optionals)

- Thursday
 - Back Jumps (long series)
 - Front Jumps (long series)
 - Reverse Dive
 - Front Dive
 - Inward Optional
 - Back Optional
 - Twist Optional
 - Double Series

- Friday
 - Back and Front Jumps (alternating)
 - ½ Twist Dive
 - Back Dive
 - Reverse Optional
 - Twist Optional
 - Front Optional
 - Double Series

- Saturday
 - Front Jumps (long series)
 - Back Jumps (short series)
 - Work on Problems, Optional Dives
 - Inward Optional
 - Reverse Optional
 - New Optional
 - Double Dual Meet (2 full sets of 11 dives)

Diving Workout #2

- Monday
 - Front Required Dives
 - Reverse Required Dives
 - Back Optional
 - Inward Optional
- Tuesday
 - Back Required
 - Inward Required
 - Reverse Optional
 - Forward Optional
- Wednesday
 - Twist Required
 - Choice Required
 - Twist Optional
 - Choice Optional
- Thursday
 - Same as Monday
- Friday
 - Same as Tuesday
- Saturday
 - 2 each of Required Group
 - 2 each of Optional Series 1
 - 2 each of Optional Series 2
 - 2 each of Optional Series 3
 - 2 of each dive in order, down the list

