

The hurdle

By - Ron Keenhold

Good diving is accomplished with a consistent forward hurdle, good balance, correct body movements and timing. I would like to suggest a simplified coaching tool that I used every day to make good diving as easy as A-B-C!

To save time in practice I verbalized the three letters A, B or C every day to indicate and correct problems in my divers timing and mechanics of their hurdles. By simply saying 'A', 'B' or 'C', my divers knew exactly where they went wrong in the hurdle. This saved me much vocal repetition about the mechanics of a good hurdle. The divers were taught the meaning of these three letters that relate to an exact moment in every hurdle and take-off. I believe these three specific moments are VERY CRITICAL for good diving. The following is a description of A, B and C:

A = That 'moment' in the early part of the hurdle, just before the diver jumps into the air, when THE 'FOOT' OF THE LAST STEP of the approach IS STILL ON THE BOARD.

1. Both arms should have completed their upward arm swing and be fully extended above the diver's body, stopped and held slightly forward of the diver's upright posture.
2. With the same timing as the arms, the knee (and leg) should thrust upward to its maximum position. (The thigh of that leg should be parallel to the board with the knee bent at a 90 degree angle. The toes should be pointed straight down at the board.) The arms and knee must coordinate to go up to their maximum height at the same time.
3. The other leg, which has helped push the board down, should be fully extended from the hip to the tip of the toes, and in a vertical line with the body (no pike position at the hips).
4. The divers head should also be in line with the body, and the eyes focused on the landing area at the end of the diving board.

******** *BEFORE the diver's foot leaves the diving board all FORCES will have been applied TO MOVE THE BOARD DOWN, then THE BOARD can help push the diver upward into the hurdle. If the upward arm swing and leg lift have not completed their motion before the diver leaves the board, the diver is not maximizing the opportunity to have a high hurdle.*

ALSO, because forceful upward arm and leg movements happen when the diver still has contact with the board on one leg, the diver can more easily maintain balance throughout the rest of the hurdle and take-off.

B = This is the highest point of the hurdle.

1. The arms are still held at the same position they attained in A.
2. The leg (2 above) that was thrust upward should now be straight down along side of the other leg. There is no reason to hold this leg up until the diver reaches the highest point of the hurdle.
3. The other leg (3 above) is still straight; with both legs side by side, both ankles flexed with the toes pointed downward and lining up with the landing area at the end of the diving board.
4. The head is still in line with the whole body, eyes focused on the landing area at the end of the diving board.

******** *At this moment the whole body, including arms, legs and head should be in a straight vertical line.*

C = That moment after the diver has landed on the board and it has been compressed downward to its maximum position.

1. By this moment a circular backward, down around and upward arm swing **MUST BE COMPLETED** and the arms should be fully extended, having arrived at a similar position as in A-1 above. However, the arms might not stop at A-1, depending on the dive being performed; but they must get to this position by the time the diving board is at its greatest downward flexion.
2. Both knees should be at their maximum flexed position that compliments the diver's leg strength.
3. Now the diver's eyes focus on a place (spot) that allows the head to remain in a neutral position for the beginning of the dive to be performed.

******** *If a diver is LATE getting to A it is unlikely they will get to B and C on time and in balance!*

******** It is very easy to use A, B or C separately in drills on the pool deck, dry board and diving board. Focus the diver's attention on one of these positions, one at a time, until they become familiar with WHERE AND WHEN they should be for A, B or C.

I wish you good luck and success. Now go practice your A-B-C's!!!