

Claude Holland

Head Track and Cross Country Coach

Coaching Tenure has spanned over 40 years as a high school, college and club coach

John Adams High School in Cleveland 1980-92

Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland 1992-95

Cleveland Heights High School 1996-2010

Cleveland Rebel Track Club 1980-2015

OATCCC Hall of Fame 2008

Don Mitchell Memorial Track Meet Dayton Hall of Fame 2001

Mike Byrne Award Nike National Coach of the year 2007

John Adams High School- 1982 Div-1 Boys State Champions, 1986 Div-1 Boys State Runner-up, 1991 Div-1 Boys State Runner-up

Numerous NJCAA National Championship Qualifiers Cuyahoga Community College

Cleveland Heights High School- 2007 OATCCC Div-1 Boys Indoor State Champions, 2007 Boys Div-1 Outdoor State Runner-up, 2008 Div-1 Boys Outdoor State Champions

Coached 12 individual or relay outdoor state champions

Coached 54 individual or relay outdoor Div-1 State placers

Athletes set these school records at both high schools during my tenure

John Adams High School:

10.5- 100 Meters 3 athletes

21.3-200 Meters

46.7- 400 Meters

1:51.3- 800 Meters

4:15.3- 1600 Meters

9:32.7- 3200 Meters

13.89- 110 High Hurdles

36.7- 300 low hurdles

52.3- 400 Intermediate Hurdles

6'-6"- High Jump

23'-4"- Long Jump

41.50- 400 Meter Relay (State Record)

1:26.7- 800 Meter Relay (State Record)

3:13.57- 1600 Meter Relay (State Record)

7:44.29- 3200 Meter Relay (State Record)

10:27.2- College Distance Medley Relay (800-1200-400-1600)

18:36.0- 4 x 1600 Meter Relay

16:01- 5000 Meter Cross Country

Cleveland Heights High School:

10.70- 100 Meters

47.53- 400 Meters

1:50.89- 800 Meters

14.00- 110 High Hurdles

38.01- 300 Intermediate Hurdles

7'-0"- High Jump

41.90- 400 Meter Relay

1:26.53- 800 Meter Relay

3:14.00- 1600 Meter Relay

7:40.89- 3200 Meter Relay (State Record 2007)

1:30.7- 800 Meter Sprint Medley Relay (100-100-200-400)

Samples of Fall Training for Non Cross Country Athletes on CC team:

Warmup- 1 mile easy run to CC course (then these dynamic warm up exercises over 40 meters- High knees dorsiflexed foot x 2, Skips with dorsiflexed foot x 2, Dynamic toe touches x 2, Karaoke x 2, 6 inches (leg extensions) 30 sec x 3, 25 pushups, 30 sec of dynamic (or ballistic) stretching each leg (hamstrings and quads), 30 sec of static stretching x 2 each leg (hamstrings and quads), 1 x dynamic (Ballistic stretching) groin stretch (Butterfly), 1 x static groin stretch 30 sec, 2 x 50 meter acceleration runs

Sample Workouts:

30 min. Whistle controlled Fartlek, increase pace for 1 min with each whistle blast then jog for 1 min. You can alternate 30 sec and 1 min increase and decrease until 30 min is concluded

Hill 3 x 10 min sets of hills(hill should be 100 to 200 meters in length with gradual elevation) run up hard, jog back down for 10 min. 5 min active recovery between, do this 3 times until you get 30 total min of hills in

6 x 600 on grass with 3 min recovery between each 600 (pace depends on level of fitness but each 600 should be about 75% effort)

3 miles of straights and turns on the track, accelerate on the straights, and jog the turns

12 x 200 on the track or CC training site, run a 200 at about 60 to 70% effort and jog a 200 until athletes have completed 12 x 200

Sample indoor winter workouts 400-800 athletes:

Warmup same as fall warmup except begin with 800 jog

Each workout is followed by a 10 min easy jog and lite static stretching

Ladder workout- 600-400-200-100-100-200-400-600 1 min recovery between 100 and 200, 2 min recovery between 200 and 400, 3 min recovery between 400 and 600, 3 min recovery between 600 and 400 ect.

10 x 200 at 80% effort with 200 walk recovery between each 200

3 x 600 hard with 6 min recovery between each 600 then active 10 min recovery, 6 x 60 meter acceleration sprints 4 min recovery between each sprint

30 min of continuous stairs first floor to top floor and across the length of the top hallway, down the stairs to first floor, across first floor to stairs, back up to top floor for 30 min

100-200 Sprinters:

Each effort is to be challenging (the only thing a sprinter gets from running slow is slow)

3 x 300 3 min recovery between each the rest 5 min, 2 x 200 with 3 min recovery, rest 5 min, 6 x 60 acceleration sprints working on drive phase, acceleration, until reach top end speed or max velocity, 5 min recovery between each 60

500 hard- 6 min rest, 3 x 100 with 100 walk back for recovery, 350 hard 5 min recovery, 3 x 100 with 100 walk recovery, 450 hard (Killer workout for sprinters)

6 x 200 with 200 brisk walk for recovery, 6 x 40 meter sprints from blocks 5 min between each 40 again working on block discipline and drive phase

600 hard 6 min recovery, 3 x 200 fast, with 4 min recovery, 3 x 100 with 100 walk recovery between

Sample Outdoor Workouts:

Warmup and Cool down same as indoor

100-200

3 x 200 23-25 sec 10 min recovery between, 3 x 150 150 walk recovery, 1 x 450 hit 400 53 to 55

SECRET WEAPON (all athletes from 100-800 run these hills)- 80 meter downhill sprints (do not hold back) The hill must have a very slight gradual declining grade similar to a driveway or some parking lots, the slope should be no greater than a 15% grade which means that the highest grade should be no greater than 15% of the entire distance that your sprinter is running, 5 min recovery between each downhill sprint rest 10 min the 6 x 100 meter challenging uphill with major escalating grade, walk back down for recovery

4 x 300(41-45 sec) with 100 walk recovery , 3 x 150 fast (17-18 sec) 150 slow walk recovery, rest 10 min, 1 x 450 hit 400 (55-56 sec)

1 x 350 hit 200 around 24 sec, 10 min recovery, 6 x 100, working on drive phase-acceleration phase-and max speed maintenance phase 5 min recovery between, 1 x 450 hard

1 x 50 sec sprint (see how far a sprinter can run in 50 sec alone, place an orange cone down on track for first runner and have each successive runner try to displace the furthest cone, have a prize for the runner who went the furthest, then block work 6 x blocks over 60 meters, working on block discipline and the sprint phases 4 to five min between each start.

400-800

30 min controlled whistle Fartlek, the coach controls the length of effort, no longer than 60 sec and no shorter than 30 sec,

3 x 600 with 200 walk recovery then 6 x 200 with 200 jog recovery

12 x 200 with 200 jog recovery

6 x 60 meter downhill sprints with 5 min recovery between each sprint, active 15 min rest period then 6 x 100 to 200 meter challenging uphill with slow jog back down the hill for recovery

1 broken 600, run 400 in 51-53 sec, rest 30 sec, and complete 600 by running last 200 under 30 sec recover for 30 min, then run 3 x 200 23-25 sec with full recovery between each 200

Program development:

Yearly introduction day is where I bring athletes from my high school to our feeder middle schools and meet with prospective athletes, I always set this up in advance with the AD, Coach and Principal for this activity to occur during the school day, kids feel more special when they are taken out of classes during the school day plus you won't lose those kids at the end of the day that want to go home. I also bring a highlight CD of the season to show the kids how

exciting track can be, and lastly, and probably most importantly provide food, real food like pizza or sandwiches and gatorade, kids will always remember that.

I have a yearly Saturday Coaches clinic for the middle school and interested coaches at my school put on by me and my staff

I invite all prospective athletes to enroll in my summer club/program so they can become indoctrinated into our system before entering our high school

I invite all feeder school track athletes and their coaches to our invitational free of charge, and encourage them to help with some aspect of the meet while there. In order to get in they must be wearing a special wristband that I drop off to each school prior to the invitational

Prior to our mobilization day during the winter I have flyers placed all over the school with information about location and meeting date on them. Then the week of the meeting I have daily thPA announcements reminding interested athletes of the upcoming meeting.

Rules and Expectations:

(My athletes said i was the nicest guy in the world until they messed up then i became Bi-polar and if they ever dropped the baton i became Tri- polar)

It is extremely important to establish a limited amount of rules and expectations that apply to every athlete on the team regardless of their ability or importance. These rules and expectations must be enforced, I call them my Non-negotiables. Here are mine- Practice and being on time is mandatory. One unexcused practice will cost you your next competition, a second unexcused practice will cost you your season, being tardy will cost you pushups, situps, 6 inches and wall squats ect. I never punish athletes with running, that's why many football players never come out for track because they associate running with punishment.

Not meeting academic expectations will sideline you from being able to compete until academic issues are resolved. I do weekly eligibility checks.

Inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

Suspensions and school administration sanctions will sideline you for extended periods, or possibly put you off of the team depending on the offense

Talk about John Adams 1983 track team state meet

What motivates athletes:

Relationships-Relationships-Relationships

“Athletes will not care how much you know until they know how much you care”

Simple things you can do that let your athletes know how much you care:

I know most school districts have policies in place that do not allow the transport of students in personal vehicles, but on occasion, extenuating circumstances may dictate that you have to do what you have to do. It's amazing how a simple ride home can endear an athlete and a family to the coach and the program

An occasional Pizza party or a trip to McDonalds can also go a long way with relationship building, it's imperative that these activities are open to all members of the team (You may need to develop a booster club to help)

Show every athlete on the team that they matter regardless of their ability (You never know who that diamond in the rough or that late bloomer will be)

Matt Love-

Always have an end of the season awards banquet or picnic that includes dinner (food), appropriate awards, and a speaker. When I say appropriate awards everyone does not get a trophy or even a letter, make earning a letter have meaning by attaching a challenging criteria to earning one.

At John Adams I had kids that were on the team for 3 to 4 years and never ran in a meet because we didn't have a usable track and didn't run dual meets, but they never missed practice and I would always make sure I rewarded those athletes with a letter their senior years

Motivating Activities:

Standing Long Jump (Previous years results posted)

50 yard dash time trials (The entire team participates) previous year's results and records posted on that day

400 meter time trials (The entire running team participates and any field event participants who would like too) previous year's results and records posted on that day

Annual Intrasquad meet completed over two days. At John Adams it was called the Maroon and Gold meet. At Cleveland Heights it was called the Black and Gold meet. I split the teams evenly and have a full complement of events including novelty events. I give awards at the end of each event (sweat socks, T-shirts, binders, backpacks all donated by track alumni who love attending these meets) This is one of the most competitive competitions of the year

Sample events for these intrasquad meets- 50-400-800-mile-50 yd high and low hurdles-4 x 200 relay-4 x 400 relay-one leg blind folded balance, standing long jump-shot put-academic

circle(challenging math and science questions) one person chosen from each team allowed in academic circle

Annual overnigher at the High School (Girls and Boys)-Numerous parent and coach chaperones, certified Lifeguard, medical person, Activities-Movies PG, basketball, swimming, volleyball, dinner, and breakfast, snacks, music and dancing, board games, a talent show with prizes, separate gender sleeping areas, permission slips, Board and school administration authorization

Mental preparedness coupled with physical preparedness:

I spend as much time on mental preparation as I do physical preparation. Developing mental toughness is part of every practice. I never allow my athletes to put their hands on their knees or hips nor lay down in practice (they can put their hands over their heads) I explain to my athletes that their minds are stronger than their bodies, whatever the mind tells the body it can do the body will do, I teach them to fight through pain, to fight through adversity. When we go outside we never return indoors no matter what the weather (other than lightning) We train in snow, rain, heat ect. I drill into their heads we never run from it we run in it, (**John Adams 1988 Mansfield 4x8**) I tell them to never fear what they cant control (weather, their competitors, facilities, ect). I tell them no matter how far they are behind in a race they are never losing until the race is over you can still catch up and win, once you tell yourself you're losing you've lost

John Adams 1988 4 x 8, Cleveland Rebel Track 1986 4 x 4

We do a lot with Imaging and visualization- I dedicate one practice where I ask all the athletes to lay down and get completely quiet and comfortable. I pump the practice area with relaxing music or sounds. I then tell them to take themselves mentally to a place they've only dreamed of, a mental paradise, create your own oasis in your mind, make it as beautiful and as serene as you can. Many athletes fall asleep. After 15 minutes or so I wake them up and ask them to share their experiences. Some people were on beautiful pristine beaches in the Caribbean, some visited with deceased family members, but each had unique and beautiful experiences. I Then tell them if they can conceive it, they can achieve it.

Relays are sacred:

Before I introduce batons to the team, I gather the team and let them know that track and field is an individual sport until it comes to relays. The unifying implement that galvanizes each relay as a family is the baton

A baton is never allowed to lay on the floor, or be played with. I always use aluminum batons in practice so if for some unforeseen reason it happens to hit the floor or track I am instantly aware of it and the culprit

If a baton is dropped in a meet or at practice the culprit is placed on baton punishment. Baton punishment consists of taking the dropped baton home, sleeping with it, eating with it, showering with it, taking it to every class of the day including lunch, and never allowing anyone to possess it at any time other than the athlete or person I gave it to. If I visit you at your home or in your classroom it better be in your possession. Most teachers and families support this.

4 x 1 Relay exchanges are always non-verbal. The outgoing runner stands at the beginning of the 30 meter exchange zone. We start with a 22 step (shoe length) go mark early in the outdoor season. We then do chasers without the baton to establish a hand back mark in the zone. Where the outgoing runner is tagged and marked, becomes the hand back mark in the zone.

When practicing 4 x 100 relay exchanges always have the incoming runner come from at least 60 meters so they are not accelerating at the exchange but maintaining top end speed at the exchange

Personnel for the 4 x 1 relay- I start off with my most reliable and predictable sprinter, usually a top 200 meter sprinter on the team who is confident. I then place my best sprinter on the second leg. (This leg is usually the longest. I use another good turn runner on the third leg, and the second best sprinter on the anchor leg. We always go right hand to left, left to right, right to left.

The hand position for the outgoing runner is always palm up, fingers spread to make a big target, thumb down. The outgoing runner's job is to make the hand as big a target as possible for the incoming runner and keep the hand still. We do this for both the 4 x 1 and 4 x 2 relays

4 x 2 relay exchanges- From the beginning of the 30 meter exchange zone I have the outgoing sprinter take three large steps into the exchange zone and place a stand mark. Then I have them begin with an 18 step go mark for the incoming sprinter. Then just as we did for the 4 x 1 we establish a hand back mark in the exchange zone. When the outgoing runner reaches the hand back mark the exchange is made.

One of the biggest mistakes that teams make when practicing 4 x 2 exchanges is having the incoming runner approaching the outgoing runner at a much higher rate of speed than they would under meet conditions. It is imperative that the incoming sprinter duplicate their competition speed during practice.

4 x 4 and 4 x 8 relay exchanges- When your 4 x 400 relay is running 3:13/3:14 the incoming runner is coming in at a fairly high rate of speed, and you never want to break the momentum of the incoming runner. I have the outgoing runner locate an approximate 15 step mark on the track which will be established as their go mark. When practicing these exchanges the incoming runner will present the baton up high as they enter the legal exchange zone, the outgoing runner will take three hard steps then turn and take the baton with a high hand from the incoming runner. The outgoing runner will always take the baton in their left hand and switch to their right. The exchanges are always made from right to left for the 4 x 4 and 4 x 8 relays.

I always set my 4 x 400 relay personnel up this way- slowest to fastest. I set my 4 x 8 relay up with my second best 800 runner leading off (you must be in the race) , my slowest runner runs second, my competitive runner third, and fastest runner anchor.

I also prepare 2 additional runners for all relays just in case there is an injury or sickness, or if a runner starts thinking their position on the relay is made

I have a policy that at any time during the season an athlete can challenge for a relay spot, but you can only challenge once. If an athlete loses their position on the relay they have one opportunity to challenge to get it back.

These were the splits when my John Adams HS 4 x 4 set the state record at the state meet on the first day of qualifying 49-49-48-46

These were the splits when my Cleveland Heights relay set the state record (7:41.17) in 2007
1:56-1:55-1:55-1:55

We can discuss field events and distance running after my session if you like