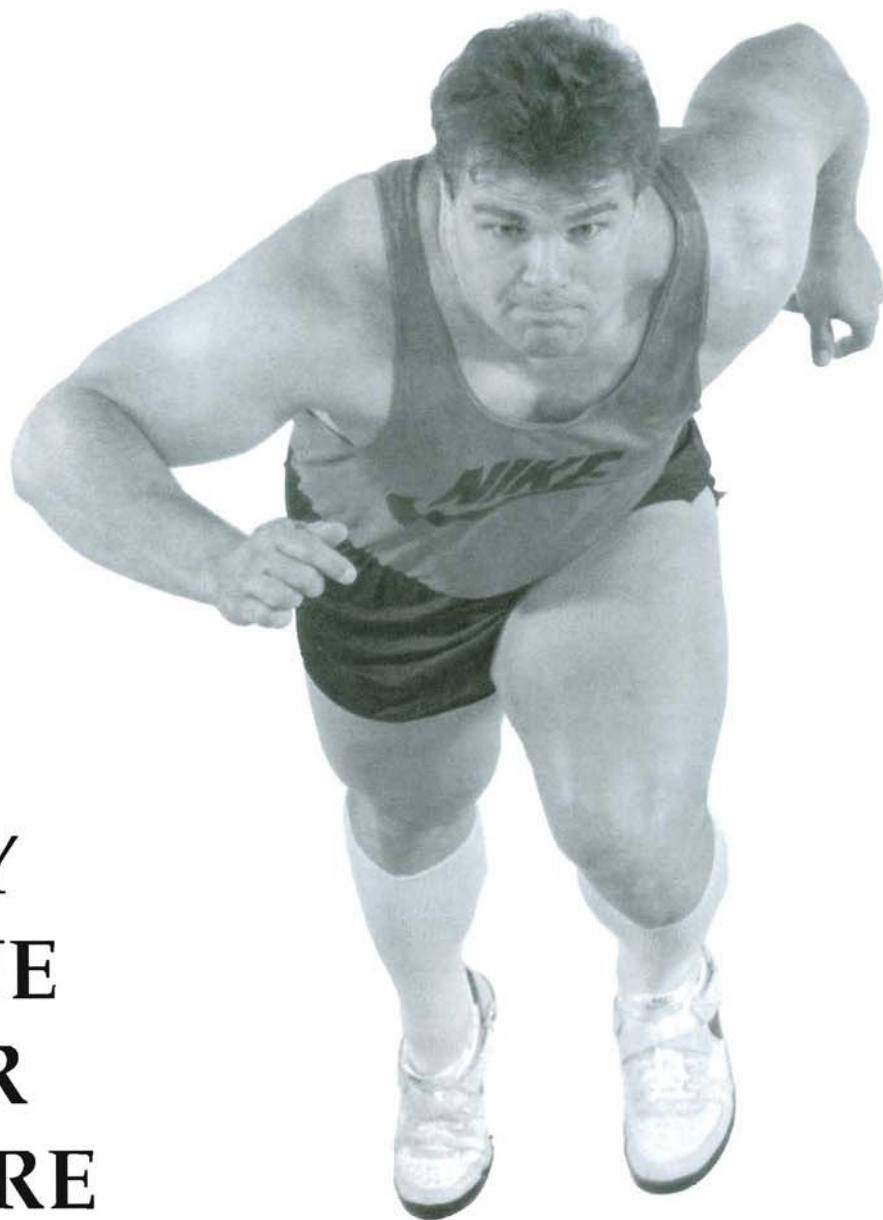


IMPROVE YOUR 40



BY
ONE
OR
MORE
TENTHS

Details
Next
Page

GUARANTEED!

IT'S IN THE START

By Dr. Greg Shepard

It has always amazed me how we time forty yard dashes in the United States. Does a pro-scout mark down a 4.7 time with an asterisk indicating a track stance or football stance? Or does he just put down 4.7 seconds? Does a college coach at a summer camp for high school players care about what kind of stance is used in a forty? The obvious answer to all those questions is "NO"!

Since hundreds of thousands of dollars, careers, and scholarships hang in the balance on the numbers that come up on a stopwatch, it would seem only smart to study and practice the start of a forty. Also, the better one's time, the greater will be one's self esteem. The better the times recorded by a team, the more positive the attitude. If you study and practice the start in this article, I can guarantee at least a one tenth improvement over a football stance!

What an advantage! Your competition will be using a football stance and you'll be using a new kind of track stance which is easy to learn for football players. And get this, the guy timing you doesn't care! This new track stance was used by a number of 100 meter state champions last year.

To assume this stance, simply put your lead foot right on the starting line. It can be either your right or left foot. The other foot or back foot is placed about 12 inches behind the lead foot. In a football stance, your feet are about shoulder width apart. In this track stance, your feet are only four to six inches apart.

Now place the opposite hand from the lead foot right on the line. Your thumb and index finger should touch the starting line. Your weight will be supported by all the fingers and thumb. Do not put the palm down on the surface. This is simply the standard hand position of a conventional track stance, except you're only putting one hand down instead of two.

The other arm should be cocked back with the elbow slightly bent. Keep the hand relaxed. Refer to the top photo on page 59. Many beginners will want to pop their heads up and look down the runway. This makes everything tight which is very bad. It is far better to keep the head down so that a straight line is created from the head down the back.

The final phase of the start is to lean forward as far as possible. Try to get the shoulders way over the starting lean. As you roll forward, it will be uncomfortable but go as far as you can. Then, pause for a split second before you explode forward. The timer will click the watch on your first movement.

You should concentrate on punching the back hand

Continued on page 59



Place the lead foot right ON the line!



Place the back foot about 12 inches from the lead foot.



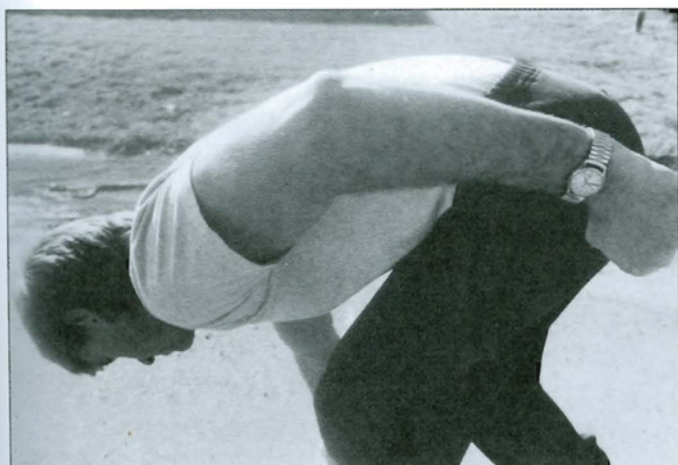
Place the opposite hand from the lead foot right ON the line.

IMPROVE YOUR FORTY

Continued from page 54

forward. Automatically, the back foot will come forward but you should accentuate a quick pop of the knee. The hand that was down will also automatically go back. The lead leg should be completely extended at the start but don't worry about that at first. A teammate can place his foot behind the runners back foot for extra support and push-off ability but if you lean way forward as explained, the runner may be fine as far as slipping at the start.

If you want a good laugh, observe two players from the side at the starting line. Put one in a football stance and one in this new stance. You'll laugh because the football stance player will be clearly two to three feet behind before the race has even begun.



Keep head down and bend back arm slightly. Hand should not be clenched but relaxed. Good position except for the hand.



Bad starting position. Head is cocked up causing great tension and also there is no forward lean.

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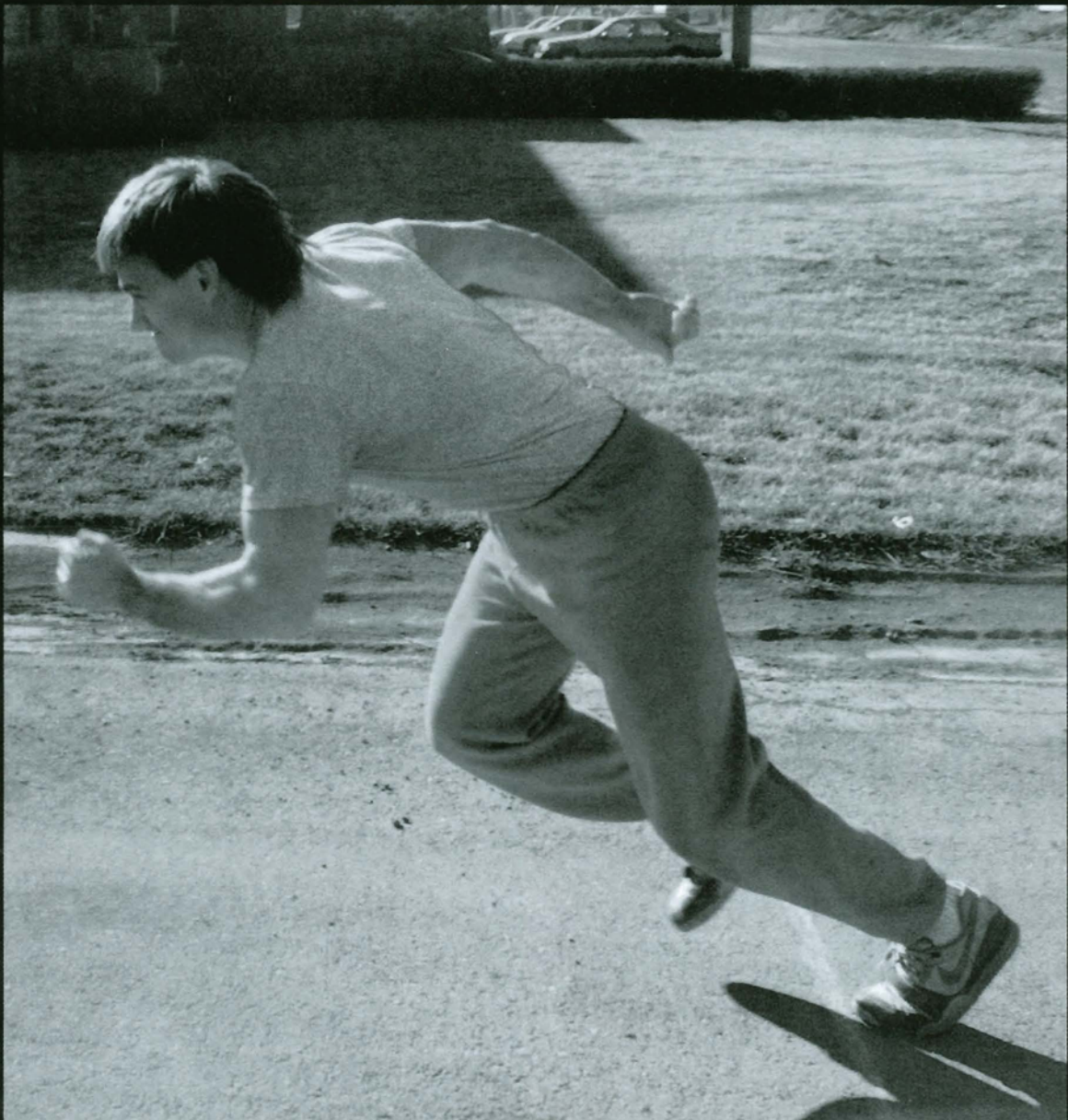
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GET THE STARTING EDGE

Assume the Starting Position and lean as far forward as possible. Keep your head down. Then, when you've almost lost your balance, Punch the back arm straight forward. At the same time, drive the back leg forward and begin SPRINTING!



Notice the Right Angle of the Lead Arm

Notice the Whip or Hammer like Action of the Back Wrist and Fingers