LNHS Relays

No matter which relay you are on, the goal remains the same:

Get the BATON around the track and to the finish line as fast as possible.

What is the key to accomplishing this goal?

* Do not slow the baton down while making exchanges during the race.

What exchange methods do we use?

* 4x100m relay and 4x200m relay (blind exchange) - Alternate exchange method: first and third runners carry the baton in their right hand, the second and fourth carry it in their left hand.

What are the exchange and acceleration zones?

* Exchange zone – 30 meters - Runners start in the zone and the

exchange must be made within the zone.

* Acceleration zone – meters set directly behind the exchange zone. This is only used in 4x100, 4x200
* Exchanges made outside of the exchange zone will result in a disqualification.

What are the responsibilities of the passer (incoming) and the receiver (outgoing) runners?

 1.       Passer (DO NOT SLOW DOWN!)

1. Hold the baton near the bottom end and carry it in an upward position
2. Remember you will always pass the baton in the middle of the lane.
3. Attack the acceleration and exchange zones.
4. Make the call “stick” 1 ½ to 2 ½ strides before you expect to hand off.
5. Focus on the shoulder, elbow, and finally the hand as you make the call.
6. The exchange occurs when the receiver takes the baton away from you.
7. Do not stop running until you clear the exchange zone.
8. Stay in your lane until all traffic is clear. Walk off the track.

2.       Receiver (DO NOT TURN TO FIND PASSER)

1. Set your lane spacing correctly. Do what you practiced. Trust your teammate, mark, and philosophy! Set your GO Marks correctly!
2. Baton is exchanged in the middle of the lane only.
3. Align feet so you are ready to run. Both feet are pointed straight ahead!
4. Body Position – standing start crouch with head turned to the inside of the track.  Eyes focus on passer and then on the “Go mark”.
5. When passer hits the “go mark”, sprint hard out of your stance.
6. React to the passer’s command immediately: Extend elbow backward - Snap the forearm up - Spread the fingers and thumb
7. When the passer slaps the baton into your hand, grasp it and take it away from them.
8. Do not run out of the exchange zone without the baton – emergency slow down!

How do you determine where to put your athletes in a relay?

1. 4x100 Relay

#1      Leader, good starter, reliable – will not false start. Gets you into every race.

#2      Fastest long sprinter, best 200 runner.  Must be able to catch and handoff well.

#3      Good curve runner - Must catch and handoff well.

#4      Good closer – best fighter.  One of fastest 100 meter runners.

2.  4x200 Relay

* The key is people who can finish the last 40 meters well in each leg.  Set up similar to the 4x100.  Wind may make you adjust or athletes may make you adjust.  You need to start well, stay in the race with legs 2 and 3, and finish well with leg 4.

**Drills for making exchanges.**

1. Standing Line Drill - Two, three or four athletes stand 6-7 feet apart, in the correct lane position configuration (R-L-R-L) and just practice exchanges.  This does not have to be fast, it has to be right!  Do it slowly.
2. Walking line drill - Same as standing line drill, but athletes walk.  When they move, make sure to observe body spacing – 6 to 7 feet apart.  Exchanges should practice arm extension and space separations.
3. Jogging line drill - Same as 1 and 2 above, just at a jog.
4. Run/spring line drills - Good conditioner and exchange drill.  Use 100 meters (or more) at set pace (75%) and exchange at 20-50-75 meters.
5. Pursuit drill - Athlete (1) takes off at ½ speed and gets a 3 second lead, athlete (2) Pursues, calls hand, and makes the exchange.  (You can vary lead 3-4-5 seconds and speed ½, ¾, full etc.).
6. Speed exchanges - Set up in exchange zones and practice at 100 percent.

The 4 x 100 relay race is often won in the exchange zones, so drills to increase a team’s baton-passing efficiency are vital to success in the sprint relay.

First, of course, coaches must select their 4 x 100 relay runners with an eye for athletes who can exchange the baton smoothly, and at full speed, in addition to being strong sprinters. Then the coach must train the team, through its drills, to hone its passing technique into a smooth-running operation.

Here are some beginning drills, mainly aimed at newly-formed relay squads. But most can be helpful for any 4 x 100 relay team.

**Drill No. 1﻿ – Running in Place**

﻿Four runners line up, with arms extended to maintain proper spacing. Each runner stands with feet together, moving only his/her arms in a running motion. The first runner holds the baton. When the coach says “go,” the second runner moves his/her arm back to receive the baton. The runners then continue moving their arms in a running motion until the coach says “go” again, at which time the second runner passes the baton to the third. The sequence is then repeated, with the third runner passing to the fourth.

Make sure each receiver observes the proper fundamentals when reaching back for the baton. The elbow goes back first, leading the forearm and hand into position. The palm is up and the arm is fully extended, at close to shoulder height, to receive the baton.

Coaches should repeat the drill, making sure each runner has a chance to pass and receive the baton with both hands. Some athletes will likely be better passing or receiving from one side or the other.

**﻿Drill No. 2﻿ – Proper Lane Spacing**

﻿Repeat drill No. 1, but practice on a surface that has a line down the middle.

If you’re indoors, you can employ tile lines on a floor. Outdoors, you can put a line on the track. When passing the baton from the runner’s right hand to the receiver’s left, the passer is on the left side of the line, the receiver on the right, and vice versa for a left-hand-to-right-hand pass. Emphasize that neither the passer nor receiver ever moves across the line, i.e., into the other runner’s portion of the lane. Again, you can shuffle your athletes around to see who passes and receives better with their right or left hands.

**﻿Drill No. 3﻿ – Timing the Pass**

﻿This drill is also similar to the first. The four runners line up and maintain proper spacing. The runners pump their arms and move their feet in place, while the coach counts out loud: “one-three-five-seven.” This simulates the seven steps that should take a receiver from the acceleration zone into the exchange zone. If the first pass will be from a runner’s right hand to the receiver’s left, the runners begin by raising their left legs. The coach counts “one” when the left leg hits the ground, “three” when the left leg hits again, etc. On “seven,” the first receiver reaches back and the runner passes the baton.

This drill can be done at different tempos, getting faster over time.

Again, make sure the receiver observes the proper technique, with his/her arm fully extended for the exchange, with the elbow going back first, keeping the hand under control. The receiver will always look forward.

**﻿**

**Drill No. 4﻿ – Stepping into the Exchange Zone**

﻿The first runner begins with the baton. The receiver will take seven steps, then reach back for the baton. Runners who’ll receive the baton in the right hand begin striding with the right leg, and vice versa. When the receiver counts seven steps, he/she reaches back for the baton, and the passer hands it over. The passer, who’s following, doesn’t count steps. When the passer sees the receiver’s hand coming back, he/she finishes that stride, then passes the baton. Again, make sure the receiver maintains proper form and doesn’t look back.

**﻿Drill No. 5﻿ – Timing Drill**

﻿Mark out acceleration and exchange zones on a track, possibly using cut up tennis balls. The receiver, running at full speed, begins in the acceleration zone, counts “one-three-five-seven” and puts his/her hand back for the baton. The passer follows and accelerates into position but doesn’t pass the baton. This gets the runners used to the speed of the relay and helps them develop the necessary timing without having to worry about passing the baton.

**Exchange Drills - Full-Speed Relay Handoffs**

Once your team has these drills down, then start practicing full-speed exchanges, generally once each week, possibly twice if you’re not running a meet that week. Relay runners shouldn’t run complete laps during practice drills – that will wear out your runners too quickly and they won’t be able to practice as many exchanges as they should. Even if you cut the distance in half, with each runner only going about 50 meters, they’ll still get a good speed workout if you practice at least three or four exchanges – for each position – during the session.

When you run full speed exchange drills in practice, time the baton in the exchange zone. Start your watch when the baton breaks the plane of the exchange zone, stop your watch when the baton exits the zone. The key is to have the baton spend as little time in the zone as possible. For high school teams, the baton should move through the zone in no more than 2.2 seconds for boys’ teams, 2.6 seconds for girls’ squads.

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What is the key to accomplishing this goal?

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What exchange methods do we use?

* 4x400m (visual-candlestick exchange)

  All runners carry the baton in their right hand (catch left and switch)

What are the exchange and acceleration zones?

* 4x400m Exchange zone – 20 meters - Runners do not have to start in the zone, but the

exchange must be made within the zone.

What are the responsibilities of the passer and receiver when making a 4x400 meter exchange?

 1.  Passer

1. Finish the race well – do not slow down for exchange.  Fight hard all the way.
2. When you come off the corner, stay to the inside.  Do not swing out unless it is to pass another team or force oncoming runners wide around you.
3. Find your receiver and run hard into the exchange zone.
4. Hold the baton by its lower end, up in front of your face, fully extend the arm, elbow straight, and snap the baton into the receiver’s hand.
5. After the passer takes the baton, stop in your lane, let traffic clear, and walk off the track.

2.  Receiver

1. Stay in the exchange zone or it is a disqualification.
2. Be ready to slide down to the inside lanes as teams ahead of yours make their exchanges.
3. Make eye contact with your teammate and talk them to the exchange zone.  Make sure they observe you and any moves you make.
4. Try not to make any last second inside moves.
5. Judgment call – Go when you “feel” it is time – practice, practice, practice!!!
6. Use a shuffle step to begin running (do not cross over step) and reach for the baton.
7. Grab the baton, take it away, and when clear of traffic, switch hands.
8. Do not foul runners as you move to the curve, but keep all runners who attempt to pass on your outside as you negotiate the curve.  Be aggressive. Do not let people pass you who you will have to re-pass later—that wastes energy.

How do you determine where to put your athletes in a relay?

4x400 relay

#1  The best or second best runner – Run from the front if you can.

#2  A strong competitor, not afraid to jostle or fight for position in a crowd. You can run other teams out of contention with the right athlete in this leg.

#3  This person should run in steady position maintaining contact with leaders.

**#**4  The anchor leg hates to lose, runs smart and can fly in the last 100-120 meters**.**

**Some General Rules/Tips from Coach Sullivan.**

1. Stance. You don’t need to hold your position as in starts for individual events. Lean to get momentum. Athlete can be in 2 pt. or 3 pt. stance with toes pointed forward. Looking for incoming runner and mark under arm or between legs, ready to get out as quick as possible. (Don’t be standing waiting for the bus!)
2. Lane Integrity – know where you need to be.
3. Accelerate, Accelerate, Accelerate! 100%!! Outgoing runner get up to full speed quickly. Practice at a full 100% on exchange reps.
4. Outgoing runner - Punch with Palm
   1. At Command (Safety Element) incoming runner loud
   2. At Pre-determined mark (exchange should occur ½ - ¾ way through zone)
   3. At Stride Pattern – incoming runner judge and match stride of outgoing runner
5. Wide Target – Big Fingers/Catcher’s Mitt
6. Grip and Rip – Outgoing runner TAKE the baton not a give
7. The SIN and CURE
   1. SIN – not practicing exchanges at 100% and only going 90-95% (look great in practice, but no one runs 90-95% in meet, that will make you look like you never practiced)
   2. CURE – Time the baton through the exchange zone hand off
      1. Incoming runner one foot in exchange zone hit the clock
      2. Outgoing runner one foot out of exchange zone hit the clock
   3. In general, High School Boys 2 sec. flat or under, Girls 2.2 sec. or under
8. External feedback from coaches on exchange and time. By shouting out time of baton, through the zone, the athletes open up to how they feel during the exchange and will adjust to improve. Do another rep until they get where they feel good about exchange and speed of exchange.