

Decoy Conditioning

By Bob Solimini

Since the Decoy Super-Selection is the most difficult test for the French Ring Decoy I wanted to cover some conditioning exercises that could help you prepare for the DSS... These exercises will also assist all decoys to increase Speed, Agility and Quickness (SAQ). All content within this article is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional.

An appropriate warm-up session should pre-cede every exercise session. Warm-up routines should begin with a general whole body activity such as cycling, walking or jogging at a low intensity.

The Decoy super-selection physical test is as follows:

A) DISTANCE RUN (no costume) 2x 500 Meters (3 minute rest between the two 500 Meters) for maximum points you need to complete this exercise by 3 minutes 5 seconds total

B) SLALOM RUN (no costume) Slalom 160 Meters total (The decoy will run the slalom 80 meters up 80 meters back with no rest in between up and back) for maximum points you need to complete this exercise in 1 minute

C) 60 METER HURDLES (With costume) 11 hurdles out, 11 hurdles return X 2

One time out then immediately one time return. Rest one minute. Again one time out and one time return (Pole height is 50cm for 11 bars spaced 5 meters apart) for maximum points you need to complete this exercise in 30 seconds

D) 60 METER RUN & DUCK UNDER (With costume) 6 bars out 6 bars return (Bars are set 1 meter high spaced 10 meters apart) (No rest between out and return) for maximum points you need to complete this exercise in 30 seconds

**note running the 500 meters on a track or pavement will give you a different time than running on grass! And running the 500 meters in a square will also give you different times than if you run on an oval track!

Practicing this exact routine will help you gain speed and familiarize you with the DSS. Speed, agility and quickness (SAQ) training has become a popular way to train athletes. SAQ training may be used to increase speed/strength, or the ability to exert maximal force during high-speed movements. Once you see improvements in your times and you do not feel any fatigue during these exercises try doing them in your costume.

1. Basic Sprints

Set 2 cones out 10-20 meters apart. Sprint from one cone to the next and slowly jog back to the start. You can vary this to start facing down field and run to a cone at a 45 degree angle like a lateral esquivé.

2. Rolling Start

Exactly the same as above except you jog for 10 meters before sprinting. This drill is specifically designed to enhance acceleration rather than speed off the mark. Try running backwards or side stepping as well. This will increase your coordination and agility. This exercise will help with the explosiveness you need during a flee attack

3. Up Hill Sprints

In a trial, during an esquite, or an escape from a guard or escort the first few strides are crucial. Running up a slight hill (about 30 degrees) helps to develop power and acceleration. Keep the distances short (10-15 meters) and allow extra rest between sets and reps. An alternative to uphill running is a resistance parachute. The resistance the chute offers assists in increasing the power in your legs and core muscles needed for the off the line explosion for an esquite, or escape.

4. Down Hill Sprints (Over speed training)

Down hill speed and agility drills help to develop leg speed and coordination. This is sometimes referred to as over-speed training. Keep the distance short (10-15 meters) and make sure the hill is only slight. You don't want to ride down the hill on your face! Also make sure you have the proper footwear or you will lose a tire on the way down!

5. Hollow Sprints

Set 5 cones out in 30 meters intervals. Sprint 30 meters, jog 30 meters, sprint 30 meters and jog 30 meters to the final cone. Walk back to the start and repeat.

6. Cruise and Sprint

Mark out a distance of 100 meters. From the start gradually accelerate to reach full speed at about 60 meters. Sprint all out for the final 40 meters.

Reduce the number of repetitions for this exercise as it takes longer to complete.

7. Ladder Drills

A ladder is a simple training device that helps to improve coordination and leg speed. It can be used for a number of speed and agility drills and is particularly useful for sports such as French Ring decoying that requires fast and coordinated footwork.

8. The Snake

Set up a series of 6-8 cones in a straight line about 1 meter apart. Weave through the cones, turn and weave through back to the start, much like the exercises in the DSS. Only the cones are much closer together.

9. Follow the Leader

A training partner and large area is required for this drill. Have your training partner jog, run and sprint randomly over a large area. You must try to shadow him/her as closely as possible. This is an excellent drill that helps to develop reaction time, acceleration and speed endurance.

Increasing your reaction time will assist you in leaving a dog in the dust during the escapes from the escort or the attack w/ revolver! It may also help with not getting caught during an esquite like a deer in the head lights

Sport speed (for our intended purposes) refers to the ability to run at maximum or near maximum speed. This phenomenon will only last four-and-a-half to six seconds, even for world-class athletes. French Ring decoys do not need to be marathon runners; they need to have off the line explosive speed for short amounts of time. I feel the above exercises will assist all decoys in that! There are also many other exercises that can be added to your workouts! Do some research and do what you feel will help you out!

Good luck!!! I hope this helps YOU win the DSS next year!

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To find out more about Bob go to about ARF and click on his Bio.