

Arrowhead Pole Vault

Coach Brent Ribble

brent.ribble@gmail.com, 740-503-9864

About me

- 18 years of pole vault coaching experience
- 8th year at Arrowhead (started in 2017)

I have coached hundreds of vaulters, including many conference/regional/sectional meet champions, dozens of state meet qualifiers, state meet champions, national meet qualifiers, and several athletes who have gone on to vault in college.

My priorities are:

- Help our athletes (learn to) pole vault safely.
- Help our athletes have a fun and fulfilling experience as Arrowhead pole vaulters.
- Help our athletes develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to achieve their personal best.

What is the pole vault?

The pole vault is a field event in which the athlete sprints down a runway while carrying a long fiberglass pole. At the end of the runway, the athlete maneuvers the tip of the pole into the ground, jumps up, and attempts to clear a horizontal crossbar that is positioned over a pit of foam mats. The athlete's fundamental challenge is to transfer their horizontal energy (runway speed) into vertical energy (height), using the pole as an implement to facilitate this energy transfer as efficiently as possible. At track meets, the vaulter who clears the greatest height typically scores 10 points for their team. 2nd place = 8 pts, 3rd place = 6 pts, etc.

Is it dangerous?

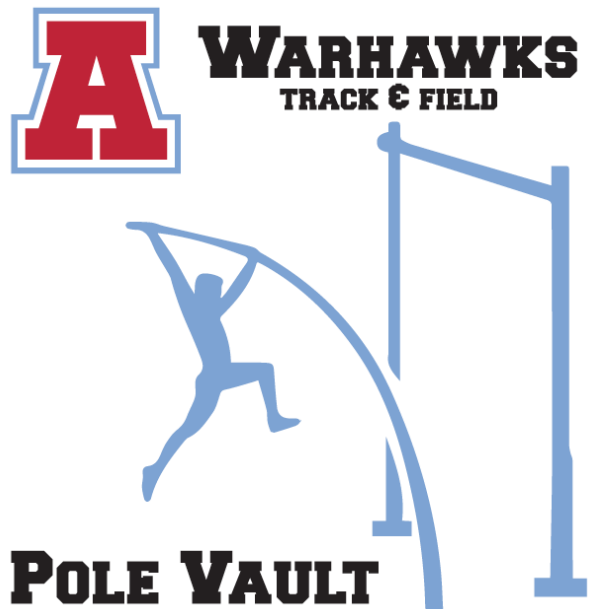
Yes, pole vaulting is inherently dangerous, but we mitigate the risks through wise decision-making and careful skill development. If you are concerned about your athlete's safety, let's chat about it.

Is it difficult?

Yes, and it takes a long time to learn and master. But my vaulters who are positive, patient, and persistent have always found quite a bit of success over time. The fun outweighs the difficulty, but younger vaulters in particular will need lots of support from teammates, parents, and coaches.

What makes a good pole vaulter? Can my athlete try it out for a few days?

The most important requirements are speed and mental toughness. Height, strength, explosiveness, coordination, and other traits are helpful, too. Please encourage your athlete to chat with me and try it out for a few days, at any time. We start low and easy, gradually adding height and difficulty over time.



More information on back side >>>

My athlete is a pole vaulter. How often will they compete in the vault at track meets?

Some vaulters might only compete in 3 meets all season. Our best vaulters might compete in 10+ meets. Most vaulters will end up in between. Often we are limited to entering 2 or 3 vaulters per meet, a challenge we share with the 17 other events as well. When selecting which vaulters will compete in each meet, we consider a wide collection of factors and criteria – including but not limited to personal record or “PR”, fatigue & injury, other entries & events, attitude & coachability, unique goals & circumstances, etc. Your vaulter might not compete in every meet you think they should. Our vaulters understand this, but if you have questions or concerns, let’s chat.

Can my vaulter do private lessons or train at a pole vaulting club during track season?

We discourage this for many reasons. Please understand your vaulter risks fatigue and injury due to overtraining, and risks acute, season-ending injury as well. The potential harm extends beyond your individual vaulter and affects the rest of the team, too. Club programs do not have the full context of what we are trying to do here at Arrowhead, our system, the habits we are trying to form or break, the culture we are trying to create, etc. If this is something your vaulter is thinking about doing, let’s chat about it first.

Can my vaulter rent or borrow a pole(s) from a third party?

This can get complicated (for reasons you might not expect), and we would probably discourage it in most cases. If this is something your vaulter is thinking about doing, let’s chat about it first.

I know a little bit about the pole vault. Can I give my vaulter some coaching?

The pole vault is technical and complicated, and for each vaulter we have unique priorities and strategies for coaching them. While we love for parents to be engaged and to learn about the event, please be careful with your advice and try to refrain from coaching. It might interfere with our specific plan for your vaulter.

Does my vaulter need to buy/wear spikes that are specifically sold as *pole vault spikes*?

No. Any spike with heel support is fine. Some vaulters might not even need spikes, or might not need them until later in the season. Also, we typically have some gently used spikes that your vaulter is welcome to borrow for free. If you have questions about spikes or other pole vault equipment, let’s chat.

What can my vaulter do at home to get better?

In this era of TikTok and YouTube, there’s no shortage of instructional videos out there. But just because it’s on the internet doesn’t mean it’s correct, proper, or that it aligns with our system, so be careful about that. Your vaulter will learn some drills they can do at home. Aside from that: get lots of sleep, eat lots of healthy-ish food, drink water, and take care of injuries.

How can I help with fundraising?

Our poles, crossbars, landing mats, uprights, and other pole vault equipment are very expensive. A new pole, for example, costs about \$700+. So every dollar raised during our fundraiser is tremendously helpful and much appreciated. If you are interested in donating or sponsoring in a more substantial way, let’s chat.

What else can you tell me about Arrowhead’s pole vault program?

- Our pole vault squad is a fun and quirky group, but don’t be fooled – We are very strategic and systematic, we work hard, we encounter and endure plenty of adversity, and we are dedicated to continuous improvement.
- Our program is probably the best in the state of Wisconsin. Your vaulter is privileged to be part of it.
- We jump really high and score lots of points for our teams.

Any other questions? Please reach out any time.

brent.ribble@gmail.com, 740-503-9864, @CoachRibbleAHS on Twitter/X