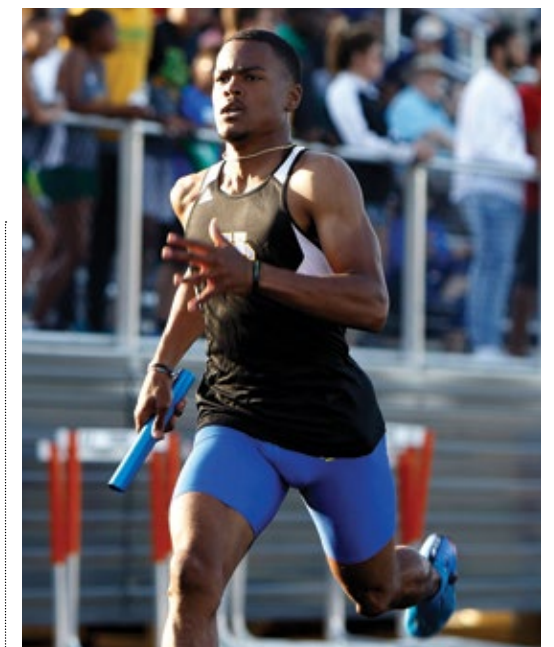


How Pilates Got an Injured Young Athlete Back on Track

After a season-ending meniscus tear, the method helped this high-school junior chase his dream of breaking the record for the 100-meter dash.

by Amy Schlinger



IT WAS JUST THE SECOND FOOTBALL GAME OF HIS SOPHOMORE YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL, WHEN THE SEASON—AND MAYBE EVEN HIS ATHLETIC CAREER—ENDED FOR LANGSTON JACKSON.

"I caught a pass and made a cut when someone hit my knee," says the now-17-year-old junior at Henry Clay High School student in Lexington, KY. The result was a lateral meniscus tear in his right knee, a devastating injury for any athlete, but especially for one who was also a track star: The year before, Jackson had run the 100 meter in 10.60 seconds, two-hundredths of a second off the state record, and the third-fastest time for a freshman in the country.

"I felt like I would never be the athlete that I was before the injury," Jackson says. But then his physical therapist recommended adding Pilates to his regimen.

"Pilates retrained my body and got me to a better place mentally and physically than I was before," Jackson says.

"Langston was referred to me by a former colleague from the University of Kentucky Sports Rehab Clinic, Gail 'Cookie' Friedhoff," says Robert Turner, the owner and head teacher of Breathe Pilates Method & More studio in Lexington. "Upon meeting Langston, I felt that we needed to work on his overall alignment and foot mechanics, improve his core strength, and balance his quad and hamstring strength."

At first, Jackson was overwhelmed. "I knew nothing about Pilates and was completely lost when I went in for my first session," he says.

Turner and Jackson did a lot of Footwork on the Reformer and the Chair in order to help with Jackson's

foot mechanics and rehab his knee injury. "His response would often be, 'Wow, I didn't realize I did that.' And I'd say, 'I know, and just think, the things you didn't know that you were doing, you were doing them really fast,'" recalls Turner.

Jackson was shocked at how quickly he made progress with Turner's help. "Pilates retrained my body and got me to a better place mentally and physically than I was before," he says.

And his hard work paid off: At the state-championship track meet this past May, Jackson won the 100 meter with a time of 10:56, .014 tenths of a second off the state record.

Jackson calls Turner a magician because of

the way that he helped transform Jackson's body, but Turner considers Jackson the magician because of the way he was able to mindfully apply the Pilates principles.

Not surprisingly, Jackson is a convert. "I will do Pilates over the summer, and honestly, the rest of my life because of how far it has brought me compared to where I started," he says. **PS**

OPPOSITE PAGE: DOING MOUNTAIN CLIMBER ON THE CHAIR HELPED LANGSTON JACKSON REHAB HIS KNEE AND STRENGTHEN HIS CORE.

ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ROBERT TURNER GUIDING JACKSON AS HE WORKS ON THE WUNDA CHAIR; JACKSON DOING EVE'S LUNGE ON THE REFORMER; JACKSON BACK ON THE TRACK THIS SPRING.