

## The Spotting Rig – Trampoline, Dry Board, Over Water

The trampoline-spotting rig helped to revolutionize not only the sport of diving, but also gymnastics, tumbling, trampoline and even aerial skiing.

The notion that a diver (or other athlete) could be suspended in the air using a cushioned belt, ropes, clips and pulleys that would permit the safe learning of multiple somersaulting and twisting skills without the fear of landing incorrectly on the head or neck was extremely valuable to the progress of the sport as well as raising the level of safety awareness. The coach would hold the spotting ropes tight as the diver somersaulted or twisted through the air – not allowing the diver to come into contact with the trampoline bed. This became and still is a very safe and efficient method of teaching not only difficult dives, but simple skills as well.

The next innovation was the placement of a spotting rig over a dry land diving board. Here, the spotting rig is mounted from the ceiling over the end of the diving board. A large mat similar to what a pole-vaulter or high jumper lands on is under the diving board as well. The same skills that a diver learned in the spotting belt over the trampoline could be performed on the dry land diving board. The advantage being that the dry land diving board was a more realistic apparatus to the diver than the trampoline. Because the diver is not actually going in to the water, multiple repetitions could safely be performed in a short amount of time. The coach would hold the spotting ropes tight – not allowing the diver to come into contact with the landing mat beneath the diving board.

The most recent innovation came when diving coaches started putting spotting rigs directly above the diving board over the water. Here, the diver could be placed in the spotting belt and the coach (or spotter) could maneuver the diver through the skill progressions and after the diver successfully completes them, the spotter could let go of the ropes and the diver would drop in the water – to gain a very realistic feel for the dive. Of course the added safety benefit of the diver being over the water (as opposed to a trampoline or landing mat) further increases the safety of the diver. In the extremely rare instance where an equipment malfunction would occur, the diver simply lands in the water.

The spotting rig – especially over the water is becoming one of the most sought after pieces of equipment for modern diving programs. The increased speed by which the divers learns skills and progressions as well as the increased safety of the athlete has allowed divers today to perform dives that just recently were considered impossible.

Of course, it goes without saying that only properly trained instructors should attempt to spot a diver over any apparatus including the water. Interested people should attend one of the many “safety-spotting clinics” that are hosted by United States Diving, Inc. – The National Governing Body of Diving. Check the U.S. Diving website ([www.usdiving.org](http://www.usdiving.org)) for dates and times of the clinic nearest you.