



The Sprinter's Leadership Mindset

What engineering leaders can learn from the track

Speaker: Ugo Anomelechi

Event: LeadDev LDX3 London 2025

English Schools Championships

2nd

Heat



2nd

Semi-Final



4th

Final Ranking



- Under 17s – Intermediate Boys
- Strong season, but not the favourite
- Coming into the final, ranked fourth on paper



Locked In & Took a Breath



I didn't need to
beat everyone off
the line
I was locked in



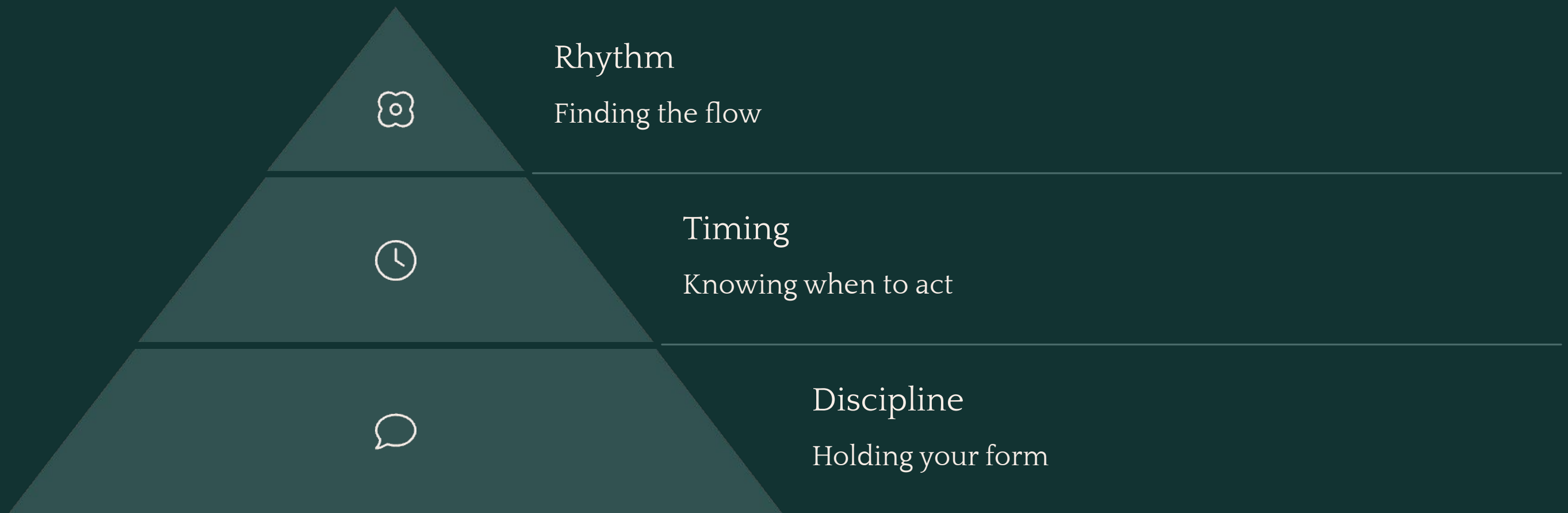
I trusted my
pickup
I just needed to get
out clean



I trusted my
finish
I took a breath



The Core Insight



Speed is not just running

It's knowing when to explode – and when to stay composed.

Phase by Phase

Leadership in Motion

■ Start - Out of the blocks

Getting the timing right

■ Drive - Building momentum

Speed with control

■ Transition - Maximum visibility

Pressure at peak

■ Finish - Composure at max effort

The breath

It maps (coincidentally) to how I lead teams today



Early Phases: Start & Drive

■ Out of the Blocks – Getting a Timely Start

Principle: Timely > Perfect

Don't wait for perfect context. Make the first move count to build momentum.

Illustration – Platform Centralisation:

- Took timely action to consolidate a few early systems
- Started with a simple plan to minimise disruption
- Kept the blast radius low and made the work visible
- Moved forward intentionally, not rushed

■ Drive Phase – Building Speed with Control

Principle: Trust & Rhythm

Building momentum requires sustainable speed and discipline, not burnout.

Illustration – Frequent Check-ins:

- Scheduled monthly on-site visits to Berlin
- Used these trips to break down uncertainty and build team rhythm
- Fostered open communication and collaboration
- Celebrated small wins and pivoted decisively when needed

Later Phases: Transition & Finish

■ Transition - Top-End Speed under Pressure

Principle: Stay Composed

High visibility equals high tension. Stay fluid when under pressure, don't tighten up.

Illustration - E-commerce Platform Launch:

- Helped the team stay focused on what mattered most
- Shielded them from distractions and noise
- Maintained composure to keep the team on pace
- Delivered the launch successfully despite the pressure

■ Final Phase - Composure at Max Effort


Principle: The Breath

That moment of composure under maximum strain provides clarity and gives an edge.


Illustration - That Moment:


- Paused to take a breath and avoid panic
- Delayed a launch to protect quality and composure
- Demonstrated leadership by maintaining clarity
- Enabled the team to perform at their best

Three Leadership Takeaways

 1. You don't need a perfect start. You need a plan.
Projects wobble, teams shift. Don't waste energy on the false start.

Instead, reset, recover, and nail the next phase.

 2. Hold your form, especially when the pressure hits.
Speed's useless if your form breaks down. Your team watches how you move.
If you stay calm, they stay calm.

 3. Know when to breathe.
That breath near the finish? It wasn't just physical — it was clarity.

Breathing is an integral part of performance.

So yes – I did win that final



pos	no	name	team	time	std
1	77	Ugochi Anomelechi	Surrey	10.93	ns
2	49	Rikki Fitton	London	10.94	ns
3	13	Peter Vickers	Cleve	11.04	ns
4	53	Devlin Williams	Midd	11.12	es
5	1	Lloyd Rice	Avon	11.12	es
6	54	Clive Turner	Midd	11.13	es



Pos	Name	Team	Time
1	Ugochi Anomelechi	Surrey	10.93ms
2	Rikki Fitton	London	10.94ms
3	Peter Vickers	Cleve	11.04ms

What stuck? Not the win, the moment of calm

Now: I try to lead in the same way

So What Now...?

So if you're leading a team right now, ask yourself:



Where do you need to start in a timely manner?



Where might you be tightening too early?



And where do you need to breathe — so you can finish strong?

That's the sprinter's mindset.

And it's not just for the track.



Ugo Anomelechi



Let's chat afterwards!

