

**SO YOU'RE NEW TO CLUB TRACK & FIELD?
WELL, ONE – HALF OF YOUR COMPETITORS ARE ALSO!**

Pointers for new athletes – REVISED April 2010

1. **Signing up** for the upcoming track meet, indicate if you will be attending either one or two days.
 - a. You do not need to sign up for events. You will need a sticker for each event you participate in. Stickers with your name, birth date and competition number will be made up and given to each athlete. You will be responsible to bring your own stickers to each meet. If you run out, ask your coach for more. Make sure you have enough stickers for each event you are competing in.
 - b. Talk to your coach about the events that you are able to do at the track meet.

2. **Before leaving home –**
 - a. Recommended items to place in your track bag
 - running shoes
 - spike shoes
 - replacement spikes and wrench
 - Vaseline for spike holes
 - waterproof jacket
 - extra layer of clothes
 - gloves and extra socks
 - umbrella
 - sun glasses
 - food and drinks
 - sun screen and lip blocks
 - warm blanket
 - sleeping bag
 - singlet and shorts
 - hat or toque for sun/rain
 - drinking water
 - spray bottle or towel
 - massage cream
 - band aids and second skin
 - tape (for marks)
 - plastic bag for wet clothes
 - b. Double check that your spikes and singlet are in your track bag.
 - c. If you are a thrower, remember an old towel to wipe the implement.

- d. It is usually unwise to eat a **full** meal within 1 hour of competing in a track event. Be sure to have nutritional snacks with you. Power drinks are fine but should be sipped in small amounts before an event if needed and after. Beverages (except water) should be consumed at least one hour before any track event.

3. Arriving at the track –

- a. Avoid going onto the infield. It is closed to competitors, parents, and coaches, especially if there are field events taking place.
- b. Do not cross the track while an event is in progress. Look both ways when you cross over. It is best to walk around the outside of the track.
- c. Arrive at least 2 hours before your event starts. This will give you time to do a proper warm up. Sometimes an event will start one – half hour before the scheduled start time, especially track events. Be aware of the schedule and the announced change of times if this should happen.
- d. Get your competitive number if one is needed from your coach or club parent. Don't lose it! If you forget to bring your competitor number on the second day of a two day meet, see your coach immediately. You can't compete without it. It is illegal to use a teammates number – automatic disqualification.

4. Competition Implements –

- a. Most track meets supply starting blocks for athletes aged 14 and over. Younger athletes do not use blocks. If you bring your own starting blocks, they are your responsibility. Don't lose them.
- b. The maximum length of spikes in your shoes on most synthetic surfaces is between 5 – 7 mm. To avoid problems check the entry form sent by the club sponsoring the meet.
- c. Athletes who bring their own throwing implements (e.g. shot puts, discus, javelins, and hammers) are required to have these implements weighed in by officials at least one hour before the event is scheduled to start.

- d. Keep off the high jump / pole vault mats. These are very expensive and are not designed for playing or lying about on.

5. The Competition –

- a. NO ATHLETE SHOULD COMPETE WHILE INJURED. It is the responsibility of the athlete to report an injury to his/her coach. Medical approval should be obtained before an athlete returns to practices and competitions.
- b. Profanity or harassment of any kind at an event will result in a warning by the official and can result in disqualification of the athlete(s) involved.
- c. Do not talk to or distract an official at an event when they are trying to run an event. They need their full attention to the task they are performing. Do not “horse around” at an event area as it can be dangerous and annoying.
- d. Be polite to officials! Remember they are volunteering their time and are not paid! Without them, there is no track and field meet. Always remember to thank them when you are finished at your field event.
- e. The event official will designate a specific space as the “competition area” Athletes must remain in this area with other competitors unless excused by an official. Parents and coaches may not enter this area.
- f. Athletes may not communicate with parents and coaches during competitions unless the official has indicated that you can do so.
- g. Parents, coaches, or friends who run next to an athlete in competition will cause the athlete to be disqualified.
- h. Track and field meets frequently run behind schedule. Meet officials try to avoid this but it frequently occurs.
- i. Athletes are responsible for their own possessions. Periodically track spikes and wallets wander away. Be careful!
- j. Usually track events for 9 – 15 year old athletes start with the older athletes (i.e. the 15 year old) and work backward in age. Keep this in mind when you sign up for events and doing your warm up. If a track event starts at

9:00 and you are a younger athlete be aware that your race will not start right away and schedule your field events accordingly.

- k. Competition numbers are worn on –
 - front for track events over 400 m, long & triple jump, high jump (athlete’s choice)
 - back for all throwing events, pole vault, sprinting events (400 m and less)

- l. When an athlete is in the starting position, his/her toes must be behind the starting line, not on or over it.

- m. In sprint events, athletes must stay in their assigned lanes. At the finish line stay in your lane until the officials dismiss you. Any athlete who runs on the inside line will be disqualified.

- n. Starting instructions –

Sprints	Middle Distance
(sweats off)	(sweats off)
On Your Mark	On Your Mark
Set	“Gun”
“Gun”	

- If the starter fires the starting pistol a second time, STOP and return to the starting area. The race had a FALSE start and the whole heat of athletes are responsible. If an athlete is responsible for a second false start in the event that athlete will be disqualified from the event. Avoid looking at the starter when lined up for an event. Concentrate on your running! (THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO OLDER ATHLETES. AS OF 2010 THEY WILL BE DISQUALIFIED AFTER ONE FALSE START)

- o. Athletes compete by the year they were born. Although at times the meet director may combine two age or gender groups, awards are determined separately.

- p. Athletes 9 – 13 may not use starting blocks in a race. Athletes 14 and over must use blocks with a 4 – point stance (both hands and both feet must be in contact with the track.)

- q. Listen to the P.A. system for information (i.e. where to marshall, changes in starting times, etc.) and watch the meet schedule.
- r. If you have two events that are happening at the same time, ask for some help from your club coaching staff. You must check in to both events and then return to the field event until your running event is about to occur. Return immediately to your field event once your race is over and the track officials are finished with you.
- s. If the athlete encounters difficulty during an event, he/she should talk politely to the event official. If the problem is not resolved, talk to your coach after the competition. This may result in an official protest to the meet director.
- t. Athletes are encouraged to keep track of their performances following the completion of an event, and keep a Personal Bests Journal.

6. Meet Results –

- a. Meet results are usually not posted for at least one hour after an event is complete. This is because any protests must be submitted within one-half hour of an event. Be patient!
- b. Some competitions have ribbons from 1st to 3rd. Others offer ribbons from 1st to 6th or 8th. Some of the major meets award medals for 1st (gold), 2nd (silver) and 3rd (bronze).
- c. Do not be disappointed if you do not win an event. Frequently you are competing against other individuals who have trained and competed for several years already. Focus on your PERSONAL BEST (PB) – your own improvement. Track is an individual sport and personal best's are far more important than how you placed!

7. After the Meet –

- a. Check that you have all the clothes that you brought with you.
- b. Clean up your area of all “garbage” before you leave.

GOOD LUCK AND ENJOY THE TRACK MEET!!