ATHLETICS COACHING GUIDE

Planning an Athletics Training and Competition Season
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Goals
Realistic, yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to the motivation of the athlete both at training and during competition. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans. Sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Please see the Principles of Coaching section for additional information and exercises on goal setting.

Benefits
- Increases athlete’s level of physical fitness.
- Teaches self discipline
- Teaches the athlete sports skills that are essential to a variety of other activities
- Provides the athlete with a means for self-expression and social interaction

Goal Setting
Setting goals is a joint effort with the athlete and coach. The main features of goal setting include the following.

1. Structured into short-term, intermediate and long-term
2. Stepping stones to success
3. Must be accepted by the athlete
4. Vary in difficulty - easy attainable to challenging
5. Must be measurable

Long Term Goal
The athlete will acquire basic athletics skills, appropriate social behavior and functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in athletics competitions.
Assessing Goals Checklist

1. Write a goal statement.
2. Does the goal sufficiently meet the athlete’s needs?
3. Is the goal is positively stated? If not, rewrite it.
4. Is the goal is under the athlete’s control and that it focuses on their goals and no one else’s?
5. Is the goal a goal and not a result?
6. Is the goal important to the athlete that they will want to work towards achieving it? Have the time and energy to do it?
7. How will this goal make the athlete’s life differently?
8. What barriers might the athlete encounter in working toward this goal?
9. What more does the athlete know?
10. What does the athlete need to learn how to do?
11. What risks does the athlete need to take?
Planning an Athletics Training & Competition Season
Season Planning

Periodization
Organization and planning are the keys to a successful Athletics program. Planning for the season ahead is actually accomplished backwards. The coach and athlete work back in time beginning with preparation and early competitions until arriving at the beginning of the training year. All training plans are best when flexible and simple. This will allow for modifications resulting from an athlete’s progress and improvements. The major objective of any training and competition program is to ensure the athlete is fully prepared – mentally and physically to perform at their greatest capacity. The term periodization is used to describe the division of a training and competition programme. Each period has specific training objectives. The following periods of training work best when followed regardless if the time available is one full year, six months, twelve or eight weeks.

1. Preparation Period
   - Pre Season Training
2. Competition Period
3. Transition Period

Preparation Period
The first and longest period of any training and competition program is the preparation period. In this period, athletes move from general to specific training. The main objective is to prepare athletes for competition. Fitness and conditioning is developed in this period by gradually increasing the volume of training. This will allow the athlete to accomplish the demands of specific training. Note that volume does not increase in a straight line. It is implemented in steps to allow time for recovery and overcompensation.

Specific preparation follows general preparation work. During this training phase, both volume and intensity are increased. For the runner, mileage will reach its highest level. Training becomes more event specific with conditioning focusing on the energy systems used in the event. Remember that technique work is accomplished when the athlete is not fatigued, therefore, comes before general fitness training.
Coach Pre Season Planning and Preparations

1. Improve your Athletics knowledge and skills by attending training schools and clinics.
2. With your Sport Administrator, locate a facility with the proper equipment for practice sessions (e.g., high school, recreation center, university, etc.).
3. Recruit volunteer assistant coaches from high school or college athletics programs.
4. Establish goals and draw up a minimum eight-week training and competition plan. Schedule a 2-5 five practices each week for the minimum eight weeks period.
5. Please note that some of the Distance events require a longer training and competition plan in order to properly train and prevent athlete injury.
6. Schedule "mini" meets against other local teams.
7. Ensure that all prospective athletes have thorough physical examinations before the first practice. Also, be sure to obtain parental and medical releases.

Preseason Training

Athletes are encouraged to develop and maintain year round, good physical fitness and nutritional habits. Suggestions for ongoing fitness programming are included in the general coaching section, Athlete Nutrition, and Fitness. Athletes that arrive for training in a state of general good health and fitness are more likely to yield better competition performances and year round results.

Preseason Training Goals

1. Development of sports-specific muscle strength and endurance
2. Development of appropriate aerobic (endurance) and anaerobic (high intensity) conditioning
3. Development of muscle power
4. Development of sports-specific skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Long Jumper</th>
<th>Distance Runner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aerobic vs. Anaerobic</td>
<td>Anaerobic</td>
<td>Anaerobic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle Strength</td>
<td>Legs, trunk, shoulders</td>
<td>Muscle Endurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle Power</td>
<td>Legs and thighs</td>
<td>Overall conditioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility and Agility</td>
<td>Hips, ankles, shoulders</td>
<td>Hips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that both the long jumper and distance runner are working with the anaerobic system during the preseason, as they both need to build a fitness base, increase their endurance. However, the distance runner will log many more mils than the long jumper.

As with year round fitness and conditioning training, preseason training is be characterized by the following principles.

- Specificity
- Progressive increase in load, time, frequency
- Overload to encourage gradual adaptation
- Resistance – Recovery - Rest
- Total commitment to task
Although the decision regarding how often to practice is dependent on many variables including coaching availability, facility availability, life commitments, it is advisable to practice 3-5 times weekly during the preseason period. More days of practice are suggested as the weeks available in the pre-season period decrease.

Remember – the pre-season period is a time of skill development and work, but to keep all your players successfully involved, it must always be FUN!!

Examples of Pre Season Programming

The examples of preseason activities are presented to suggest ideas as you plan for your athletes. The coach should assess the athletic activity to determine the proportion of aerobic vs. anaerobic conditioning is necessary to participate successfully.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aerobic Conditioning</th>
<th>Anaerobic Conditioning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>Sprinting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Hill Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Fartleks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The coach will need to assess the athletic activity to determine which muscles need specific strength and/or power to compete most successfully. See Section 7 for more information on training theory.

Strength is the ability of a muscle or muscle group to exert force. Examples of specific strength include the sprinter’s need for strength in the thigh and calf muscles, or the shot putter’s requirement for strength in the shoulder and trunk.

Power is the ability of a muscle or muscle group to exert force quickly. Examples of power might include the runner’s need for explosive power in the thigh muscles, or the shot putter’s requirement for explosive power to drive up and out with the shot.

Competition Period

During the competition period, volume is gradually decreased and intensity increased. For instance, heavier weights are lifted, but less often. Speed workouts are run faster, however recovery times are longer. Competition characteristics are simulated during this training period. Mini competitions, local area or dual area competitions are a good training competitions during this period. It is important to keep training loads heavy enough to improve athlete’s fitness levels, yet light enough to boost enthusiasm and maintain high energy levels. An athlete’s “athletic shape” is at its highest during this period.

In Season Training

Plan each practice session according to what needs to be accomplished, using the athletes' individual progress and gradual event specification as guidelines for planning. Continue to use the skills assessments to record each athlete’s progress from the general preparation phase to specific preparation accompanied with mini competitions.

The training program during the actual season has two primary goals: maintenance of the gains of pre-season training; and continued specific attention to areas of the body at risk either from past injury, or the particular risks of the sport.
**Transition Period**

This period is also called the “active rest” period. The end of the season is drawing near and we do not want the athlete to lose all that they have gained. The main objective of the transition period is to allow athletes to recover mentally, physically and emotionally from their hard work during the preparation and competition periods. Implement low volume, low intensity cross training exercises during this. Do anything other than the event that your athletes have been training for in the previous periods. Have some fun.

Rest should be increased to allow rejuvenation. The athlete should be encouraged to engage in an alternate activity that is enjoyable, less strenuous, and relaxing.

**An Example – General Training for the Jumpers**

![Diagram of General Training for the Jumpers]

**Post Season Planning**

1. Review preseason goals and determine how many of them were achieved.
2. Ask for comments from the athletes and family members.
3. Write an evaluation of each athlete, and of the season, to send to family members.
4. Instruct the athletes to participate in other sports training and competition programs, and to continue using their warm up, stretching, strengthening, and cool down exercises to stay fit during the off-season.
Confirmation of Practice Schedule
Once your venue has been determined and assessed you are now ready to confirm your training and competition schedules. It is important to publish training and competition schedules to submit to the interested groups below. This can help generate community awareness for your Special Olympics Athletics Program.

- Facility Representatives
- Local Special Olympics Program
- Volunteer Coaches
- Athletes
- Families
- Media
- Management Team members
- Officials

The Training and Competition schedule is not exclusive to the areas listed below.

- Dates
- Start and End Times
- Registration and/or Meeting areas
- Contact phone number at the facility
- Coaches phone numbers
Essential Components of Planning a Athletics Training Session
Special Olympics athletes respond well to a simple well-structured training outline with which they can become familiar. An organized plan, prepared before you get to the athletics center, will help establish such a routine and help make best use of your limited time. Every practice session needs to contain the following elements. The amount of time spent on each element will vary because of several factors.

- Warm ups
- Previously taught skills
- New Skills
- Competition experience
- Feedback on performance.

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember when creating a training session using the key components of a training session, the progression through the session allows for a gradual build up of physical activity.

- Easy to difficult
- Slow to fast
- Known to unknown
- General to specific
- Start to finish
## Principles of Effective Training Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description and Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep all active</td>
<td>Athlete needs to be an active listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create clear, concise goals</td>
<td>Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give clear, concise instructions</td>
<td>Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record progress</td>
<td>You and your athletes chart progress together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give positive feedback</td>
<td>Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide variety</td>
<td>Vary exercises – prevent boredom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage enjoyment</td>
<td>Training and competition is fun, help keep it this way for you and your athletes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Create progressions               | Learning in increased when information progresses from:  
  - Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully  
  - Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it  
  - General to specific – this is why I am working so hard |
| Plan maximum use of resources     | Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively |
| Allow for individual differences  | Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities. |
Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

- Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
- When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
- Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
- Review intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- Alter the plan according to weather, the facility in order to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
- Change activities before the athlete become bored, and lose interest.
- Keep drills and activities brief so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise even it is rest.
- Devote the end of the practice to a fun, group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun always giving them something to look forward to at the end of practice.
- If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
- Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next session.
- Keep the **fun** in fundamentals.
Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions
Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of athletics.

- Establish clear rules for behavior at your first practice and enforce them.
  1. Keep your hands to yourself.
  2. Listen to the coach.
  3. When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look, and Listen
  4. Ask the coach before you leave the field of play
- When the weather is poor, have a plan to immediately remove athletes from inclement weather.
- Always rope off the throwing areas so that athletes do not wander into the line of throwing.
- Never play around with the shot puts or relay batons
- Make sure athletes bring water to every practice, especially in hotter climates.
- Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
- Identify the nearest phone accessible during practice.
- Ensure that the locker rooms and or rest rooms are available and clean during practice.
- Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
- Do not allow athletes to play while wearing watches, bracelets, or jewelry including earrings.
- Provide proper stretching exercises after warming up at the beginning of each practice.
- Provide activities that also improve general fitness levels. Fit athletes are less likely to get injured.
Athletics Practice Competitions
The more we compete, the better we get. Part of the strategic plan for Special Olympics Athletics is to drive more sport development at the local levels. Competition motivates athletes, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. We have provided a few suggestions below.

1. Host mini meets with adjacent local Programs.
2. Ask the local high school can your athletes compete with them as a practice meet.
3. Join the local community running clubs and/or associations.
4. Host weekly “all comers meets for the area.
5. Create a running league or club in your community.
6. Incorporate competition components at the end of every training session.
Selecting Team Members
The key to the successful development of a Traditional Special Olympics or Unified Sports® team is the proper selection of team members. We have provided some primary considerations below for you.

Ability Grouping
Unified teams work best when all team members have similar sports skills. Partners with abilities that are far superior to other teammates will either control competition or accommodate others by not competing to their potential. In both situations, the goals of interaction and teamwork are diminished and a true competitive experience is not achieved. For example, in Football, an 8 year old should not be competing against or with a 30 year old athlete.

Age Grouping
All team members should be closely matched in age.

- Within 3-5 years of age for athletes 21 years of age and under
- Within 10-15 years for athletes 22 years of age and over

Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports®
Unified Sports® embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your Unified team you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and end of your sport season. Unified teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all athletes and partners. Every teammate should play a role and have the opportunity to contribute to the team. Meaningful involvement also refers to the quality of interaction and competition within a Unified Sports® team. Achieving meaningful involvement by all teammates on the team ensures a positive and rewarding experience for everyone.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement
- Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- Teammates compete according to the rules of competition.
- Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- Teammates understand how to blend their skills with those of other athletes, resulting in improved performance by athletes with lesser ability.

Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members
- Have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow team members.
- Act as on field coaches, rather than teammates.
- Control most aspects of the competition during critical periods of the game.
- Do not train or practice regularly, and only show up on the day of competition.
- Lower their level of ability dramatically, so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.
**Athletics Athlete Skills Assessment**

The sport skills assessment chart is a systematic method useful to determine the skill ability of an athlete. The Athletics Skills Assessment Card is designed to assist coaches in determining athlete’s ability level in athletics before they begin participation. Coaches will find this assessment a useful tool for several reasons.

1. Help coach to determine with the athlete which events in which they will compete
2. Establish the baseline training areas of athlete
3. Assist coaches to group athletes of similar ability in training teams
4. Measure the athlete’s progression
5. Help determine athletes daily training schedule

Before administering the assessment coaches need to perform the following analysis when observing the athlete.

- Become familiar with each of the tasks listed under the major skills
- Have an accurate visual picture of each task
- Have observed a skilled performer executing the skill.

When administering the assessment coaches will have a better opportunity in getting the best analysis from their athletes. Always begin by explaining the skill you would like to observe. When possible demonstrate the skill.
Special Olympics Athletics Skills Assessment Card

**Athlete’s Name**

**Coach’s Name**

**Date**

**Date**

**Instructions**

1. Use tool at the beginning of the training/competition season to establish a basis of the athlete’s starting skill level.
2. Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
3. If the athlete performs the skill correctly 3 out of 5 times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.
4. Program Assessment Sessions into your program.
5. Athletes may accomplish skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished this list when *all possible items* have been achieved.

**Running Basics**

- [ ] Maintains a balanced and upright posture
- [ ] Can maintain a hips tall position
- [ ] Lifts opposite knee/arm while running
- [ ] Does not swing the arms in front of the body or rotate the shoulders while running

**Starts**

- [ ] Performs a stand up sprint start
- [ ] Demonstrates proper sprinting form
- [ ] Takes relaxed "On Your Mark" position in the starting blocks
- [ ] Takes balanced "Set" position in the starting blocks
- [ ] Performs a sprint start out of the starting position upon hearing start command
- [ ] Athlete performs a stand up start

**Sprints**

- [ ] Athlete can perform a stand up or block start
- [ ] Athlete has good foot speed
- [ ] Demonstrates ability to start and finish a sprint event
- [ ] Athletes sprints under control
- [ ] Athlete likes to run fast
Hurdles
☐ Athlete attempts to step over a low barrier
☐ Athlete demonstrates the ability to step over a low obstacle while running
☐ Athlete demonstrates flexibility in hips
☐ Athlete demonstrates ability to start and finish a sprint
☐ Athlete likes running over barriers

Relays
☐ Receives baton in a visual pass
☐ Performs an upsweep/palm down baton pass
☐ Performs an downsweep/palm up baton pass
☐ Performs baton pass in exchange zone
☐ Runs designated leg of relay race in proper manner
☐ Athlete runs to teammate in proper lane
☐ Athlete runs in lane while reaching back with designated arm
☐ Athlete can run to teammate with baton
☐ Athlete runs in lane while looking back at incoming runner
☐ Athlete can run 100M
☐ Athlete can run 400M
☐ Athlete likes running relays with teammates

Middle Distance
☐ Athlete can run for 3 minutes at a steady pace
☐ Athlete can run for 30 seconds at a fast pace
☐ Athlete likes running 2-4 laps around track

Long Distance Running
☐ Runs in balanced and erect posture
☐ Demonstrates correct distance running form
☐ Demonstrates ability to start and finish a 1600M race
☐ Demonstrates ability to run at a certain pace
Planning an Athletics Training & Competition Season
Athletics Skills Assessment

Running Long Jump
- Performs a 9-step approach
- Performs a single leg takeoff
- Demonstrates the step-style flight technique
- Demonstrates the hang-style flight technique
- Demonstrates proper landing technique
- Jumps on command and under control
- Athlete can perform a good standing long jump
- Athlete can locate his/her starting mark
- Athlete can locate takeoff board
- Athlete likes jumping into sand pit

Standing Long Jump
- Assumes a ready-to-jump position
- Demonstrates the correct takeoff for a standing long jump
- Demonstrates proper flight technique
- Demonstrates proper landing technique
- Jumps on command and under control
- Athlete can perform two-leg takeoff
- Athlete likes jumping

High Jump
- Performs a 7-step approach for a flop style high jump
- Performs a flop style jump, landing on back
- Performs a scissor style high jump
- Performs a 7-step approach for a scissor-style high jump
- Jumps on command and under control
- Athlete can jump up into the air off one foot
- Athlete can take off with one foot and land in the pit
- Athlete can perform a consistent three-step approach
- Athlete can perform a one-foot takeoff
- Athlete can jump backward into the pit
- Athlete can run on a curve
- Athlete likes jumping
Planning an Athletics Training & Competition Season
Athletics Skills Assessment

**Shot Put (for wheelchair athletes too)**
- Grips shot correctly
- Takes a ready-to-put position
- Performs a standing put, or wheelchair sitting put
- Performs a sliding put
- Performs a glide put
- Puts shot in a forward direction
- Puts shot in the shot put marking area
- Performs reverse or weight transfer
- Athlete can balance the shot in the palm of one hand
- Athlete can safely pick up and hold the shot in the proper position
- Athlete likes putting the shot

**Race Walking**
- Race walks in a balanced and erect posture
- Race walks in proper form at low speeds
- Race walks at various speeds, slow-fast
- Race walks in competitive form
- Race walks under control
- Athlete likes race walking

**Wheelchair Racing**
- Assumes a ready-to-race position
- Performs a forward stroke and recovery
- Demonstrates ability to complete a wheelchair race
- Races in a controlled manner

**Softball Throw (wheelchair athletes too)**
- Grips a softball correctly
- Demonstrates proper overhand throwing technique
- Throws softball on command
- Throws softball in a forward direction
- Throws softball in the softball marking area
- Athlete can properly grip softball in throwing hand
- Athlete can take a correct ready-to-throw position
- Athlete likes throwing a softball
Daily Performance Record
The Daily Performance Record is designed for the coach to keep an accurate record of the athlete's daily performances as they learn a sports skill. There are several reasons why the coach can benefit from using the Daily Performance Record.

1. The record becomes a permanent documentation of the athlete's progress
2. Helps the coach establish measurable consistency in the athlete's training program.
3. The record allows the coach to be flexible during the actual teaching and coaching session because he can break down the skills into specific, smaller tasks that meet the individual needs of each athlete.
4. The record helps the coach choose proper skills teaching methods, correct conditions and criteria for evaluating the athlete's performance of the skills.

Using the Daily Performance Record
At the top of the record, the coach enters his name; the athlete's name, and their athletics event. If more than one coach works with the athlete, they should enter the dates that they work with the athlete next to their names.

Before the training session begins, the coach decides what skills will be covered. The coach makes this decision based on the athlete's age, the athlete's interests, and his mental and physical abilities. The skill needs to be a statement or a description of the specific exercise that the athlete must perform. The coach enters the skill on the top line of the left-hand column. Each subsequent skill is entered after the athlete masters the previous skill. Of course, more than one sheet may be used to record all of the skills involved. Also, if the athlete cannot perform a prescribed skill, the coach may break down the skill into smaller tasks that will allow for the athlete's success at the new skill.

Conditions and Criteria for Mastering
After the coach enters the skill, they must then decide on the conditions and criteria by which the athlete must master the skill. Conditions are special circumstances, which define the manner in which the athlete must perform a skill. For example, "given a demonstration, and with assistance". The coach needs to always operate under the assumption that the ultimate conditions in which the athlete masters a skill are, "upon command and without assistance", and therefore, does not have to enter these conditions in the record next to the skill entry. Ideally, the coach needs to arrange the skills and conditions such that the athlete gradually learns to perform the skill while upon command and without assistance.

Criteria are the standards that determine how well the skill must be performed. The coach needs to determine a standard that realistically suits the athlete's mental and physical abilities. For example, "make three strikes, 60 percent of the time". Given the varied nature of skills, the criteria might involve many different types of standards, such as - amount of time, number of repetitions, accuracy, distance or speed.

Dates of Sessions and Levels of Instruction Used
The coach may work on one task for a couple of days, and may use several methods of instruction during that time to progress to the point where the athlete performs the task upon command and without assistance. To establish a consistent curriculum for the athlete, the coach must record the dates he works on particular tasks, and must enter the methods of instruction that were used on those dates.
## Planning an Athletics Training & Competition Season

### Daily Performance Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event:</th>
<th>Insert Event Name</th>
<th>Athlete’s Name</th>
<th>Insert Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill:</td>
<td>Insert Skill</td>
<td>Coach’s Name</td>
<td>Insert Name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Analysis</th>
<th>Conditions &amp; Criteria</th>
<th>Dates &amp; Instruction Methods</th>
<th>Date Mastered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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#### Skill Analysis

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<th>Dates &amp; Instruction Methods</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Perform proper flight technique for standing long jump                      | VeC, 4 out of 5 (4/5) times | 3/10, PP - 3 out of 3 (3/3) times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/12, VeC – 2 out of 5 (2/5) times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/14, VeC – 4 out of 5 (4/5) times  
| Perform correct takeoff behind takeoff line or board                         |                           |                                                                                           | 3/14          |
| Brings legs and upper body forward while I flight by piking hips             | D, 4 out of 5 times (4/5)  | 3/10, PA – 2 out of 5 (2/5) times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/12, PA – 5 out of 5 (5/5) times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/14, D – 4 out of 5 (4/5) times  
| Extends heels forward while swinging arms down past hips                    | D, 4/5                    | 3/10, PA – 2/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/12, PA – 4/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/14, D – 4/5 times  
| Keeps feet slightly apart and parallel during flight                         | VeC, 4/5                  | 3/10, PP – 3/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/12, PP – 4/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/14, D – 4/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/17, VeC - 4/5 times  
| Holds head forward, and focuses a couple of meters ahead                    | VeC, 4/5                  | 3/10, PP – 3/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/12, PP – 4/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/14, PP – 5/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/17, D – 3/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/19, D – 3/5 times  
|                                                                             |                           | 3/21, VeC - 4/5 times  

--- Example ---
**Athletics Attire**

Appropriate Athletics attire is required for all competitors. As coach discuss the types of sport clothes that is acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long pant jeans to blue jean shorts are not proper Athletics attire for any event. Explain that they cannot perform their best 100M or 3K race while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or collegiate while training or during competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes that do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Athletes must wear clothes that are suited for the activities in which the athletes are engaged. In general, this means comfortable, non-confining clothing and well-fitted athletic shoes. Proper fitting and clean uniforms tend to give athletes a boost. Although the saying "You play as well as you look" has never been proven, many athletes and coaches continue to believe in it.

**Shirts**

Shirts should provide comfort and a good appearance while allowing freedom of movement in the shoulders and arms. Shirts should fit loosely, but not so loosely that they appear to be baggy. A sleeveless shirt or T-shirt is recommended. Make sure the shirt is long enough to tuck into the shorts or warm up pants.

**Shorts**

Gym shorts with waistbands that fit snugly around the waist are recommended. Shorts should provide the athlete with comfort and a good appearance. The elastic waistband should help keep the shirt in place. Loose shorts can cause athletes discomfort, and are a distraction from their sports activities.

**Socks**

White tube socks made of good material will add support, help prevent blisters, give a good appearance, last an entire season and add to the length of the life of shoes.

**Shoes**

Probably the most important article of clothing an athlete wears when participating in track and field is a properly fitted running shoe. A good running shoe needs to have the following.

1. A thick padded heel cushion, which lowers the incidence of calluses, bruises, spurs, shin splints, ankle sprains, etc., by absorbing impact
2. Thick durable rubber sole
3. A firm heel counter, which adds more stability and keeps the heel straight in the shoe
4. Good flexibility; and, most importantly
5. A good fit

**Warm Up Suits**

Warm up suits are worn for warming up prior to, and staying warm after, a practice or meet. Medium weight cotton sweatshirt and pants are excellent and inexpensive warm ups. Nylon windbreakers are excellent for retaining warmth and keeping the athlete dry during inclement weather.
Athletics Equipment
The many events of Athletics requires numerous sporting equipment. It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment for the specific events works and impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. To reinforce this ability within them, have them select the equipment used for their events as well.

Timing Devices
A fully automatic timing system or electric or digital stopwatches are recommended. When Fully Automatic Timing (FAT) is used, times will be recorded in one one-hundredth (1/100) of a second. Most manual timing devices are equipped with a button for start, a button for stop and a reset button. All manual times will be recorded in one-tenth (1/10) of a second.

Starting Pistol
A starting pistol should be used during training sessions. Special Olympians should be exposed to the gun prior to participating in a competitive event. Suitable replacements for the gun are a bell (mandatory in an indoor track), whistle or verbal start.

Starting Blocks
The use of starting blocks is optional. Starting blocks should be anchored behind the starting line so that when in the start position, the athlete’s hands are set just behind the starting line. The blocks must be adjustable to allow the athlete to attain the most beneficial starting position.
Hurdles
Hurdles that suit the ability of the athletes should be used. Competitive hurdles shouldn't be used until athletes have learned the basis of hurdling technique over practice hurdles. Practice hurdles can be collapsible or designed to fall over easily. Practice hurdles come in many forms — from a light stick balanced on traffic cones to specifically designed beginner/practice hurdles.

Relay Baton
One relay baton is needed for each participating relay team. Batons measuring 10cm in circumference are made of anodized aluminum, or lightweight, unbreakable plastic. For practice, the following materials cut into 30cm lengths and having smooth edges can be utilized: dowels, old broom handles, or PVC pipe.

Long Jump Pit
The running long jump pit should be filled with a minimum depth of 30cms of sand. The pit should be long and wide enough to ensure a safe landing by the athlete. A temporary takeoff board may be set in the runway, 1m from the front edge of the pit, if the permanent board is set more than 2m from the pit.

High Jump Pit
The high jump pit consists of a landing pit, a pair of adjustable standards and a crossbar. The ideal practice crossbar is a fiber glass crossbar. The high jump pit should have a minimum measurement of 500x250x50cm. Only approved and certified high jump pits may be used; pits made of other materials (such as gym mats) are not acceptable.
Shot Puts

Outdoor shots, made of iron, and indoor shots, covered with hard plastic, are acceptable for use in Special Olympics competitions, and either type may be used in competition as long as the following minimum weight requirements are followed:

- Men: 4 kg.
- Women: 2.72 kg.
- Wheelchair Competition:
  - Men: 1.81 kg.
  - Women: 1.36 kg.

Softballs

Official size (30cm) and weight (blue dot, traditional flight) softballs are recommended. Usually a dozen softballs are adequate for a training session. Tennis balls can be substituted for use by lower functioning and multi-handicapped athletes.

General Athletics Equipment List At-A-Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Batons</th>
<th>Rakes, level board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell for start of indoor meets</td>
<td>Restraining ropes, or pennant flags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooms for field event runways, circles</td>
<td>Rubber bands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clipboards</td>
<td>Rules Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossbars</td>
<td>Safety pins, numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flags for restraining ropes</td>
<td>Score sheets and event cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foul/Fair flags (red and white)</td>
<td>Sector flags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing Implements</td>
<td>Shovels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landing pits</td>
<td>Standards for high jump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lap counter</td>
<td>Starters pistols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last lap bell</td>
<td>Starting block carrier (or wheelbarrow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masking tape</td>
<td>Starting blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public address system</td>
<td>Steel or fiberglass tapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megaphone or bullhorn</td>
<td>Stopwatches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Officials' stands</td>
<td>Two-way radios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pencils and pens</td>
<td>Whistles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>