

RUNNING

Each athlete competes in various distances according to their age. These running events are either on a straight or circular track depending on the length of the event.

There are 4 different types of running events. They are:-

- ◆ Sprints (normally from 40m to 400m)
- ◆ Distance (normally from 800m to 3000m)
- ◆ Relays
- ◆ Hurdles

It is worth remembering that for a younger athlete, 100m may be a distance event. Don't expect a Linford Christie at 6 or 7 years of age.

SPRINTS

Sprints are held in lanes. Each athlete must stay in their own lane during the entire race. This does not occur for distance events. Sprints involve running at full speed over short distances.

There are two main types of starting positions for this event. They are the **Crouch Start** and the **Standing Start**. The latter is used for distance races and young athletes. The Crouch start can be introduced at approximately 11 to 12 years of age.

The Standing Start

- ❖ The athletes should wait 1 to 2 metres behind the starting line.

- ❖ When the starter calls “On Your Marks”, the athlete should come up to the starting line, place one foot forward just behind the line and stand relaxed with both toes pointing forward.
- ❖ On the command “Set”, the front knee is bent and the hands are brought into the ready position. If the left foot is forward and touching the line, then the right hand should be brought forward. (The reverse also applies).
- ❖ The weight should be on the front foot to avoid rock back on “Go”.
- ❖ On the command “Go”, the athlete drives forward.
- ❖ The opposite arm to forward knee drives back.
- ❖ All of the athlete should be moving in the same direction. (Encourage your athletes to keep the arms close to the sides and the head as still as possible.)
- ❖ The athlete should attempt to run tall.

The Crouch Start This advanced skill will not be dealt with during this course.

Drills

The following activities will assist in the development of sound sprinting technique. They should be performed over a short distance of about 30 metres.

- ❖ High Knee Marching:- This can be done on flat feet for beginners or on the toes. The knee should be lifted high and the rear leg completely straightened. The body should lean slightly forward (not bend) and the arms should be bent at 90 degrees.
- ❖ High Knee Skipping:- This follows on from the above.
- ❖ Bounding:- These are exaggerated forward bounds or jumps with alternating legs. They are **not recommended** for athletes under 13 and should be done on soft, spongy ground.
- ❖ Back Lifts:- This involves very quick leg action. The athlete raises the heels to kick himself/herself in the backside.
- ❖ Running Arms:- The athlete sits on the ground with the legs out in front, slightly flexed and simply swings arms backwards and forwards quickly. The athlete should concentrate on driving the elbows backwards with slight movement across the body.

DISTANCE

As mentioned earlier, distance running is normally from 800m to 3000m (depending on the season). The perception of distance depends on the age, current ability and growth characteristics of the individual athlete.

The aim of Distance running is:- **To run further faster.**

The coaches responsibility is to provide a safe method of getting growing bodies fit enough to deal with the distance efficiently and **undamaged.**

During the Summer Season athletes run around a track. Distance events start on a slight curve which is marked on the track. Sometimes these starts are referred to as Mass starts. Athletes attempt to run as close as possible to the inside part of the track during the race (running wider means the athlete has to run further).

The **Standing Start** is used for distance running.

- ❖ The athletes should wait 1 to 2 metres behind the starting line.
- ❖ When the starter calls “On Your Marks”, the athlete should come up to the starting line, place one foot forward just behind the line and assume the “Set” position. This means that the front knee is bent and the hands are brought into the ready position. If the left foot is forward and touching the line, then the right hand should be brought forward. (The reverse also applies.) There is **no “Set” command**.
- ❖ The weight should be on the front foot to avoid rock back on “Go”.
- ❖ On the command “Go”, the athlete drives forward.
- ❖ The opposite arm to forward knee drives back.

Technique

- ❖ Run tall.
- ❖ Keep the hips high and to the front.
- ❖ Swing the arms from the shoulder.
- ❖ Be quiet on the feet - don’t crash them down.
- ❖ Breath through the mouth.

Pace and Tactics

The first tactic to learn is how to run the entire race at a pace which is manageable. Then the athlete may work to overcome:-

- ◆ Starting too quickly. No energy left to finish the race.
- ◆ Starting too slowly. Having lots of energy left at the end of the race.
- ◆ Losing contact with a group.
- ◆ Getting boxed in.
- ◆ Running in lanes 2 and 3 on curves.
- ◆ Giving up track space when hustled.

Training

It is best to use soft, unmade surfaces where possible (grass, dirt, sand). Santos Stadium at Mile end and roads **are not recommended**.

A balance of the following activities is necessary.

- ◆ **Huff 'n' Puff** (Endurance)
 1. **Long Slow Distance Runs** (LSD) These runs are normally done in a pack. U7 - U9 (up to 8 minutes)
U10 - U12 (up to 12 minutes) U12 and upward (up to 15 minutes)
 2. **Go as you please** (Fartlek) This is similar to children's normal play. They Sprint, Walk, Jog, Stop, Sprint, etc. You can take advantage of this by adjusting the time of each and the terrain used. The time taken should be similar to that of LSD.

◆ **Arm 'n' Leg (Strength)**

1. **Hill Running** on sand or grass. Lifting the knees and keeping a long stride going up. Emphasise arm swing. The maximum length of the run is 60m, with no more than 4 in a set.
2. **Leap Frog, step ups, bounds** (older athletes only), **hops and running backwards**. (Up to 10 metres only)
3. **Water Running**.

◆ **Zip (Speed)**

1. **Speed Play** i.e. modified “Red Rover”, Chase the Walker, Continuous Relays (2 to 1 recovery).
2. **Sprint Training** (see the sprint section).

◆ **Pain (Stamina)**

This area is half way between Huff 'n' Puff and Zip. It is a very contentious area. Children possess an immature system to cope with maximum efforts in the time range from 30 seconds to 2 minutes. During a maximum effort their bodies produce waste products which are not easily displaced, hence “Pain”. We have no right to subject growing bodies to pain and subsequent damage.

Use the following with great care!

1. **Repetition Running**. This is basically run, rest, run, rest, etc. Usually the length of the run is fixed and the rest time is long.

2. **Interval Running.** This is run, short rest (either stopped or slow moving), run, short rest etc.

Little Athletes who can cope with this section are limited.

If an athlete is unhappy about continuing with the above training
- STOP!!.

It is better to try to include this work in a game for younger athletes.

Explain what you are asking the athlete to do and give the reasons why when you are dealing with older athletes. They need to learn.