

## SITE DIRECTORS PRACTICE GUIDELINES

**Practice emphasis** – As our program motto goes so does our program – Fun – Fitness and Finish lines. With the majority of the kids in our program being under the age of 11 you should always remember that we need to keep what we are doing FUN. Why? Many of the kids you encounter will be experiencing track and field for the first time so not only do we want to teach them something about the sport but we also want to promote track and field as a healthy, fun sport to participate in. With the variety of events that make up track and field – it’s hard to imagine getting bored with the sport. Kids that come into the program are “generalists” not “specialists”. We want them to be able to taste everything track and field has to offer and not put them in an “event box”. By keeping this in mind you can better direct and allocate time and resources to what amounts to eight total practices and four meets. The guidelines that follow are what we have found works best through the collective experience of site directors over the past 24 years.

### Practice Format – Schedule

Week	Practice	Emphasis
1	1	Half of your first practice will be taken up with initial on-site registrations and meeting with the parents. It is wise to have a volunteer that can help take the load off of you and help with registration duties. Before you start with practice meet with the parents. Go over the highlights of the parents info sheet and get a show of hands for those parents that signed up to volunteer at the site. Use their help early. This should leave you with enough time to do a warm-up stretches and drills. This would also be a good time to take kids for a jog around the track and stop them at places of significance > starting lines for the 50 – 100 – 200 – 400 -800-1500 – 3000. If you know Tom Black Track show them about where the SP / DISC / HJ / LJ would be on the track that you are at. Most of the confusion of the first meet is a result of not knowing where things are. Go from field event venue to venue and point out once basic thing to remember about the event.
	2	Meet with parents briefly to make sure they understand how a Saturday meet is run. It’s not soccer – not football or basketball. Remind them to listen for the age group call on the PA and that they need to be selective on event choices > let them know running events are going on at the same time as field events – you can’t do it all at the same time. This will be your first practice to actually get some work done. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Warm-up ½ lap or lap – then stretches and drills</li> <li>➤ Break into age groups 5,6,7 and 8’s / 9-10’s / 11 and up</li> <li>➤ Rotate through proper running form – proper starting position for sprint races – staying in lanes – practice 100m races</li> <li>➤ one field event – long jump is a good one to compliment your sprint work</li> <li>➤ finish off practice with relays – 4x100’s</li> </ul>
2	1	The second week of practice is when you can begin to expose kids to other events in track and on the field. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Warm-up / stretches and drills.</li> <li>➤ Use this practice to expose kids to the two throws. Shot put and Discus. Even the youngest can participate by learning proper throwing techniques and footwork in the circle by using either a softball or Frisbee.</li> <li>➤ Finish up practice with an endurance relay component - for example 300m tag team relays form two sets of four lines in lanes – mix up the ages to even the teams or make the older kids run in lane 8 younger in lane 1</li> <li>➤ Indian runs are also a great way to introduce some distance to the kids without them</li> </ul>

		realizing it. Form 2 long lines in lanes 3 and 6 – person in the back sprints to the front when you clap your hands. The entire line keeps running around the track until everyone in line has sprinted to the front twice.
	2	<p>Running Form / Mechanics and Jumps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work with groups on proper arm motion / upper trunk carriage / running from the hips</li> <li>➤ Rotate through long jump and high jump (if you have a mat). If you do not have a HJ mat practice HJ run ups working on running the “J”. In the long jump begin to introduce popping up in the air coupled with runway speed.</li> <li>➤ Finish off with relays – 4x100 or 4x200</li> </ul>
3	1	Cycle through week 1 practice 2 again but dig a little deeper into specifics and technique. Remember this practice will also be the one that you hand out program shirts. We recommend you have a parent volunteer do this at practice or deal with it after practice is over.
	2	Cycle through week 2 – practice 1
4	1	Field Event Specialty Day – Take an entire practice to focus on field events using a 400m jog between field event rotations as the running portion of your practice. Shorten your warm-up and drills in order to get this practice in.
	2	<p>Final practice of the program a great way to finish off the season is the do something special with your practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Water balloon 4x100 relay – goal here is to make sure you get through the entire 4x100 without breaking the balloon – until of course you run your final race</li> <li>➤ Mini decathlon – choose four events by age group – 2 running / 2 field however many kids in an age group = the pts awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> place and you decrease 1 pt for every place after. Highest total pts wins.</li> <li>➤ Water Balloon toss left over from water balloon relay – goal here is to not have a balloon left at the end of practice</li> </ul>

### **Practice Safety**

- Keep all participants and parents on lower level of stands when practicing in a stadium environment
- Take frequent water breaks – younger athletes have a less developed thermoregulatory system than adults do. Encourage bringing water for consumption at practice with fluid replacement drinks to have after practice
- Try to do your warm-ups /stretches and drills in the shade before you start the main part of your practice
- Clothing – tell the parents that lighter colored clothing is preferred over dark in the summer. Shorts and shirts are great.
- Keep a safe extended zone of practice for your throwing practices. Under no circumstances should a participant be in the throwing sector. Under no circumstances should any participant have their backs turned to the throwing area at ANY TIME.
- Inclement weather: As a site director you have the primary call on determining if a practice should be cancelled due to weather conditions. You can run in the rain – kids will not melt, however downpours will make practice hard to manage. Use your best judgment. Other inclement weather such as lightning will require you to use standard rules for practice cancellation (rules require 2 – 30 minute delays – we will use one). If lightning is in the area delay the start of practice by 30 minutes / clear the stands and track. If

after 30 minutes lightning is still present you can cancel practice. REMEMBER YOU MUST BE AT PRACTICE TO CANCEL IT – DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF NOT GOING TO YOUR SITE IF THE WEATHER IS BAD.

- Never leave practice if a child has not been picked up from the practice site.