

USA Track & Field is proud to bring you this innovative approach to the development and support of a fitter America – **Track In A Cooler**, presented by SoBe Sports System.

For those of you who may not be familiar with our organization, USA Track & Field (USATF) is the national governing body for the sports of track and field, long distance running, race walking and cross country running. We are comprised of 57 local Associations throughout the country. Check our website – [www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org) — for the latest information about our sport, and the Association or club nearest you.

We are happy to partner with new USATF national sponsor, SoBe Sports System, to encourage the creation of new programs, or lend support to existing programs, here in the United States. In addition to funding this year's **Track In A Cooler** program, and providing coolers and sampling at our national youth meets this summer, SoBe Sports System is committed to assisting in the growth and development of our sport at the grass roots level.

**Track In A Cooler** meshes perfectly with USA Track & Field's Mission Statement:

*The mission of USATF is to provide vision and leadership to the sport of Athletics in the United States, and to promote the pursuit of excellence from youth to masters, from grass roots to the Olympic Games.*

That "pursuit of excellence" is occurring right now on playgrounds and tracks all across this country – and it is our hope that **Track In A Cooler** will contribute to and enhance this pursuit, and provide some added structure to existing programs or a starting point for beginning track and field programs.

It is our firm belief that the discipline and camaraderie that our sport inspires is a great deterrent to many of the temptations that today's student-athletes face each day. **Track In A Cooler** is another step in that direction.

Many of you who receive this start-up program may already have a solid track and field program or club "up-and-running", but we thought it was important to cover as wide a range as possible. Please feel free to pass on any of the information or equipment to those in your community who may not be as fortunate.

Thank you all for your support of our great sport in this country. Do not hesitate to contact our Grass Roots Department at USA Track & Field (317-261-0500, ext. 309) if you have any questions, or if we can be of any assistance in helping you in furthering track and field programs in your community.

V  egards,

Bill Roe  
Masback  
President



Craig A.  
CEO

Special Thanks  
To USATF  
YOUTH  
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**XEROX**

# TRACK in a COOLER

## Contents of the Cooler

Stopwatch - used for timing activities.  
Measuring tape - to measure jumping and throwing activities.  
Baton - to be used for relays.  
Frisbees - used to teach the discus event and use in training games.  
Cones - used to mark distance and areas for event training and can be used in discus training.  
Whistle and lanyard - to assist in organizing athletes.  
"Track in a Cooler" Manual for instructors use.  
"Track in a Cooler" T-shirt for Instructor.  
SoBe product and informational materials.  
USATF membership and informational materials.

### *Also recommended:*

6 lb. shot put - implement used for the event.  
Softballs - to be used to teach overhand throwing and part of the shot put teaching progression.

*A USA Track & Field Developmental Grass Roots Project  
Presented by SoBe Sports System*

Curriculum developed by Catherine Sellers  
Manager, Development Programs  
USATF



Track in a Cooler

The purpose of this manual is to provide a basic introduction into "skills and drills" for track and field with young students on a "shoestring" budget.

Research (Ewing and Seefeldt, 1990) tells us the 'top ten' reasons an athlete participates in sports are:

10. to win
9. to learn new skills
8. for the challenge of competition
7. to play as a part of a team
6. to get exercise
- 5. for the excitement of competition**
- 4. to do something one is good at**
- 3. to stay in shape**
- 2. to improve skills**
- 1. TO HAVE FUN!!!**

Winning was the last reason for participation in sport, not the first or even in the top five. Winning may become more important for the coach and/or parent than for the athlete. Children want to feel successful, achieve an objective and improve themselves. As the instructor you must always bear in mind that success is not measured by winning, it is measured by the improvement or achievement of the individual athlete. The formula for Success = Ability x Preparation x Effort x Will.

The objective of this program is to teach a wide range of activities and thus learn new skills (9) and improve skills previously developed (2). Competition is only the test of learned skills. Note that in the 'top ten' list that competition is on the list for the challenge (8) and excitement (5). Above any other objective is the ability to make an activity fun and challenging for children.

**SAFETY** is the primary concern of all instructors who work with children. You must inspect areas looking for possible problems. Walk the facility prior to any activity, check the fields and tracks for holes and sharp objects. You should know where the nearest working phone is located. Have a list of all the children's emergency contact numbers with you at all times when you are working with them. As the instructor, make sure that children behave in a safe manner as per your instructions. Unsafe behavior can not be tolerated.



Track in a Cooler

## ***CURRICULUM OVERVIEW***

When working with children, USA Track & Field advocates the following workout focus:

AGE	FOCUS
6 - 10	Activities
11 - 14	Teaching
15 - 18	Training

### **TEACHING SKILLS**

When teaching a skill it is best to introduce the whole skill, break the skill into small parts and then show the whole action again. An example is in teaching a section on the shot, first you must have a discussion about safety. The instructor would then demonstrate the complete throw, the students would then mimic the activity with softballs, the instructor then would focus on two or three section of the event and then complete the training by having them throw the ball again from start to finish trying to use their newly acquired skills within the whole activity.

### **DAILY PLAN STRUCTURE FOR 6-10 YEAR OLDS**

A daily plan structure for the 6-10 year olds should consist of 45-60 minutes of activities. The initial 5-10 minutes should consist of an attention getting game. After the game, is a good time for any short daily announcements that are necessary. The specific skill introduction for the day would then be introduced for 12-15 minutes. Then spend the next 15-20 minutes allowing for skill rehearsal. A cool down activities/games should conclude the physical activity of the day and last about five minutes.

### **Daily Plan for 6-10 based on 45-60 minutes with an athlete coach ratio of 15/1**

### **ATTENTION GETTERS**

Introduce the " Eyes and Ears" drill at the beginning of the program. The Eyes and Ears drill is to give the children a signal when their attention slips or when they need to re-focus on the instructor. On the instructors command, children will clap, stamp their feet, or sit down. At any point the instructor should use this to re-gain control of his/her group. Make it fun and be creative. Kids will respond to hand clapping "two claps after whistle" or a simple "Who are we ...PAL".



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## 6-10 Years Olds... continued

### WARM-UP

Have children sit in a semi-circle facing instructor. Make sure that the children aren't sitting with the sun facing into their eyes or having a distracting activity as a back drop to the instructor. The instructor will use this time to set the "tone " for the activity. This is a good time to use "Eyes and Ears".

The instructor will place a set of cones/markers at random around an area sufficient for his/her group. One cone/marker for each child. The children will line up on a cone/marker. The instructor can use a few "FUN" warm-up drills such as: "Simon Says", Hockey Pokey or Sharks and Minnows or many other movement activities.

"Sharks and Minnows" is a very active game that is played crossways on a football field or similar size field; designate one child as the shark, the others are minnows. Arrange the minnows in a straight line on one side of the field, all facing the opposite side, the shark attempts to tag as many minnows as possible. Once tagged one becomes a shark. Continue running back and forth until all minnows have been converted to sharks.

Touche Turtle- This activity may be used as a warm-up or cool-down. This activity has children getting on the ground and provides a different type of movement activity. Touche has a friend who is a dog, and his name is Dum Dum. In the game, Touche and Dum Dum will try to tag as many of you as possible. You must stay within this area and dodge them, if possible. When you can not keep from being tagged by dodging, there is a way for you to be 'safe'- you lie flat on your back and raise all fours. And you must say "Dead turtle". When Touche and DumDum go away to chase others, you may get up and join the game. You will need to show them how to get down quickly without hurting themselves. A modification could be to teach Fire Safety with this game. The names could be Fire and Sparky and you roll to put the flame out or crawl if it is smoke.

The objective of games should be that all children can remain active. You do not want games that when tagged, a child must sit down or become inactive.

Traditional stretching for 6-10 year olds is not needed.



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## 6-10 Year Olds...continued

### BASIC MOTOR MOVEMENTS

Many children do not know basic motor movements such as skipping, galloping, hopping along with sliding, marching, tiptoeing, etc. It is extremely important that children learn the basic motor movements as they are building blocks for all activities. The basic motor movement develop rhythm and kinesthetic awareness. These activity can have alot of creativeness on the child's part. Again, have the space boundaries determined. The instructor calls out for the children to walk, run, skip, gallop, hop, slide, march tiptoe, etc in a direction that the instructor has pointed out. The children use the type of movement called and move in the given direction until the leader calls. "Change!" and points in a different direction. When the leader calls "Explosion" and the child uses their body to interpret the word "explosion" and runs anywhere within the area until the leader blows the whistle. This is the signal to stop and listen. At this time the leader may ask them to interpret a word such as sink, collapse, melt, freeze and so forth.

### DAILY PLAN STRUCTURE FOR 11 to 14 YEAR OLDS

The Daily Plan structure for 11-14 year olds should consist of 85-105 minutes of workout time. Since the main focus of this group is teaching, the initial 5-10 minutes of general warm-up serves as the attention-getter. This may be a run through of general static and/or dynamic stretching or could indeed be a game. The next 10- 15 minutes involve task specific warm-ups, including flexibility work. For example, the throwers would be in one group, the sprinters and hurdlers in another, jumpers in one and the distance runners in another. This is the recommended time to do additional flexibility work. The next 30-35 minutes is used to introduce or repeat a skill instruction, with demonstration, and then rehearsal. Do the technical stuff first while the bio-motor pathways are still fresh. After the neuro-muscular system becomes fatigued, spend the next 20-30 minutes on speed/strength/endurance development specific to the event. At this age a structured cool down becomes very important to allow for the gradual cooling of the body core temperatures. Two or three laps of gentle jogging followed by two minutes of elevation of the legs is best. Finish practice with positive reinforcement to each athlete.

### Daily Plan for 11-14 based on 85-105 minutes with an athlete/coach ratio of 15/1

Minutes	Activities
5	Initial group/general warm-up with attention getter
3 - 5	Announcements for the Day
10 - 15	Task specific warm-ups including flexibility by event groups
30 b- 35	Skill Instruction/Rehearsal (Whole-Part-Whole) by event groups
20 - 30	Speed/Strength/Endurance development, depending on event group
5	Cool down activity
5	Posititive Reinforcement Activity



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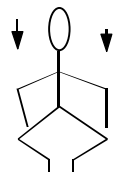
## 11-14 Year Olds....continued

### ATTENTION GETTERS

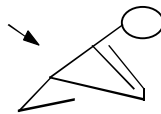
A game that is appropriate for this age group is "Ultimate Frisbee." Establish the playing area using the cones. Cross field on a football field is more than adequate for this fast paced game. Two teams are selected. For the offense, the object of the game is to score goals by throwing a Frisbee to teammates and advancing it across the opposing team's goal line, like American football. You can only advance the Frisbee by passing because the athlete who catches it is not allowed to take any steps. The game has plenty of running and action because athletes are trying to get free of the defenders to catch the Frisbee. The object of the defense is to intercept the Frisbee by covering the offensive athletes, who are trying to get open for a pass. If a defensive player intercepts the Frisbee, they become the offense and try to score. The Frisbee also changes direction if an offensive athlete drops it, or it hits the ground on an incomplete pass or goes out of bounds.

### STRETCHES

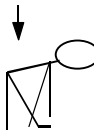
Below are samples of general stretches:



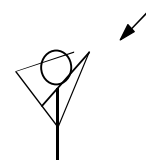
Groin Stretch



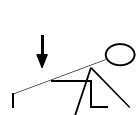
Hurdle Stretch



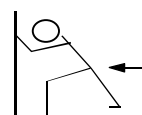
Toe-Touches



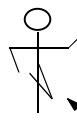
Shoulder



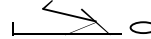
Lunges



Calf Stretches



Quadriceps



Hamstrings



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Other exercises for general strength can be included such as: Sit-ups, Push-ups, Flexed Arm Hangs (if equipment is available), etc.

## TEACHING ACTIVITIES FOR 6 to 11 year olds

### Running Skills:

1. Teach the concept of **opposition**. Have the child walk normal and pay attention to their arms. They should note that the move opposite of their legs. Or when the right arm moves, the left leg moves. Have them move the right arm and leg together- it should be very awkward and some may not be able to do the activity. *Always finish with a rehearsal of the correct technique-* so have them move in opposition. Ask them about the difference.

2. Teach a standing start. There are several ways to determine which foot is up and which is back.

Method 1- Have the child pretend to kick a ball. The foot that is used to kick the ball is the back foot and the foot used to support the body is the forward foot.

Method 2- Is to have the child stand and the instructor gently nudges the athlete from behind. The objective is to see which foot they step out with (becomes the back foot).

In a standing start, the concept of opposition comes into play again. If the right foot is back, right arm is in front of the body and the left arm is behind the body. The child will make the first step from the back foot (in the example the right), the left arm moves forward and the right arm moves back.

3. Teach the three commands for a start: On your mark, set and then go. **On your marks** means that the child will come up to the starting line. **Set** is when the will get into the standing start position described above. **Go** means to initiate the movement. The instructor can blow a whistle for the start, flip the clip on a clipboard (pull the clip back and release for a loud noise), clap or just say go. Encourage the children not to look at you, but concentrate on the movement in response to the commands.

4. Children can practice this activity by themselves and teach themselves to improve their reaction time. The child has a stick or stone and the toss it behind them and does a standing start to the sound of the object hitting the ground.

5. Have the children think of only running with the ball of their foot touching the ground. Run as though the ground is on fire or the surface is covered with hot coals.

6. Teach the concept of changing pace and acceleration.

### Running Activities:

1. Running 25, 50 and 100 meters.

*Equipment- tape measure , cones to establish starting and meter lines.*

The child will get a partner and form two lines. The first three times the children will focus on the standing start. You can have the athletes start and run 25 meters, then 50 meters and then 100 meters.



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2. Running relays at 25, 50 and 100 meters.

*Equipment- Tape measurer and cones.*

Group up the buddies and put a cone at 25 meters. On the instructors command, the first side goes from a standing start and runs to the cone. When they reach the cone, they turn around and run back past the starting point, where their buddy takes off from a standing start and continues the race. Progressively increase the distances of the cones. This activity may also be used with skips, gallops and shortened for hops and jumps. You are only limited by your creativity. Children will automatically become competitive in this activity regardless of age.

3. Changing of pace.

*Equipment- Tape measurer and cones.*

Mark out a section of 20 m, 40m and 60 meters. Have the children run the first 20m fast, the second 20 m slower and the last 20 meters fast or other variations.

4. Acceleration.

*Equipment- Tape measurer and cones.*

Mark the distances as above activity. This time have the child go low, fast and faster throughout the distances.

5. Running over barriers.

*Equipment- Cones and empty pizza boxes*

Establish a distance for the activity. Randomly place pizza boxes with the open ends on the track forming triangles (or beginner hurdles) and have the athletes run over the boxes without jumping.

### **Jumping Skills:**

1. Teach the children the difference between a jump, a hop and a step. A jump is taking off of both feet and landing on both feet (double leg jump) or taking off of one foot and landing on both feet. A hop takes off of one foot and lands on the same foot. A step takes off one foot and lands on the other foot.
2. Teach the running and jumping.
3. Teach combinations of jumps and running.

### **Jumping Activities:**

1. Double leg jumps.

*Equipment- Cones*

Have children line up on the grass. The instructor has each child do one double leg jump. You may want to teach the children to have their arms back and bring them forward as they jump. See who has the farthest jump. Put a cone at that distance. Repeat as long as the children remain interested.



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2. Hops

*Equipment- Cones*

Same basic activity as above but using a hop.

3. Hops into Jumps, Jumps into Hops or any combination.

*Equipment- Cones*

Same basic activity as #1, however, have them do combinations of the skills. i.e. 3 hops and then a jump, the triple jump basic of a hop, a step and a jump

4. Jumps into circles.

*Equipment: Pieces of rope, intertubes or hula hoops.*

Have the child do double leg, single leg jumps, hops or combinations of jumps, hops and steps into the circles formed by the rope or intertubes. They should be placed in a line or slightly off a center line and a distance that can be achieved by children.

5. Runs with jumps over ropes or cones.

*Equipment: Tape Measure, pieces of ropes or cones*

Establish a starting point for the runs and five meters from that point place a piece of rope with a distance of 6 feet (or other appropriate distances) between ropes and have the athlete clear the distance.

**Variation:**

Establish starting line with the first rope at the same distance and as the child makes a distance they then go to the next area which has a longer distance. i.e. Cone 1- first rope at 5 meters second rope at 180 cm, Cone 2- first rope at 5 meters, second rope at 200 cm, Cone 3- first rope at 5 meters, 2nd rope at 220cm, etc. The beginning distance for the placement of the rope can also be varied.

6. Standing Long Jump relays.

*Equipment: Tape Measurer and cones*

Form two lines and place cones at a distance about 15-20 yards. The children will make a series of single double leg jumps to the cone and then go around the cone and race back. The next participant then begins and the race continues until all have participated.

7. Running Long Jump into jumping pit.

*Equipment: Tape Measurer, sand pit, cones or white athletic tape*

Instructor determines the take-off point. It is advisable to make the take-off point close to the pit. It can be marked by cones, white tape or the board. The instructor can either measure each jump (measure from the edge of the take-off point closest to the pit to the mark of entry into the sand closest to the take-off point). The instructor might just draw a line on the edge of the pit and/or place a cone at that point. Make sure that the sand has been shovelled to make it the landing softer and that you have cleared the pit of all debris.

8. Vertical jumping

*Equipment: Wall, tape measurer and a piece of chalk*

Child stands next to wall with one arm reaches as high as they can and makes a mark. Child then jumps without taking a step and makes another mark at the height of jump. The difference is called a vertical jump measurement. Winner would be the one with the greatest difference. You can also have them take two steps for the jump.



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## 9. Beginning High Jump

Equipment: Piece of rope about 8 ft. long

The instructor and another responsible adult or child holds the piece of rope about 2 feet from the ground. Have the children approach the rope at an angle of about 45 degrees. The action the legs use is called a **scissor kick**. If the child takes off from the left leg- the right leg swings up and over the rope. The right leg will touch down on the other side immediately followed by the left. The child will start the activity from the right side. The rope height can be moved up as the athletes progress. Have the child attempt to lift the kicking leg as high as they can and hold it in the air as long as they can. Have them approach from both sides.

### Throws Skills:

NOTE: All throws should be done from one direction. Children should be taught never to turn their back to the throwers. Have a **"Safety-Watcher"** (a student who is not participating) watch both the landing sector and the thrower. Allow no one to throw until the Safety-Watcher calls **"Safe to Throw."**

1. Teach how to hold the ball to throw.

The forefinger and middle finger are placed behind the ball. The thumb and remaining fingers grip the sides of the ball. The hand must be relaxed.

2. Teach concept of **opposition**, but as it relates to throwing activities.

If the thrower is right handed, they will step onto the left foot as they throw.

3. Teach the concept of shifting or **transference of weight**.

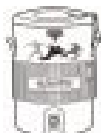
The thrower is right handed and the child's weight will be on the right foot. The child will shift their weight to the left foot as they throw. It is important to understand that you can shift weight for future teachings. Children will probably do this automatically, but it is important for them to understand the concept.

4. Basic Shot Put movement.

GRIP: The softball will be used to practice the skill. The proper placement of the ball in the hand is to have it rest on the base of the fingers, not in the palm. The thumb is pointing down. The ball is then pushed against the lower jaw with the fingers under the ear. The elbow is shoulder level and behind the shoulder.

RELEASE: The shot is propelled with a pushing action-not-a throw— with the elbow staying behind the hand and the heel of the palm advancing in front of the shot as the arm straightens out.

TRANSFER: The weight will be on the back foot when the child is facing into the throwing area and the child shifts the weight to the front foot as they push the shot forward.



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**Throws Activities:**

1. Throwing a softball overhanded.

*Equipment: Softball and field for throwing*

Remind the children of the teaching cue in #1,2,3 above.

**Variations:**

Seated throws- children sit on the ground and throw

Kneeling throws- both knees and on one knee

2. Throw a ball for distance

*Equipment: Softball and targets to throw at and over*

Have the children try to throw at close targets and over targets. Teach the children the concept of angle of release (the height or where you release makes a difference in how far the ball will travel).

3. Run into a throw.

*Equipment: Cones to mark beginning of run and when to throw.*

Start the athlete with 3 steps and a throw. All running steps should be an odd number starting with the opposite leg of the throwing arm. (Ball is in right hand, weight is on right leg- step left,right, left- throw).

4. Shot put initial movement

*Equipment: Softball and field for throwing*

Children review how to grip the Softball. Have the children face the throwing area with the Softball in the grip position. Have the child assume a split leg position with the right leg back and the left foot forward if they are a right handed thrower. The action is one of shifting the weight to the left foot and putting or pushing the shot out and slightly up from the neck.



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## **TEACHING ACTIVITIES FOR 11 to 14 YEAR OLDS**

Many of the activities for the 6 to 10 year olds can be used with the 11-14 age group and vice-versa. In fact, many of the concepts are taught in the 6 to 10 year old material should be reviewed with the older age group. It is during the 11-14 year old period that a child will begin to specialize. It is important that they have as wide and diverse knowledge of other activities prior to specialization. All children enjoy relay races and competitive situations as long as FUN is the main objective.

Remember that your first and primary concern when working with any children is their safety. Please check all facilities and equipment before beginning any activity. Pay special attention to the long jump pits, children will usually play in them and bury all sorts of items, along with regular debris and occasional broken glass. The pit should be dug up so that the landing is in a soft surface, not hard.

This section will be composed of a series of activities with teaching tips about the events and will be more track and field specific.



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## Short Sprints

*Equipment: Whistle or clipboard, Starting blocks, Stopwatch*

### Practice the sprint start:

1. Review the standing start in the 6-10 year old material.
2. Have children line-up behind the starting blocks (if they are available) set-up in lanes behind a starting line. Determine which foot is in front and which is back (see 6-10 material). To start out, place the front pad two of the child's foot length behind the start line. The back foot pad three of the child's foot length behind.
3. Give the command, "On your marks", have the front row of children move forward in front of the blocks and place both their hands on the ground in front of the starting line.
4. Have the runners first place their foot on the rear foot pad, then the other foot on the front foot pad and place the knee of the foot in the rear pad on the ground. Both feet should touch the ground.
5. Have the children place their hands behind the starting line... thumb and fore-finger to the line. ..high on the fingers... hands directly below their shoulders... elbows 'locked'... head in line with spine... and the back and shoulders rounded.
6. Give the command "Set", and have the runners raise their hips until their front legs are bent 90-degrees. Instruct runners that the first response to the gun should be to drive the left arm forward and up.
7. At the "Gun", as the arms drive from the ground, the legs will push and propel the runners forward. The back foot should move off the block-pad quickly and contact the track 6-12 inches in front of the starting line.

### Practice Proper Sprinting Mechanics:

1. Have children vigorously drive their arms forward ( not across the body) to eye-level as they come out of the starting blocks. The thumbs should be pointed up and the elbows bent at 90 degrees ( the arms may straighten out some on the down-swing).
2. The knees and feet should point straight ahead down the track.. not out to the side.
3. The facial muscles should be relaxed and the hands cupped, but not clenched.
4. The arms should swing from relaxed, low shoulders.
5. Focus should be on achieving maximum stride frequency (how fast can your legs turn over).



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## Baton Passing for Relays:

*Equipment needed: Batons, whistles, cones*

There are two basic baton exchanges: **Blind exchanges** which are composed of the up-sweep or the down-sweep exchange and a **visual exchange**. The blind exchanges are typically used in the sprint relays. The visual is used from the 4 x 400 and up.

Blind exchanges are made when the athlete does not look at the incoming runner. In the **up-sweep**, the baton is swung up into a "v" that is formed by the receiver's fingers and thumbs, which are pointed down at the ground.

In the **down-sweep**, the receiver's arm is held back with the palm up and the thumb extended toward the body. The passer puts the baton in the outstretched hand in a slight downward motion.

In the **visual exchange**, the outgoing runner watches the incoming runner to an established point, turn and run up the track usually takes three steps and turns back to get the baton. With younger athletes, the cue is "Give me a cookie, please". Please is when the turn around to get the baton. The hand is open to the sky and a down pass is made to the outgoing runner.

### ACTIVITIES:

1. Work on the exchanges standing in place. The first runner on a team will have the baton in their right hand. The second runner will take the baton in the left, with the third in the right hand and the fourth or anchor leg in the left. Have the children stand on the appropriate side of a lane line stripe. i.e. the first runner would be on the left of the line with the baton in the right hand, 2nd runner right of the line taking in the left hand. The baton should travel in a straight line. The person with the baton calls hand and the outgoing runner places their hand in position for the type of baton pass as instructed (up or down-sweep).
2. Jog in a line with the mechanics above.
3. Work on specific exchange areas. You can practice all curve exchanges in the first or third exchange area. The 2nd or 3rd should be done on the straight away.
4. Relays can be run in any length, but should be at least 200 meters for children to learn to use pass mechanics.



Track in a Cooler

## Long Jump

*Equipment: Shovel, Rake(s), Brooms, Tape Measure*

- Be sure your sand landing pit and long jump runway are clear of debris.
- Before jumping, the pit should be turned-over with a shovel to the depth of at least one shovel head. After being turned-over, the entire landing pit should be raked smooth and level.
- Keep shovels, rakes, brooms and measuring tapes out of the landing pit and away from the immediately surrounding area. Be sure any sand is swept away from the runway take-off area. before each jump.

### Practice long jump take-off mechanics.



1. Have students line up on the grass infield facing the instructor or demonstrator. Demonstrate the free leg drive at take-off by jogging 5 yards towards the class, driving the knee up and blocking it (stopping the knee when it is parallel to the ground), hips are high in the same action as taking off under the basket for a lay-up. Hold this position to landing. Have the class practice these take-off mechanics several times with a 5 yard run-up.



### Practice the running approach and landing mechanics.

1. Move to the long jump pit and have students practice several short, 15 yard approach runs down the runway emphasizing, **a)** accelerating into the take-off, **b)** driving the free leg up, and **c)** landing with both feet to together in the pit. *Jumpers should not be concerned with the take-off board.*

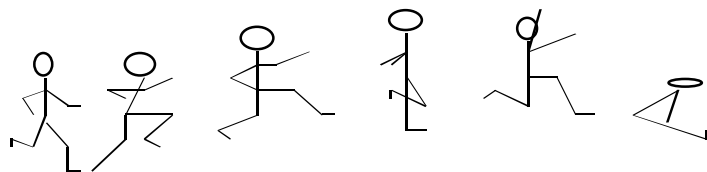
TAKE-OFF

### Practice proper arm-action.

For the next attempts, instruct students to try to hold the arms up over the head in flight, then bring them forward towards the feet at landing.

### Practice complete long jumps.

Stretch a tape measure along the side of the runway down the length of the pit. Increase the approach run to 25-yards. Instruct students to concentrate on **a)** running fast into the take-off **b)** driving the knee of the free leg UP and **c)** holding the arms up over their heads in-flight as long as possible. (Quickly measure jumps from the point of take-off while the pit is being raked level).



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## Distance Running

*Equipment: whistle, stopwatch, a running course or track*

### Practice proper running form

**1) Posture-** "Run Tall" to maintain a high center of mass. Chest should be slightly out, shoulders directly above the hips, and the chin slightly tucked. Have the students run down and back, approximately 100 meters, practicing running with a tall, upright posture with no forward or backward lean or slumped shoulders.

**2) Arms-** The arms swing slightly across the chest, with the elbows at an angle of approximately 90 degrees and the hands open (thumb on top of index finger). Palms down tends to lock in that arm angle. The arms should not cause the shoulders to turn or cross the mid-line of the body. The shoulders should stay "square" and not swing forward and back, or shrug. Have the students run down and back, approximately 100 meters, while focusing on arm action. Arms control running. A runner's pace is set by the cadence of the arm swing. Have students jog in place without using their arms- then using their arms and then moving the arms as fast as they can. Have them tell you what they discovered.

**3) Footstrike or Support-** The first contact with the ground is with the ball of the foot and then the whole foot drops in a springy manner until it is supported on the ground. This is proportional to the speed of the running. The weight should be forward, not back towards the heel. Have the students repeat above activity, focusing on footstrike. (This happens very quickly- look for students who are leaning back as your first cue).

**Aerobic running-** Aerobic means "with oxygen". Aerobic running is running at a pace that allows the body to meet its oxygen requirements. Have the students run continuously for 3 minutes on your marked course or track at an easy pace. They should be able to carry on a conversation while running.

**Anaerobic-** Anaerobic running is running at a pace at which the body cannot meet its oxygen requirements. There is a point in racing at any distance where running becomes anaerobic and runners create an "oxygen debt" which takes several minutes of heavy breathing to repay. Have the students run continuously at a fast pace around one lap of the track (a distance of 400 meters) or for 75 seconds on your marked course.

**Practice pacing yourself through a distance run-** Have students run a half mile or 3-4 minutes on your marked course trying to maintain a steady pace from start to finish.



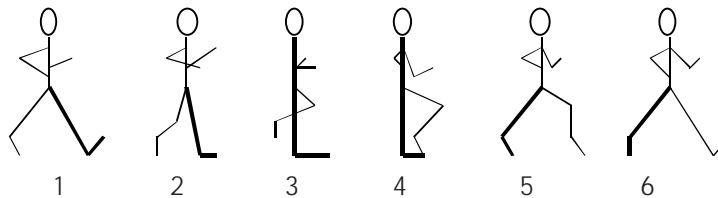
Track in a Cooler

## Race Walking

*Equipment: whistle, stopwatch, a running course or track*

Race walking is a "progression by steps so taken that unbroken contact with the ground is maintained". "This means that before a racewalker lifts the rear foot off the ground, the leading foot must make contact with the ground. For a brief moment the heel of the leading foot and the toe of the rear foot appear to be in contact with the ground simultaneously."

"The advancing leg must be straightened (i.e., not bent at the knee) from the moment of first contact with the ground until in the vertical position. On first hearing this rule, beginning walkers may think that they must walk with their legs straight all the time. This is not the case. The only stipulation is that when a racewalker's lead foot strikes the ground, his or her leg should be straight. It must stay straight until it passes the body. Then it will swing forward."



**Posture-** "Body should be straight and relaxed throughout the entire stride. The lower back is flat throughout the stride without forward or backward tilt of the pelvis". Head should not be up or down, looking straight ahead.

**Hips-** "Hips act like a motor, accelerating the knee and foot forward. In later movements of the swing phase, the knee reaches a position forward of the hips (2). At ground contact, the heel is slightly forward of the knee.

**Knees-** "The knee must be straight from the moment of heel contact until the support leg is in the vertical position (see above).

**Foot Action-** " The heel strikes the ground first with the toes elevated, not flat-footed. Once the foot has made contact, it rolls forward, keeping the toes off the ground until the leg is supporting the body's weight.

**Arms-** "The elbows of a racewalker are bent at an angle between 90 degrees and 45 degrees. The hands trace an arc from just behind the hip at the level of the waistband to the sternum. The hands should not cross the mid-line of the body.



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Source: USA Track & Field Coaching Manual

## DISCUS

*Equipment: Discus, cones, whistle, discus ring or an 8 ft. 2 1/2 inch diameter circle scribed on a smooth surface.*

### Safety Concerns

- Never turn your back on the throwing circle.
- Rather than have retrievers stand in the back of the landing sector, have students retrieve their own discus. Instruct students who are throwing to always check that no one is in the landing sector before they throw.
- Have a **"Safety-Watcher"** (a student who is not participating) watch both the landing sector and the thrower. Allow no throw to be initiated until he/she calls, **"Safe to throw"**.

### Practice the proper grip and "finger-roll" release.

Have students line-up in two equal lines facing each other five yards apart, so each student has a partner directly opposite him or her. Give discus to the students in one line. Instruct students to place the throwing hand flat on top of the discus with the fingers gripping the edge with the first knuckles of all four fingers, and the thumb lying flat on the middle of the discus... while keeping the throwing arm back, step forward with the opposite foot, and roll the discus of the index finger with a **bowling action** on its edge towards their throwing partner in the opposite line. Have the students repeat this drill several times, back and forth. As they master rolling the discus on its edge in a straight line towards their partners, have one line move back 5- yards and repeat the drill. (See A)

### Practice standing throws with traffic cones.

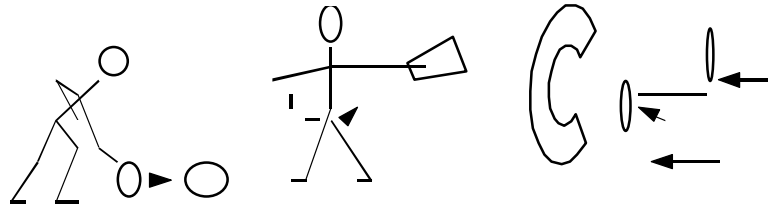
Have each student take a position in the front of the throwing circle, with the opposite shoulder pointing in the direction of the landing area and the feet slightly wide than shoulder width. The **toe** of the front foot and the **heel** of the back foot should be in a straight line and the **knees** should be slightly bent in a balanced stance. Instruct throwers to wind-up by twisting at the waist to face the back of the circle without moving the feet, and begin the throw by pivoting on the back foot to point the toe towards the landing area ( as if crushing out a cigarette). (See C) The cone should be pulled around the circle with the arm straight and the hand shoulder high. The head and chest should lead the arm to the front of the circle and cone should be released with a **slinging action**.

After several throws, students can practice standing throws with the discus. Instruct students that centrifugal force will keep the discus in the hand parallel to the ground.



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## DISCUS cont'd.



## SHOT PUT

*Equipment: Shot, Softballs, 7 ft. circle on a smooth surface or a shot ring*

### Review the safety concerns for the Discus

#### 1. Using a softball, practice the proper hold and arm position

The shot is cradled- not gripped- with the thumb holding the ball at the base of all four fingers. The put begins with the shot held below the ear, up against the neck with the elbow parallel to the ground and slightly behind the shoulder.

#### 2. Using a softball, practice the proper release

The shot is propelled with a **pushing** action- not a throw- with the elbow staying behind the hand and the heel of the palm advancing in front of the shot as the arm straightens out. (Right hand throwers- face the direction of the throw -your feet are split with a front foot and a back foot, the weight is on the back leg or the right leg, right knee is bent, push up and over to the left leg to initiate the momentum for the throw.

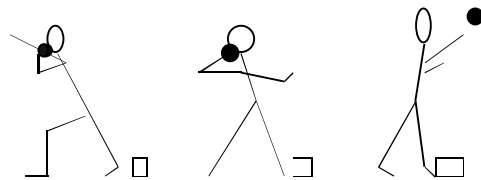
#### 3. Practice standing puts

Have right -handed putters,

**a)** place the outside of the left foot against the toe board or front of the drawn ring. The right foot is near the middle of the ring with the toe of the left foot in line with the heel of the right foot. (See Discus C)

**b)** turn the shoulders toward the back of the ring

**c)** bend at the waist **d)** turn, push up with right leg and release while driving off the right leg.



Track in a Cooler

### **USA Track & Field Coaching Education**

USA Track & Field offers a complete series of programs to educate coaches within the sport. We offer five levels of certification:

**Developmental-** This is the first tier in a progressive learning approach to the teaching and coaching of track and field. The course is designed for coaches who do not have an extensive background in the sport or experience in coaching. The objective is to provide an overview of the sport within a four hour time frame. Contact your local USATF Association for more information as to when this course will be offered.

**Level I** gives the coach a basic understanding of coaching methods used in track and field and integrates an elementary knowledge of sports science as it applies to coaching. Level I covers all events in a rudimentary manner, emphasizing rules and teaching progressions and introducing general fundamentals for all track and field events. This course is a 21 hours of material usually covered in one weekend.

**Level II** is a week-long course that builds upon information learned at Level I. A coach selects an event area to study in-depth using video analysis, group projects and classroom lectures. The sport sciences are covered more extensively as related to general track and field as well as to specific events.

**Level III** is a scientific knowledge based program. Each seminar will have "cutting edge" sport science and event specific presentations. The coach must attend a minimum of 60 hours of Level III sanctioned seminars, along with the submission of an original research based paper on technique, training, or sports science. Additional requirements for admission into this program can be found by contacting the National Headquarters for USA Track & Field.

**Level IV** is currently in the design stage and should be ready for implementation by 2001.

For more information, you can contact us at :

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### Recommended Readings and Sources

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# U S ATF Local Associations



- |                   |                    |                        |                                     |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Maine           | 16 Indiana         | 31 Montana             | 46 Central California               |
| 2 New England     | 17 Ohio            | 32 Colorado            | 47 West Texas                       |
| 3 Adirondack      | 18 Lake Erie       | 33 Southern California | 48 Arizona                          |
| 4 Niagara         | 19 Michigan        | 34 Utah                | 49 Nevada                           |
| 5 Connecticut     | 20 Wisconsin       | 35 Inland Northwest    | 50 Wyoming                          |
| 6 Metropolitan    | 21 Illinois        | 36 Pacific Northwest   | 51 West Virginia                    |
| 7 New Jersey      | 22 Ozark           | 37 Oregon              | 52 Dakotas                          |
| 8 Mid-Atlantic    | 23 Arkansas        | 38 Pacific             | 53 Border                           |
| 9 Alabama         | 24 Southern        | 39 Hawaii              | 54 Snake River                      |
| 10 Potomac Valley | 25 Gulf            | 40 Iowa                | 55 South Carolina                   |
| 11 Three Rivers   | 26 Southwestern    | 41 Kentucky            | 56 Alaska                           |
| 12 Virginia       | 27 Oklahoma        | 42 New Mexico          | 57 Nat'l Membership<br>Center (NMC) |
| 13 North Carolina | 28 Missouri Valley | 43 South Texas         | 58 National Clubs                   |
| 14 Florida        | 29 Nebraska        | 44 San Diego           | 59 Long Island                      |
| 15 Tennessee      | 30 Minnesota       | 45 Georgia             |                                     |