

# TRACK EVENTS

PACKET # 17

## INSTRUCTIONS

This Learning Packet has two parts: (1) text to read and (2) questions to answer.

The text describes a particular sport or physical activity, and relates its history, rules, playing techniques, scoring, notes and news.

The Response Forms (questions and puzzles) check your understanding and appreciation of the sport or physical activity.

## INTRODUCTION

Track events are closely related to field events. This packet will deal with five traditional track events: the dash, the steeplechase, the hurdle, the relay race and the distance race. Running as a sport did not become popular in America until 1871, when the first track meet was held in New York City. Eventually, track and field events became so popular that the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletics in America (ICAAAA) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) were organized to govern/oversee these events and the rules that control them.

## HISTORY OF TRACK SPORTS

Early human beings were forced by their environment to run. They both ran after animals when hunting for food, and ran from other animals who were themselves hungry. This running consisted of jumping over bushes, fallen trees, ditches and other obstacles. Hunting and gathering techniques were taken into battle as skirmishes between tribes made survival important.



In between hunting parties and wars, running and jumping became leisure-time activities that people chose to do as athletic events. Sometimes the object was to compete against others; at other times, the athlete simply wanted to test himself or herself. Running events were recorded in Greece as early as 776 B.C. They were also part of athletic competition throughout the Middle Ages and on through the Renaissance and into modern times.

Over 2,000 years after the earliest Greek track events, in 1912, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was founded to function as the governing body for track and field sports all over the world.

Today, as many as 25 events may be included in a track and field meet. The track events at the championship level include the 100, 200, 400, 800, 1500, 5000 and 10,000-meter runs, the 3000-meter steeplechase, the 110- and 400-meter hurdles and the 400 and 1500-meter relays.

## HOW DIFFERENT TRACK EVENTS ARE DONE

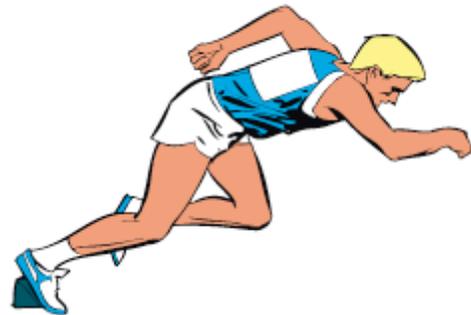
### *THE DASH*

Dashes, or short runs, are also called sprints. The athlete must attain maximum speed in minimum time in order to compete successfully in these races. Like many field events, dashes are deceptively simple. Almost everyone has run fast at some point in his or her life. But competition-level runners in the dash must develop superior stamina, flexibility and muscular strength. The dash is NOT as simple as it looks! Here's how it's done:

1. Getting off to a good start in short races is crucial. Many races are lost at the starting line! The rules require that you start in a “crouch” position—with both feet and both hands placed on the track with the heels placed against the starting block. These starting blocks are anchored to the ground and are adjustable to runners of every size and height. The block gives you a solid base from which to push off.
2. At the command, “On your mark,” place your feet on the starting block.
3. At the second command, “Set,” lift your body until your back is almost parallel to the ground, with the hips slightly above the level of the shoulders. This is called the “ready position.”
4. As the starting gun is fired, push off from the starting block with explosive force, keeping the body forward and the head low at the beginning of the run.



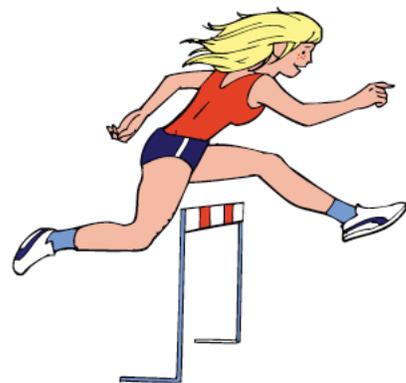
Both psychological and physical considerations enter into running the dash. Being aware of the competition's strengths and weaknesses is as critical as being a skilled and aggressive runner. Patience and determination are also essential attributes for the competitive runner in this event.



## *THE HURDLE*

Hurdle competition is not running and leaping, but making running leaps over the hurdles. You do not jump over the hurdle. Instead, as you reach the hurdle, you lift your legs and tuck them up so that they barely clear the top of the crosspiece.

Traditionally, there are two types of hurdle races—the 120-yard (110 meter) high hurdle and the 440-yard (403 meter) intermediate hurdle. The hurdles are 42 inches (1.06 meters) high in the 120-yard event and 36 inches (.91 meters) high in the 440-yard event. The distance from the starting line to the first hurdle is 49 1/4 yards (45.03 meters). The ten hurdles are placed at 38 1/4-yard (34.9 meter) intervals across the running lanes. Here's how to do the hurdles:



1. As you cross a hurdle, your body will be leaning forward. The arm opposite the lead leg crosses the hurdle first. If the left leg leads, the right arm crosses the hurdle first.
2. As you cross the hurdle, tuck your legs up so that they barely clear the top of the hurdle.
3. After you have crossed the hurdle, land so that the body's weight will still be forward, in front of the lead leg. Landing with the weight so far forward can throw a careless runner off balance. Thus, it is often recommended that the left leg become the lead leg in order to help the runner maintain a better balance upon landing, especially around curves in the track.
4. Continue running with no interruption of your rhythm to the next hurdle. If



you do this maneuver correctly, your upper body will barely move vertically as you cross the hurdle.

## *RELAY RACING*

Relay racing (or teamwork racing) uses a four-person team of sprinters, each of whom runs approximately the same distance. The first person to run is the **leadoff**, and the last to run, usually the best runner on the team, is called the **anchor**.

Even a team with four fast runners isn't assured of victory. Relay racing demands not only speed but teamwork. The crux of relay racing is the act of passing a baton or stick to the next team member without dropping it and without losing speed during the pass. If the baton is dropped, the runner who dropped it is disqualified and his/her team finishes last. If speed is lost in the passing of the baton, positions can be lost.



The Visual Pass and the Blind Pass are two types of passes used in relay racing. Here's how these two passes are done:

### **The Visual Pass**

1. The receiver of the baton starts running so that his/her speed will match that of the oncoming runner.
2. As the two runners approach each other, the receiver looks over his/her shoulder and extends the receiving arm back toward the oncoming runner. The receiver has his or her palm up as the pass takes place.
3. The oncoming runner passes the baton to the receiver, who then moves ahead and continues the race.
4. The oncoming runner quickly slows down and leaves the track.

## **The Blind Pass**

1. The receiver starts running as the oncoming runner approaches.
2. As they draw near to each other, the receiver waits for the baton holder to run about seven inches from him/her and then begins to move forward.
3. The receiver, meanwhile, moves with the receiving arm extended back toward the passer. As the pass is made, the receiver pulls the baton from the passer's hand and runs faster as the passer slows down.

## *LONG DISTANCE RUNNING*

Distance running refers to races over 800 meters and longer. Middle distance races are generally designated as those between 800 and 2,000 meters. Long-distance races are those of 3,000 meters or more. Regardless of the actual number of meters involved, however, distance running requires endurance, stamina, tremendous concentration and self-pacing to prevent exhaustion.

A runner in a middle-distance race must learn to relax while using a controlled leg movement. He or she must also master optimum hip rotation and learn to adjust the stride—a shorter stride if the race is slow, a longer one for a faster race.

Each mile in a race can be divided into four segments. The first segment is a brisk run. The second segment is taken at a comfortable stride. The third segment is run at a stride that allows the runner to conserve energy, while the fourth segment starts slowly but ends with a burst of speed. The third segment is often considered the most critical part of the mile because it is the point where many runners are tiring, both physically and mentally.



Long-distance runners need good judgment and a keen eye for assessing the abilities of other runners on the track. They also need to develop a game plan for winning each race.

## *STEEPLECHASE*

This event requires that the athlete combine the skills of a hurdler and the endurance of a long-distance runner. The steeplechase is comprised of running and jumping over

28 hurdles and 7 water jumps. In the Olympic Games, this race is approximately 3,280 yards long.

Originally, the name “steeplechase” referred to a country horse race over obstacles. Eventually, English students began to attempt the race on foot and in 1889, the event was introduced into the United States.

## EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

Track clothing is traditionally light in weight and allows complete freedom of movement. This usually means tank tops or sleeveless shirts. The bottom hem of track shorts is well above the knee, and sometimes the shorts have slits up the sides. Shoes are especially important, since different events require different shoe designs. The soles of the shoes are cleated.



## TRACK EVENTS NOTES AND NEWS

Below you will see a list of many Gold Medal winners of Track events in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China.

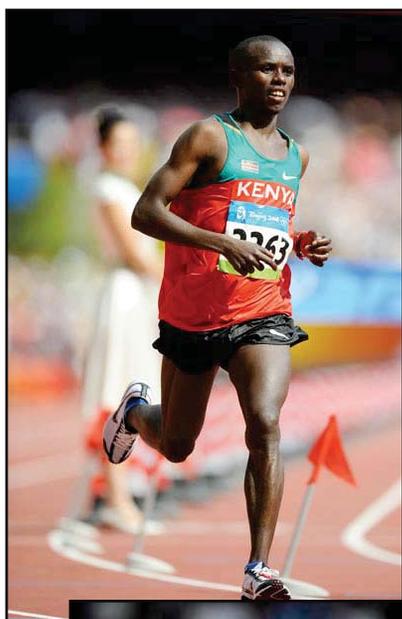
### *Men's Events*



<b>Event</b>	<b>Contestant</b>	<b>Country</b>
MEN 100 METERS	BOLT Usain	Jamaica
MEN 200 METERS	BOLT Usain	Jamaica
MEN 400 METERS	MERRITT LaShawn	United States
MEN 800 METERS	BUNGEI Wilfred	Kenya
MEN 1500 METERS	RAMZI Rashid	Bahrain
MEN 5000 METERS	BEKELE Kenenisa	Ethiopia
MEN 10,000 METERS	BEKELE Kenenisa	Ethiopia
MEN 400 METER HURDLES	TAYLOR Angelo	United States
MEN 3000 STEEPLECHASE	KIPRUTO Brimin Kiprop	Kenya
MEN 400 METER RELAY		Jamaica
MEN 1600 METER RELAY		United States
MEN 20 KM WALK	BORCHIN Valeriy	Russian Fed.
MEN MARATHON	WANSIRU Samuel Kamau	Kenya

## Women's Events

Event	Contestant	Country
WOMEN 100 METERS	FRASER Shelly-Ann	Jamaica
WOMEN 200 METERS	CAMPBELL-BROWN Veronica	Jamaica
WOMEN 400 METERS	OHURUOGU Christine	Britain
WOMEN 800 METERS	JELIMO Pamela	Kenya
WOMEN 1500 METERS	LANGAT Nancy Jebet	Kenya
WOMEN 5,000 METERS	DIBABA Tirunesh	Ethiopia
WOMEN 10,000 METERS	DIBABA Tirunesh	Ethiopia
WOMEN 100 METER HURDLES	HARPER Dawn	United States
WOMEN 400 METER HURDLES	WALKER Melaine	Jamaica
WOMEN 400 METER RELAY		Russian Fed.
WOMEN 1600 METER RELAY		United States
MARATHON	TOMESCU Constantina	Romania
WOMEN 20KM WALK	KANISKINA Olga	Russian Fed.



For more information on the 2008 Olympics visit this website:

<http://en.beijing2008.cn/>



## NCAA 2010 Men & Women's Track Championships

Legendary college track coach Pat Henry and his Texas A&M Aggies swept the men's and women's team titles for the second year in a row on at the 2010 NCAA Division I Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

The Texas A&M men won the final event on the track, the 4x400 relay, to edge Florida by a single point, 55-54. The Gators finished third in the relay and were .21 seconds behind second-place Mississippi State.



On the women's side, the Aggie's were nearly flawless, securing 22 points in the 200 meters on the final day and finishing with 72 to beat hometown favorite Oregon, second with 57.

Texas A&M also won the 4x100 relay and finished second to Oregon by a whisker in the 4x400.

“It's about team efforts, ups and downs, and it's about responding to ups and downs,” Henry said. “All year long, this has been a unique group of guys and women.”



The women lost Natasha Ruddock and Gabby Mayo - big projected scorers - to injuries. And still, the Aggies found a way to score more points than any team has at the NCAA meet since 2002.

“We have so much talent on this team,” said Porscha Lucas, who won the 200 and ran the second leg on the victorious 4x100 relay. “If we're losing one (athlete) we still have three more (ready) to go.”

The first challenge for the Texas A&M sprinters was to turn quickly from their 4x100 relay win and prepare for the 200 meters final just 38 minutes later on a cool, gray morning in Eugene.

“It was tough, but it was manageable,” Lucas said. “We look at the 4-by-1 as a warmup, so it got our bodies warm and ready for the 200.”

Lucas won that event in 22.83 seconds, while teammate Jeneba Tarmoh was second

in 22.92. Dominique Duncan was fifth in 23.48. All three of them had been part of the short relay.



In the 4x400 relay, with the team win safely secured for the Aggies, Oregon's Keshia Baker was able to hold off Texas A&M's Jessica Beard for the win, by .03 seconds. The Ducks won their first relay title in 3:28.54.

For the A&M men, the title seemed like it might have been lost with a botched handoff between Tran Howell and Gerald Phiri in the first exchange of the 4x100 meters.

Florida, with Jeff Demps on the anchor leg, got the win in 39.04 seconds, while the Aggies took a zero.

That result put the Gators in front by two points, 38-36.

Curtis Mitchell and Phiri placed second and eighth, respectively, in the 200 meters to score a total of nine points for the Aggies. And the 4x400 relay win lifted the team to the title.

Henry is the only coach to sweep the men's and women's titles in the same year and he has now done it four times (1989 and 1990 at LSU; 2009 and 2010 at Texas A&M).



Stay on top of the latest track events at the college level by visiting the NCAA web site at: <http://www.ncaa.org>

Remember, there are many exciting events in this sport on the high school level. Keep your eyes on the standouts at these levels of competition and you may someday see them again among the international champions. For example, Alan Webb recently smashed Jim Ryun's 36 year-old national high school record in the mile. Webb erased a legend from the record books with his confident running at the Prefontaine Classic with a time of 3 minutes 53.43 seconds. Webb's mile was fastest by any US runner since Richie Boulet's 3:53.26 in 1998.

# STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET

## TRACK EVENTS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### WHAT TO DO

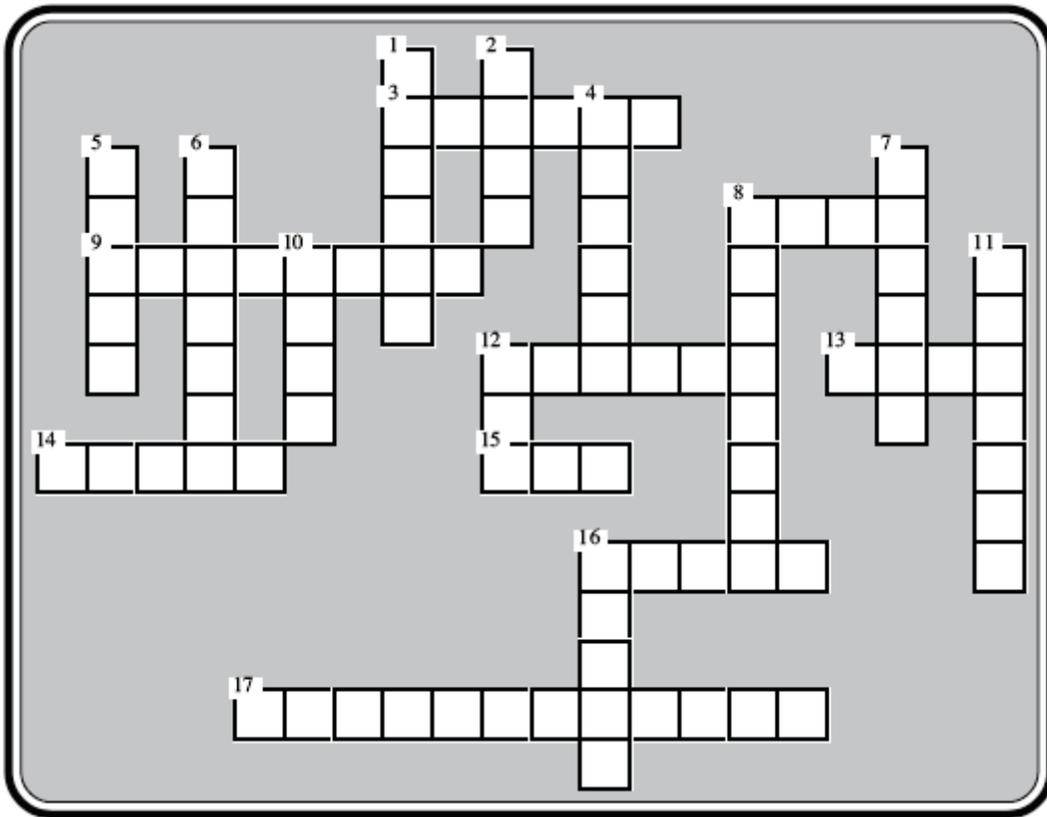
The following questions will help you to have a greater appreciation and understanding of track events. Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, and write in complete sentences.

1. What are the physical benefits to be gained from participating in track as a sport?
2. What are the five traditional track events?
3. Describe why the starting position is so crucial to the dash or short run.
4. It is often said that both psychological and physical considerations enter into a successful dash. What are these factors and why are they so important?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Education 17 Crossword



**Across:**

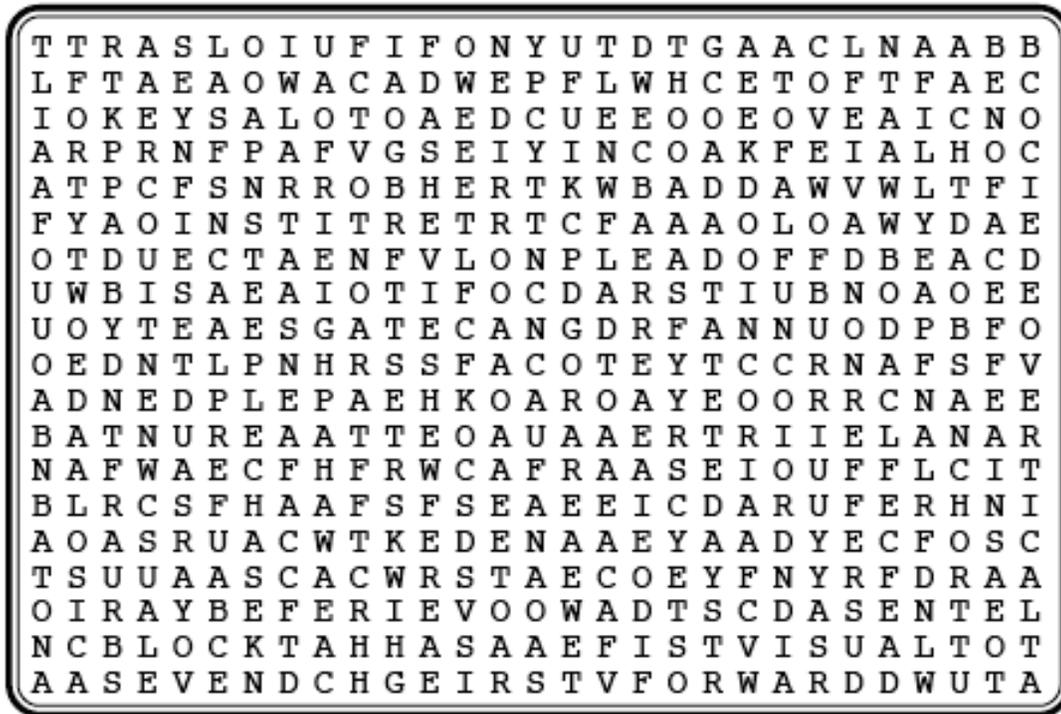
- 3. One of the associations that control track events
- 8. Number of sprinters in a relay race
- 9. Direction of minimum movement in crossing hurdle
- 12. Another name for the dash
- 13. An association of colleges that supervises track events
- 14. Position with hips slightly above shoulder level
- 15. Traditional number of hurdle types
- 16. This is passed in a relay race
- 17. This race involves water jumps and hurdles

**Down:**

- 1. Type of relay pass
- 2. One of the five track events covered in this packet
- 4. The last runner in a relay race
- 5. Number of water jumps in a steeplechase
- 6. Direction of body weight after crossing hurdle
- 7. Track events held here in 776 BC
- 8. Height in inches of hurdles
- 10. Federation that controls track all over the world
- 11. Name of first sprinter in a relay race
- 12. Second command when starting the dash
- 16. The sprinter puts his or her feet here at the start of the race

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Physical Education 17 Word Search



Use the clues below to discover words in the above puzzle. Circle the words.

1. Type of relay pass
2. Direction of body weight after crossing hurdle
3. Name of first sprinter in a relay race
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