



# INTERSCHOLASTIC UNIFIED TRACK & FIELD

2026 COACHES'  
RESOURCE GUIDE



**Special  
Olympics**  
Pennsylvania



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

# THANK YOU!



Office of Special Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Bureau of Special Education*



**for supporting our Unified  
Champion Schools!**

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# 2026 IUS TRACK & FIELD SEASON OVERVIEW

## All Coaches Pre-Season Webinars (2 options; Only need to attend 1)

- [February 17<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00pm](#) – Click to register
- [February 19<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00pm](#) – Click to register

## Mid – End of February

- In-Person Unified T&F Coaches Training
- Locations will be determined regionally

## Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>

- [PIAA/SOPA Championship Webinar @ 3:00pm](#) – Click to Register

## Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>

- Track Practice Starts

## Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>

- Uniform Orders Due

## Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>

- [Competition Management Webinar @ 3:00pm](#) – Click to Register

## Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

- Waivers are due
  - This year, waivers will be filled out when signing up.
- Participant Rosters are due
  - Each school enters their team members via SOPA Waiver
  - Link to be provided by SOPA liaison.
- Physicals are due to your school's Athletic Director
- Coach Quiz Due

## Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup>

- Last date time trials information can be submitted
- Each school will conduct their own time trials and submit scores to their SOPA liaison.

## Week of March 23<sup>rd</sup> - May 1<sup>st</sup>

- Regular season meets

## Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>

- Letter of Intent (LOI) is due

## Week of April 27<sup>th</sup> – May 5<sup>TH</sup>

- Regional Championships (State qualifying events)

### **Weeks of May 11<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>**

- League Championships (Non-state qualifying events)

### **Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- State Championships
- Shippensburg University

## **REQUIRED COACHES TRAININGS**

All coaches must take the following two courses by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS). You will need to register with the NFHS but the courses are free.

Upon completion, please submit your certificates to your UCS Liaison.

### **Concussion Training:** <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/concussion-in-sports-2>

- Signs & Symptoms
- When to seek medical attention
- Concussion Prevention
- What to do if you suspect a concussion
- When to return to play

### **Unified Sports Training:** <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/coaching-unified-sports>

- Selection of Teammates
- Principle of Meaningful Involvement
- Unified Sports Rules



## UCS STAFF CONTACT LIST

Questions? Contact your SOPA Liaison

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## **SPORT & TEAM INFORMATION - Quick Glance: Interscholastic Unified Track and Field Program**

Special Olympics Interscholastic Unified Sports® (IUS) is a fully-inclusive co-ed high school sports program which successfully brings together students with and without disabilities. They train together and compete as equal teammates and through this experience, become friends. IUS teams are regarded like every other interscholastic sports team at the high school.

- A Unified Track and Field team can have a minimum of 12 and maximum of 40 participants. The team is co-ed and consists of a proportional number of high school students who are Special Olympics eligible and students without intellectual disabilities.
- This is an after-school program. All students need to have a physical examination and required consent forms completed.
- **Format:** Students select one track event and one field event to train and compete and may be selected to one relay team. In competition, they are placed in heats with other athletes who have similar qualifying times or distances. Based on their place of finish, students earn points for their Unified team. The Unified team with the most points wins the meet.
  - **Track Events** include: 100 meters, 400 meters, 800 meters; 4x100 and 4x400 relays
  - **Field Events** include: Shot put, running long jump, mini javelin
- 10-12 week long season which begins the first week of March and ends the third week of May. Teams practice after school twice a week. They participate in at least three competitions against other high school Unified Track and Field teams. There are post-season league championships for those that qualify. Every school has the opportunity to attend a regional event which would qualify winning teams for advancement to states.
- Members wear uniforms with their school's name and colors.

## Meaningful Involvement

- There are two elements which distinguish IUS Track & Field.
  - Each teammate has the opportunity to score points for their team based on their own competition performance. Every event division is scored. First place scores 5 points. Second place scores 3 points. Third place scores one point.
  - Athletes and partners compete against each other. Divisions are composed of competitors who all have similar times or distances. Athletes and partners are treated equally; they are not separated. This leads to an atmosphere of full inclusion.
- This means that every teammate:
  - demonstrates sufficient sport-specific skills and game understanding
  - plays a valued role on the team that emphasizes his or her personal talents
  - has an opportunity to play without a heightened risk of injury.
- Competition among everyone promotes equality and respect. It also removes labels. Participants are viewed simply by their talents, and attitudes become more enlightened. Unified Track & Field engenders camaraderie and team spirit. Team members support and encourage their teammates in every event division. Each team member can contribute meaningfully to their team's performance. Each athlete's performance is important. Lasting friendships emerge as teammates train together and become more involved in each other's lives.
- Athletes and partners do not need to be of similar ability levels. In fact, the coach can recruit teammates who have very different abilities. In competition they are grouped with others with similar times or distances.
- As a coach, it is essential you coach everyone on the team.
  - Never separate the athletes and partners in instructional settings. All teammates learn and train together. Treat everyone the same.
  - Adapt your coaching style to meet the needs of your team members.
  - You should also make sure athletes and partner share leadership roles. Encourage them to do activities together. E.g. In warm-ups and stretching, ask pairs of athletes and partners to lead the rest of the team.

## ONLINE OFFICIAL TEAM ROSTER

**Each team member must complete the SOPA Waiver to be listed as eligible on your team's roster. Coaches must also complete the SOPA Waiver.**

All official team rosters are to be submitted online by Wednesday, **March 14<sup>th</sup>**. You will be given a unique link to an online roster by your SOPA liaison. That link will become inactive after the deadline to lock in every school's roster. Event choices and submission times will be done on a separate link you will receive later.

### **Requirements for Unified Track and Field Team Roster:**

- Interscholastic Unified Track and Field teams can have rosters ranging from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 40 participants. Number of required coaches is as follows:
  - Every Unified Track and Field team with 12 - 24 participants will need to have two coaches.
  - If the roster size is 25-36, there needs to be three coaches.
  - A roster with 37-40 members should have four coaches.
- This is a co-ed program and students must be in grades 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Students up to 21 who are still receiving services from the school district are eligible.
- On a roster, there needs to be a proportional number of students eligible to participate in Special Olympics (defined as having an intellectual disability, cognitive delay, or developmental disability including different types of autism) **and** students without intellectual disabilities (referred to as Unified partners). Students with other disabilities are welcome to participate as Unified partners.
  - While the ideal goal is 50% of the team as Special Olympics athletes and 50% of the team as general education students, the allowable minimum is at least 40% and no more than 60% for either group.
  - Students participating on any spring interscholastic sports team (including track and field) are **ineligible** for the Unified Track and Field team. Fall and winter varsity athletes may participate.

## Completing Your Team Roster

The following information will auto-populate when parents/guardians have completed the waiver link for their student:

- Whether a teammate is an Athlete (student who is Special Olympics eligible) or a Unified Partner (students who do not have an intellectual or developmental disability)
- First and Last Name
- Gender
- Status (New or Returning)
- Grade in School
- Birthdate

You will need to manually enter the following information on your team roster:

- **School**
  - Official name used by your high school's athletic teams
  - School Colors (primary and secondary)
- **Team Members**
  - Additional Information (hearing or visual impairments, uses manual or power wheelchair, cane or walker, sun sensitivities, etc.)

# UNIFORMS

- Each competitor shall wear a SOPA issued and school-approved singlet and shorts.
- Bib numbers are required, each competitor shall wear his/her assigned, unaltered contestant number.
  - Bib numbers shall remain the same for the entire season.
  - Coaches are responsible for collecting the bibs at the end of each meet and reissuing them to team members prior to each meet.
- Track bottoms do not need to be SOPA issued but must match the school-issued track top's color (i.e. black shorts, black top). Loose-fitting bottoms or compression-style bottoms are permitted for boys and girls. Closed-leg briefs are acceptable for girls.
- Any outer garment (e.g. sweatshirt, tights, or long sleeves) that is school-issued or school-approved becomes the official uniform and can be worn under the team-issued uniform.
  - Bib numbers must be visible and attached to the front of the participant's singlet. If a sweatshirt is worn, the singlet must be over top of the sweatshirt.
  - Anything worn under the uniform must be black, white, or the color of the athlete's school.
- Each competitor shall wear athletic shoes on both feet.
  - The athletic shoes shall have an upper and recognizable sole and heel.
  - The athletic shoe must be designed so that it can be fastened securely to the foot.
- No hats, rimless headwear, including bandanas are allowed. Religious and medical-related headwear is permissible.
- NFHS Track and Field Rules do not prohibit the use of wearable technologies, but Rules 3-2-8a and 4-6-5d state that no competitor may receive electronically transmitted data from a coach or other third party. If such communication is observed by an official, the competitor shall be disqualified.

# TRACK & FIELD EVENT SPECIFICS

## Field Events

### Running Long Jump Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your Athlete Can</b>
Measure and mark approach
Perform a nine-step stride approach
Plant takeoff foot on board behind foul line
Take off from board by extending takeoff leg
Keep upper body straight and head up
<b>Step Style</b>
Drive right knee and left arm forward and upward over sand pit
Extend lead leg with takeoff leg trailing
Stride in air
Circle right arm overhead. Bring left leg forward
Reach, extending arms and upper body forward
Drop arms below legs. Bend knees upon hitting sand
Land in sand heels first, hands sweeping past hips
Roll over on toes, falling forward
<b>Hang Style</b>
Drive right knee and left arm forward and upward
Hold left leg and right arm back
Drive left leg and right arm (they are parallel)
Arch back to achieve hang position
Circle arms clockwise
Lower upper body toward thighs
Extend legs, and reach arms forward and back
Hit sand heels first and bend knees
Move upper body forward and roll over toes, falling forward

## BASIC REQUIRED SKILLS NEEDED TO BE ENTERED IN THE RUNNING LONG JUMP

- An athlete must be able to jump consistently at least 1 meter from the jump board into the sand pit to meet the rule requirement. However, from a coaching perspective, you should insist upon each long jumper being able to consistently jump 1.5 meters to ensure they will not be disqualified.
- **There MUST be a jump board marked 1 meter back from the front edge of the pit.**
- An athlete must always take off on one leg. Using two legs to take off is a FOUL.
- If an athlete cannot consistently perform these two basic requirements of the event prior to the start of the competition season, then he/she needs to train and compete in a different field event.

## DETERMINING THE TAKEOFF LEG FOR THE RUNNING LONG JUMP

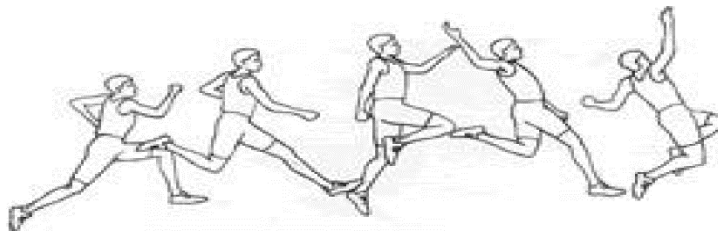
- The athlete's stronger leg is usually their take-off leg.
  - Ask the athlete to take three consecutive hops from a standing start using the right leg only.
  - Measure the distance traveled.
  - Repeat with the left leg.
- The leg used to hop the furthest is usually their stronger leg.
  - For some athletes, there is no clear difference between legs. In this case, it is helpful to know that most right-handed people use their left leg as the take-off leg for jumps. However, if the athlete is more comfortable using the opposite leg, they should use it.
- All coaching points in this section are based on a left-foot take off. If your athlete uses a right foot take off, you should switch the foot in the instruction.

## MEASURING AN ATHLETE'S APPROACH

- As your athlete becomes stronger and more skilled, their approach will need adjustment.
  - Initially, the athlete should use 3 strides.
  - The number of strides should correspond with your athlete's maximum speed when they hit the take-off board or tape.
- Athlete stands on takeoff board and runs back along the runway.
  - Take the number of strides that will be used on the approach.
  - The point where the athlete stops or reaches the number of strides is marked.
  - This initial mark will be adjusted by moving forward or backward.
- Athlete faces take-off board from this mark.
- Athlete does a controlled run towards the take-off board.
  - They should reach the take-off board on their take-off foot.
- The athlete should run through the sand in the landing pit.
  - Mark the point where the athlete's take-off foot hits take-off board.
  - Adjustments can be made forward and backward to fit individual needs.
- When you are sure that the athlete's approach is consistent, measure and record distances for future practice and competitions.
  - Run approach again and mark the location of first and third steps of the takeoff foot. The athlete can run a consistent approach by matching his/her stride to meet these marks.
- Encourage athletes to practice their approach often. This helps develop consistency.
  - Support the athlete to measure the approach themselves. This will help them identify the starting point of their approach when you are not present.

## COACHING POINTS – THE TAKE-OFF

- Perform the approach run and plant the takeoff foot on board behind foul line.
- Stretch upward immediately prior to takeoff.
- Strongly take off from board by extending and pushing through the takeoff leg.
- Bend the other leg. Drive the thigh up and over sand pit.
- Keep upper body straight and head up. The athlete should focus ahead to the sand.
- Land in a running position on non-takeoff foot and run through the sand.



## COACHING POINTS – IN-FLIGHT (STEP STYLE)

- From takeoff:
  - Drive right knee and left arm forward and upward over the sand pit.
- While in flight:
  - Extend the lead leg with the take-off leg trailing.
  - The athlete should appear to be in a stride position mid-flight.
  - Circle right arm overhead and bring left leg forward.
  - Arms and legs should now be parallel.
- As the athlete prepares to land:
  - Extend their arms and upper body to reach forward.
  - Drop both arms below legs and bend knees as they hit the sand.
  - Land in sand heels first, with hands sweeping past hips.
  - Roll over on toes, falling forward.

## COACHING POINTS – IN-FLIGHT (HANG STYLE)

- From takeoff:
  - Drive right knee and left arm forward and upward.
  - Hold the left leg and right arm back.
  - Drive the left leg and right arm so that they are parallel.
  - Arch the back to achieve the "hang" position.
  - Move the arms in a circle clockwise.

- Prepare for landing by:
  - Lowering the upper body toward thighs
  - Extending legs
  - Reaching arms forward and then backward.
  - Hit the sand heels first.
  - Bend knees to absorb shock of landing. Move your upper body forward and roll over your toes to fall forward.

## Shot Put Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your Athlete Can</b>
Hold shot in throwing hand. Spread fingers around shot
Balance shot with thumb and little finger
Place shot against neck, below ear, with palm turned out
Keep elbow away from body
<b>Standing Put</b>
Stand with feet just wider than shoulder width near toe board. Face perpendicular to toe board
Keep shoulders parallel to direction of throw
Step back and bend back leg, keeping back straight
Turn upper body 90 degrees away from direction of put
Drive hips and chest counterclockwise toward direction of put
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.
<b>Sliding Put</b>
Stand in middle of ring. Face perpendicular to toe board.
Lower upper body. Flex back leg to quarter squat.
Lift front foot and extend forward. Slide body toward front of circle.
Keep your back leg flexed, with body perpendicular to throw's direction.
Rotate back leg and extend body upward. Force hips in throw's direction
Thrust chest forward and extend both legs
Transfer weight to left leg
Extend right arm and push shot with fingertips
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.
<b>Gliding Put</b>

Stand at rear of circle. Face away from toe board.
Place the power foot in front. Have ball of other foot on throwing surface.
Hop backward. Turn both feet 90° counterclockwise until parallel to toe board.
Land on both feet simultaneously.
Rotate and raise trunk upward. Begin turning feet 90° toward throw's direction.
Transfer weight from right to left foot. Pivot both feet and knees toward the direction of put.
Keep right elbow away from body, extend right arm
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot

### Overview: Shot Put

- Shot Put requires the athlete to put the shot as far as possible.
  - A combination of strength, power and speed will propel the shot further.
  - The ability to accelerate the shot faster depends on the amount of force (speed) the athlete can apply, using strength and power.
- There are three primary styles of putting the shot:
  - Standing put
  - Slide
  - Gliding put
- Warm-up is very important for shot put to prevent injury. The same general warm-up advice applies for all events.
- Gripping the shot put is the same for all athletes. The following coaching points are made for a righthanded put.

### Gripping the Shot Put & Ready Position

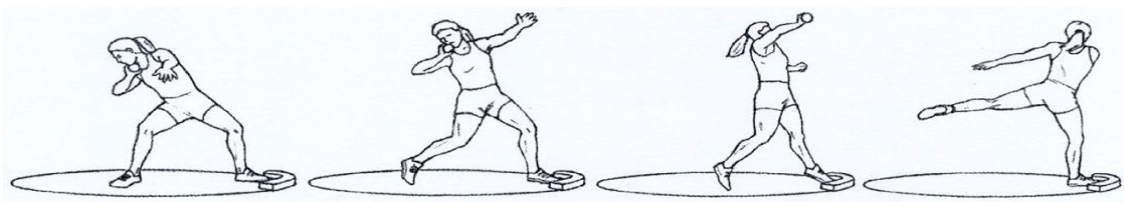
- Hold shot with both hands.
- Place shot in throwing hand and spread fingers around shot.
  - Do not rest or allow the shot to drop into palm of hand
  - Place thumb and little finger wider apart for balance and support.
  - Shot is supported by thumb and little finger on sides
  - The majority of weight is on other fingers.
- Place the shot against the neck but below the ear with the palm turned out.
- The elbow is away from the body and must stay behind the shot.

- Apply pressure against the neck to support the shot.
- The shot must not fall below the level of the shoulder or be behind the shoulder during the put.



### Coaching Points – Standing Put

- Ready position:
  - Wide stance near the toe board.
  - Stand perpendicular to the direction of throw.
  - Left shoulder at front of the ring.
- Shoulders are parallel to direction of throw.
  - The left arm (non-throwing arm) is relaxed and extended in front of the body.
- Step back and bend right leg, keeping back straight.
- Turn upper body 90 degrees away from direction of put.
- Body weight is over bent right leg.
  - Drive hips and chest counterclockwise toward the direction of put.
  - Extend right arm and snap fingers, releasing shot.



### Coaching Points – Sliding Put

- Ready position:
  - Wide stance near the toe board

- Stand perpendicular to the direction of throw
- Left shoulder at front of the ring.
- Lower upper body and flex right leg to quarter squat.
  - Lift the left foot and extend it forward, sliding the body toward the front of circle.
  - The right leg remains flexed. The body is perpendicular to direction of throw.
- Rotate right leg.
  - Extend body upward to force hips around to direction of put.
- Thrust chest forward and extend both legs.
  - Transfer weight to left leg and emphasize a strong leg push.
- Extend right arm and push shot with fingertips.
  - Release shot, right arm extending in direction of put.

### **Coaching Points – Gliding Put**

- Ready position:
  - Stand at rear of circle, facing away from the direction of put.
  - Keep weight is on right leg.
  - Place the ball of the left foot on the throwing surface.
- Hop backward powerfully.
  - Turn both feet 90 degrees parallel to the toe board.
  - The right leg provides most of the gliding force.
- Glide in a balanced position from the back to the center of the circle.
- Land on both feet simultaneously.
- Rotate and raise trunk upward.
  - Feet should begin to turn 90 degrees toward the direction of put.
- Transfer weight from right to left foot.
  - Pivot both feet and knees toward the direction of put.
- Keep your left toe close to the throwing surface during extension and ground the foot quickly.
  - Drive to the toe board with your left foot.
  - Do not hop.

- Keep right elbow away from body.
  - Extend right arm forcefully.
- Keeping thumb down, put the shot
  - Forcefully snap the wrist and fingers outward.
  - Extend beyond toe board to improve release point.



### Coaching Points – Exiting the Circle

- After an athlete has fully completed their put:
  - They **MUST** exit the throwing circle correctly through the rear (back half) of throwing circle
  - A foul will be called and put attempt disqualified for any athletes who exit through the side or front of the circle.

## Wheelchair Shot Put Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your Athlete Can</b>
Sit upright in chair. Buttocks are against chair and feet on foot supports.
Hold shot in throwing hand. Spread fingers around shot.
Balance shot with thumb and little finger.
Place shot against neck, below ear, with palm turned out.
Keep elbow away from body, pointing it back away from body.
Grab left armrest with left hand for balance.
Extend throwing arm and keep thumb down. Snap wrist and fingers outward, releasing shot.

### Coaching Points – Wheelchair Shot Put

- Set front wheels of chair behind toe board of the circle.
  - Lock back wheels.

- Sit upright in chair with buttocks against chair and the feet on foot supports.
- Grip shot in right hand.
  - Do not let the shot drop into the palm of the hand.
  - Place shot against the side of neck, not under chin.
- Keep right elbow to the right side, pointing back away from body.
- Grab left armrest with left hand for balance if required or hold it at eye level.
- Extend right arm forcefully.
  - Lower left shoulder, raise right shoulder.
- Keeping thumb down, put shot, snapping wrist and fingers outward.
- Emphasize the athlete sits up straight in the wheelchair.

During competition, coaches **cannot** provide hand-over-hand assistance or any physical guidance. For those athletes unable to pick up their shot put, coaches can assist by handing athletes their shot put **outside of the circle**. However, the athlete **must be able to put the shot independently on their own**. If they are unable to do this, the athlete needs to be in another, more appropriate event.

### Mini-Javelin Key Skills Checklist

<b>YOUR ATHLETE CAN</b>
Hold mini javelin in throwing hand with fingers in correct position.
Hold mini javelin resting in the palm of their hand.
Hold mini javelin with relaxed, straight arm, behind and higher than the shoulder.
<b>Standing Throw</b>
Stand facing the front with one arm extended high behind the thrower.
Assume the correct foot position - back foot is at 45°. Front foot facing forward.
Execute correct pre-release movement - From bent knee position, push hip through to front. Use your left arm to block.
Pull mini javelin through, leading with shoulder and elbow and execute throw.
Release mini javelin.

### **One-step Throw**

Stand 1.5 steps behind the foul-line.

Stand sideways with head facing front and hips and shoulders facing the side.

Keep the right foot facing front with knees relaxed.

Step forward and keep your hand above shoulder height.

Throw mini javelin over the top of the head.

Complete follow through

### **Full Approach**

Take the correct start position for a 5-step throw.

Attempt the cross over run.

Stop at the foul line.

Keep your hand above shoulder height.

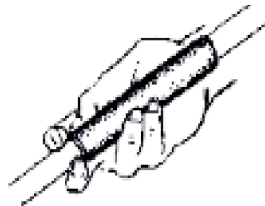
Throw mini javelin over the top of the head.

Complete follow through

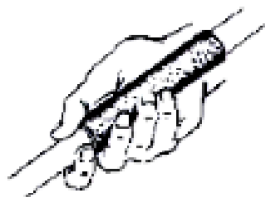
### **Coaching Points: The Grip**

There are 3 types of grips for the min-javelin.

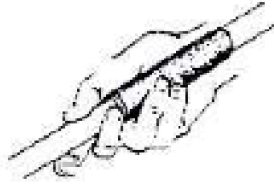
- **V-Grip:** The min-javelin is held across the palm with the top of the grip resting between the index and the third finger either side of the grip. With this grip, the thrower places the javelin between their index finger and middle finger.



- **American Grip:** The index finger typically grips right around the edge of the binding. The thumb can grab the edge of the binding opposite the index finger, and the other fingers wrap onto the binding.



- **Finnish Grip:** Place the mini-javelin in your hand, you'll notice that the mini-javelin comfortably sits in the groove of your hand and that middle finger naturally lands on the binding edge.



### Coaching Points - Standing Throw

- The athlete stands with both feet shoulder width apart behind the foul line.
- Throwing arm extended behind athlete.
  - Back foot is at 45°
  - Front foot facing forward
- Mini javelin is held just behind the shoulder with a straight but relaxed arm.
- With knees slightly bent, rock back onto back foot.
- Athlete turns their hip through to the front, pivoting on the front foot.
- Pull mini javelin through, keeping the arm straight.
- Release the javelin at the highest point so it is moving in an upward trajectory to the sky.
- **For athletes with more challenges:** An athlete that is unable to keep their arm straight while throwing the javelin can use a modified approach. This would be similar to an outfielder on a baseball team throwing a ball back into the infield. The release of the javelin needs to be at its highest point possible for the athlete so it is moving in an upward trajectory to the sky.

### Coaching Points - One-Step Throw

- Stand sideways 1 ½ steps behind the foul line.
  - Head faces the front
  - Hips and shoulders face the side.
- Right foot should be positioned behind the left.

- Step forward onto the right foot.
- Rotate hips to the front
  - Shoulder, arms and throwing hand should follow.
- Pull mini javelin through, keeping the arm straight.
- Release the javelin at the highest point so it is moving in an upward trajectory to the sky.

### **Coaching Points - Full Approach (5 step)**

- Assume the correct start position for a 5-step throw:
  - Step crossing right foot over left foot.
  - Step and skip and step on left foot.
- Plant the left heel, and push through the right foot.
  - Pivot on the ball of the right foot.
- Rotate hips to the front. Shoulder, arms and throwing hand should follow.
- Pull mini javelin through, keeping the arm straight.
- Release the javelin at the highest point so it is moving in an upward trajectory to the sky.

### **TIPS FOR COACHING MINI-JAVELIN FOR ATHLETES WITH PHYSICAL NEEDS**

- To help athletes learn the correct grip:
  - The coach holds the mini javelin vertically.
  - The athlete slides their first finger and thumb down the shaft until they hit the binding.
  - Close all the other fingers around the grip and pick the javelin up.
- Athletes may have difficulty with deciding which grip is best for them if they have never thrown the mini javelin before. Experiment with all three options to determine the best option for the athlete. The coach should demonstrate the correct positioning of the fingers.
- Remind athletes to point the mini javelin at their target. A tip pointed too high can result in the javelin:
  - Cartwheeling end-over-end

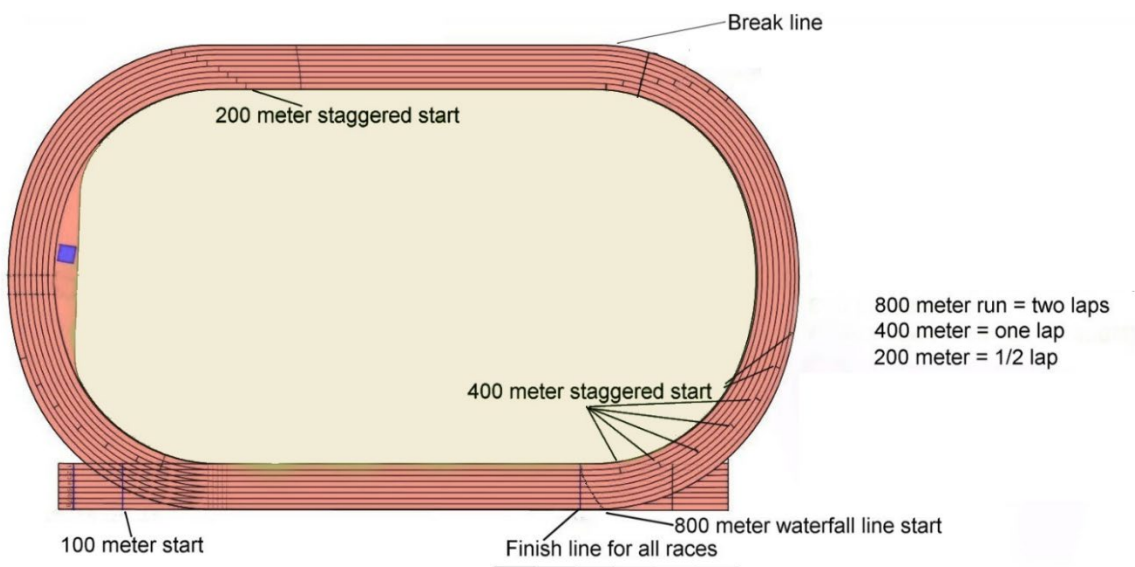
- Landing flat or tail-first (i.e., a foul throw)
- Taking too steep a flight path, causing it to nose-dive
- Hold the javelin properly:
  - Instruct the athletes to keep the mini javelin at eye level and parallel to the ground. Stopping or slowing during the run up can reduce the distance an athlete throws.
- If your athlete does this, practice with a shorter run up (e.g. 3-5 steps).
- Focus on building and keeping up speed on the runway. Speed must be transferred into the throw. A short, continuous run up is better than a long one with stops.
- Teach athletes that the javelin should be pulled over the shoulder in one continuous, smooth action. This can be learned using a mini-javelin or other implements such as a softball.
- Teach athletes that after releasing the javelin, their hand should “follow” the implement and then continue down and across their body.
  - The javelin needs to be thrown with speed and force.
  - If the athlete does not follow through, the javelin will appear to be “lobbed”.

During competition, coaches **cannot** provide hand-over-hand assistance or any physical guidance. For those athletes unable to pick up their mini javelin, coaches can assist by handing athletes their mini javelin prior to entering the runway. However, the athlete **must be able to throw the mini javelin independently on their own**. If they are unable to do this, the athlete needs to be in another, more appropriate event.

## Running Events 100M, 400M, 800M, Relays

- Students participating in any running event must be able to independently walk/run at least 100 meters without help unless they have a visual impairment.
- Staff or other students cannot walk alongside, in front of, or behind an athlete in a race unless they have a visual impairment. This will result in disqualification.
- Coaches should evaluate students' abilities at the beginning of the season and determine which event(s) may be the best fit and safest option for each student athlete.

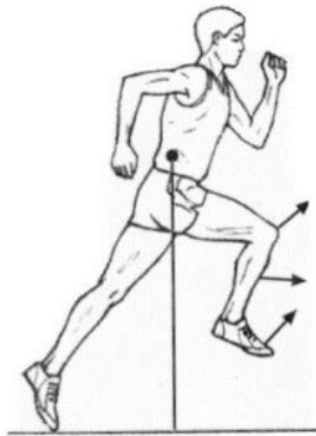
### Unified Track Map



## Basic Mechanics of Running

Special Olympics athletes are, first and foremost, athletes. The basics of running mechanics are the same as for any athlete. Remember that some of your athletes may have physical impairments. You may need to work with them to adapt their running technique. As a coach, you may also need to adapt your coaching methods. You can best support your athletes learning by:

- Recognizing and understanding their abilities
- Making simple change to technique and drills
- Continue to challenge them and give them a chance to experience success.



**Sprinter**



**Distance Runner**

## Running Event Starts

Unless coaches are specifically helping with staging, they should not be crowding around the starting line of running events. Runners must start their race independently.

- **100 Meter** – all runners start at the starting line of the 100 meter dash (straightaway of the track); runners must stay in their lane for duration of event
- **400 Meter** – stagger start; runners must stay in their lane for duration of event
- **800 Meter** – waterfall start; runners may cut into lane 1 after starting, as long as they do not interfere with any other runner. Runners should remain in lane 1 after cutting in.

- **4x100 Relay** – stagger start; each runner in the relay stays in their lane for duration of event
- **4x400 Relay** – stagger start for the 1<sup>st</sup> runner; after 1<sup>st</sup> runner hands the baton off to 2<sup>nd</sup> runner; the 2<sup>nd</sup> runner may move into lane 1, as long as they do not interfere with any other runner
- For all starts, runners must keep their toes behind the line.
- 100, 400, 4x100 and 4x400 relays all use a 3 command start: “On your mark, Set, Go (or the starting gun/whistle).
- 800 meter uses a 2 command start: “On your mark, Go” (or the starting gun/whistle).
- Starting blocks can be used for the 100 and 400 for advanced runners. Please contact your SOPA liaison if you would like more information about starting blocks.
- Pacing is NOT allowed in any running event. Pacing is running alongside an athlete who is racing. Pacing is often done unintentionally by a fellow teammate, coach, support staff, etc. Running on the infield of the track by a teammate who is not in the race or next to an athlete by a teammate who is in the race are both examples of pacing.
- Pacing will result in disqualification of the competitor. Teammates can cheer for an athlete who is competing but cannot run alongside them. Teammates can spread out around the track but cannot move alongside the runner.
- Holding hands with another individual while running will also result in disqualification.

## 100 METERS

### Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your athlete can</b>
Perform a stand-up or block start
Maintain erect posture with hips tall
Push off the track with balls of feet
Move foot backward under body upon landing
Drive knees up o thigh is parallel (horizontal) to track
Maintain high heel recovery as drive foot leaves ground
Maintain tall posture, with slight forward body lean from ground, not waist
Swing arms forward and back without rotating shoulders
Keep feet flexed, toes up
Sprint under control for entire race

## Overview

Power and coordination are important elements in producing speed. We can improve speed through good running mechanics and coordination. Speed is determined by two main factors. These are:

- Stride Length (Length of each step)
- Stride Frequency (How quickly steps are made)
- Improving both factors will increase your speed

### **A sprint has four main phases:**

- The start
- Acceleration
- Maintaining momentum
- The finish

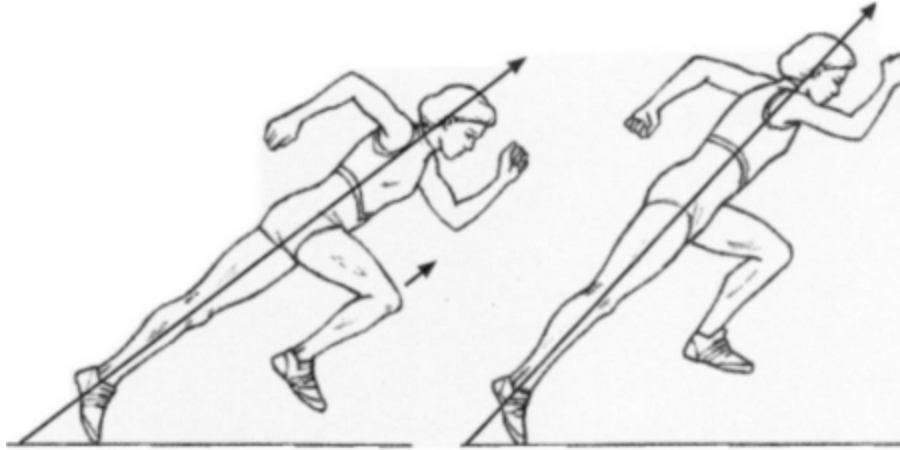
## Coaching Points - The Start Phase

- Sprinting races are started with a 3 command start of "On Your Mark", "Set" and the gun/whistle.
- Athletes assume the same initial position with their weight on their back foot.
- Between the commands of "On Your Mark" and "Set", the athlete shifts their weight from back to front foot.
- The athlete assumes the racing position and waits for the starting gun/flag.
- On the starter pistol signal or whistle, athletes begin to run.

## Coaching Points- Accelerating Phase

After the Start, the accelerating phase begins.

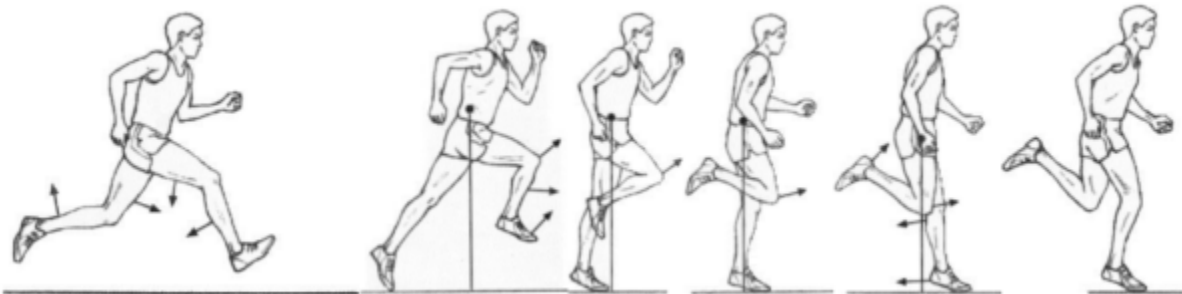
- Acceleration is created by driving or pushing with the drive leg until it is straight.
- The free leg drives low and fast the pace the foot under the body's center of gravity.
- The athlete must lean forward. The more the athlete leans forward, the more acceleration they create.
- Vigorous arm action helps keep balance, rhythm and relaxation.
- It is helpful to show athletes a good demonstration, photos or videos of this skill. This can help them to better understand what they must do



## Coaching Points- Maintaining Momentum Phase

In this phase, the focus is on maintaining speed.

- The athlete must combine good basic mechanics with the speed they created in the accelerating phase.
- The key focus areas are as follows:
  - Posture/Body Position
  - Head Position
  - Arm Action
  - Leg Action



## Coaching Points- Finishing Phase

This is a very important skill to practice. The point at which the athlete's chest crosses the line determines their final time. While sprinting toward the finish line, the athlete should have good running posture and a normal stride action.

- In the final strides of the race, the athlete should:
  - Run through and not to the finish line. Coaches can help athletes to learn this by asking athletes to pretend that the finish is a few meters beyond where it really. This encourages them to maintain their momentum

- The athlete should lunge forward and lean through the finish line.
- Coaches can create different scenarios to help learning ex. place people standing in different areas at the finish line. This helps athletes to experience the reality of a race finish and to practice in a competition-like situation

## 400 METERS

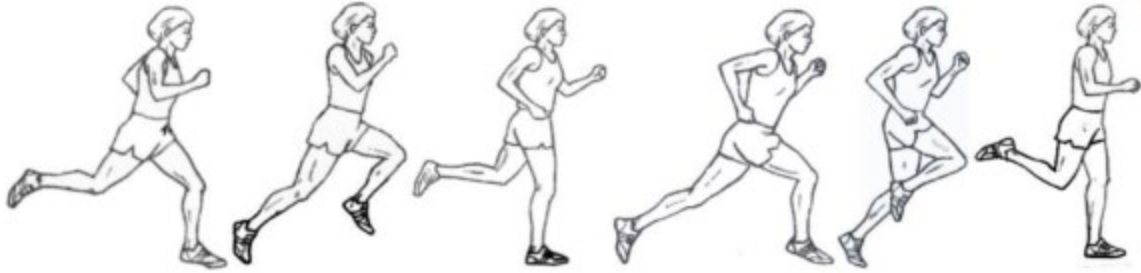
### Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your athlete can</b>
Run longer distances
Pace self (or can learn to)
Demonstrate speed, strength and endurance
Maintain erect posture with hips tall
From the back of the foot, roll through the ball of the foot and push off
Show spring, rhythm and light touch in foot action
Have controlled, relaxed arm action
Keep shoulder not hunched and elbows tucked in
Keep body relaxed and moving efficiently

### Coaching Points for 400M

When coaching the 400m, the coach needs to find the right combination of speed and endurance for each athlete.

- It is important to have a comfortable stride & rhythm; do not over stride.
- Unlike sprinting, the foot strikes the ground less on the ball of the foot and more to the back of the foot. The foot rolls onto the ball and pushes off.
- The knee has some flexion. Knee lift is lower than that of a sprinter.
- Heel does not go as high as a sprinter.
- Leg movement is smooth.
- Swing arms from shoulders. The elbows are bent at around a 90-degree angle but can straighten a little more on the down swing. Arms and shoulders should be relaxed.
- Head straight; chin level, focus ahead 20-30 meters.



## 800 METERS

### Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your athlete can</b>
Run longer distances
Pace self (or can learn to)
Maintain erect posture with hips tall
Settle more on the back of the feet. Roll through the ball of the foot and push off
Show spring, rhythm and light touch in foot action
Have relaxed arm action
Keep shoulder not hunched and elbows tucked in
Keep body relaxed and moving efficiently

### Coaching Points for 800M

- Stride length and rhythm should be comfortable. Do not over stride.
- The foot strike is more to the back of the foot than in sprinting. The foot rolls into the ball and pushes off.
- The knee is slightly bent.
- Leg movement is smooth.
- Swing arms from shoulder in a comfortable back and forward movement. Keep the arms and shoulders relaxed.
- Keep the head straight and chin level. Focus ahead 20-30 meters.

# RELAYS

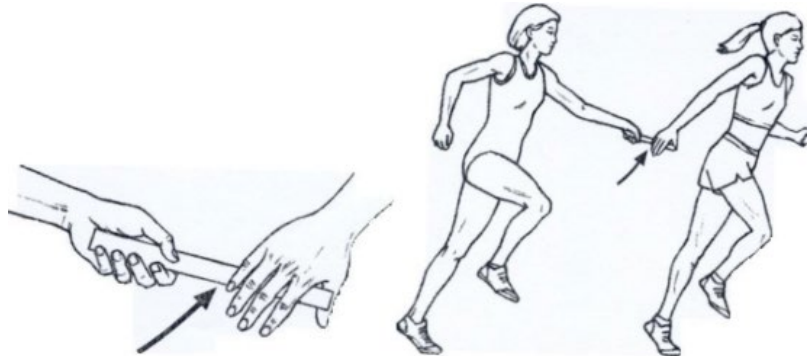
## Key Skills Checklist

<b>Your athlete can</b>
<b>FIRST LEG</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform a stand-up start</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold baton in hand while running</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprint under control with hips tall, erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run the curve, staying in lane</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass baton in exchange zone with designated technique</li> </ul>
<b>SECOND LEG</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold baton in hand while running</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprint under control with hips tall erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run the straightaway</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass baton in exchange zone with designated technique</li> </ul>
<b>THIRD LEG</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold baton in hand while running</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprint under control with hips tall erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run the curve in lane if 4x100</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass baton in exchange zone with designated technique</li> </ul>
<b>FOURTH "ANCHOR" LEG</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold baton in hand while running</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprint under control with hips tall erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run the curve</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunge forward and lean through finish line</li> </ul>

## EXCHANGES

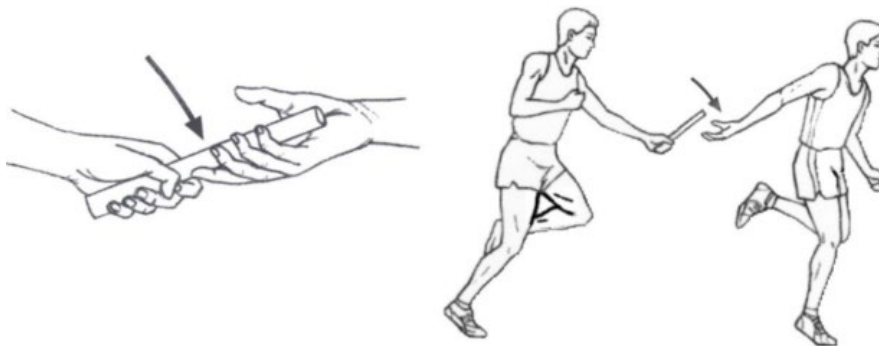
### Coaching Points Up- Sweep Baton Exchange

- Outgoing runner begins to sprint at the signal from the incoming runner.
- Outgoing runner reaches back with receiving hand – forming an inverted V (see image)
- Incoming runner places baton into outgoing runners hand, in an upward sweeping motion
- Outgoing runner takes the baton from incoming runner and sprints.



### Coaching Points Down- Sweep Baton Exchange

- Outgoing runner begins to sprint at the signal from the incoming runner.
- Outgoing runner reaches back with receiving hand – almost parallel to the track.
- Outgoing runner's palm is facing up, forming a V with thumb towards torso.
- Incoming runner places baton into outgoing runners hand, in downward sweeping motion
- Outgoing runner takes the baton from incoming runner and sprints



## 4 x 100M RELAY

All runners in the 4x100m relays must stay in their designated lanes the entire race.

Leg	Baton Ability	Athlete Strength
Lead off leg	Passes baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good starter with strong acceleration, response to the starter's gun, and balance.</li> <li>• Can run the curve, staying in lane.</li> </ul>
Second Leg	Receives and passes baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very fast runner.</li> <li>• Ability to run strong straightaway.</li> <li>• Excellent speed and endurance.</li> <li>• Strong baton passing and receiving skills.</li> </ul>
Third Leg	Receives and passes baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can run the curve, staying in lane.</li> <li>• Excellent speed and endurance.</li> <li>• Strong baton passing and receiving skills.</li> </ul>
Fourth Leg or "Anchor" Leg	Receives Baton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most competitive runner.</li> <li>• Ability to catch and pass runners.</li> <li>• Consistent finisher.</li> </ul>

## 4 x 400M RELAY

- In the 4x400m relay, the lead-off (first) runner must stay in their lane the entire lap.
- The 2nd runner may break for lane 1 in the appropriate zone after receiving the baton and without interfering with another runner.
- The 3rd and 4th runners can run in lane 1 or any inside lane.

<b>Leg</b>	<b>Athlete Role</b>
Lead leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Get the team out in front.</li> <li>● Must be aggressive and strong and have a good sense of pace.</li> <li>● Ability to run in lane the entire lap.</li> </ul>
Second Leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Keep the team in the race.</li> <li>● Must be physically strong, able to handle bumping.</li> <li>● Must be able to negotiate the breakpoint.</li> <li>● If the team is not in first place, the job is to get the team in first place.</li> </ul>
Third Leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Put the team in a position to win.</li> <li>● Must be able to run well from behind or maintain a lead and build upon it.</li> <li>● Often, this is the second-best possible anchor on the team.</li> </ul>
Fourth Leg or "Anchor" Leg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be able to run well from behind or maintain a lead.</li> <li>● Ability to catch and pass runners - usually the strongest runner</li> </ul>

# RULES OF COMPETITION

## Time Trials Event Entry & Qualifier Form

- Coaches will need to submit their qualifying times and distances from their time trials a week before their league's competition begins.
- Coaches will be given a link to an event entry form by their SOPA liaison, who will also coordinate the due date with them.
- Please remember the following:
  - Each team member may only be entered in **one** track event and **one** field event.
  - In addition, a team member may be given the option to be part of **one** relay team (this includes being listed as an alternate).
  - Once entered on this form, no team member can change events. They are required to compete in the events listed for the entire season.
  - It is very important to work with the school's track and field coach or consult with the SOPA liaison on how to best conduct time trials to ensure that your times and distances are accurate.
  - These times/distances will be utilized for the divisioning of each team's first meet. Each athlete's best time/distance will carry over to future meets.
- Coaches must report the information below for time trials for each team member.
  - Athlete or Partner
  - First and Last Name
  - Field Event and Distance
    - All distances must be measured in Meters and Centimeters
  - Track Event and Time
  - Relay Team and Team Time
    - Each school may have a maximum of 2 teams per relay.

## Event Rules

- All track and field events will follow the National Federation of State High School Associations rules, except where there are rules modifications set forth in the Official Special Olympics rules for athletics. These rules can be found on the Special Olympics web site at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)
- Highlighted track event rules appearing in the Special Olympics rules include the following:
  - In races up to and including the 400 meters, the runners can use or not use starting blocks.
  - A runner who is charged with two false starts in the same race will be disqualified from that race.
  - All runners should run within their lanes. However, if a runner either runs outside his/her lane in the straight or runs outside the outer lane on the bend, with no material advantage being gained, and if no other runner is obstructed, then the competitor should not be disqualified.
  - Wheelchair Racers:
    - A competitor using a wheelchair finishes his/her race when all front wheels (one or two) of the wheelchair reach the finish line.
    - The lanes used by wheelchair athletes should be made two track lanes wide.
- Highlighted field event rules appearing in the Special Olympics rules:
  - **In the shot put, mini-javelin, and running long jump, each competitor takes three non-consecutive attempts.**
  - **Just like the track events, the field events must be conducted by divisions.**
  - All three attempts shall be measured and recorded for breaking ties. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used for scoring. If there is a tie, the second longest measurement is used to break it and if that also is the same distance, use the third longest measurement.
- Running Long Jump:
  - **A competitor must be able to jump at least 1 meter, or they cannot participate in this event.** This is the minimum distance between the take-off board and sand pit.
  - All students must take off from one foot only.
    - Taking off from two feet is a foul and the attempt is disqualified.

- **Shot Put:**
  - All competitors will use a 6 lb. shot put.
  - All competitors must exit out of the back of the throwing circle after releasing the shot.
    - If they do not exit from the back of the throwing circle, the attempt will be disqualified.
  
- **Mini-Javelin**
  - All competitors will throw a mini javelin with a weight of 400 g.
  - The mini javelin must be held by the grip with one hand only. Staff cannot physically assist a student in throwing the mini javelin.
    - Physical assistance will result in a foul being called and the attempt disqualified.
  - The mini javelin must be thrown over the shoulder or upper part of the throwing arm and may not be thrown in an underhanded delivery.
  
  - It is counted as a foul and the attempt is disqualified if a competitor:
    - does not use the proper throwing technique;
    - does not throw the mini javelin so the point (tip) lands before any other part of the implement;
    - Does not throw the mini javelin so the point (tip) falls completely within the inner edges of the sector lines.
    - Crosses over the foul line with either foot during or after the release of the mini javelin.

## COMPETITION GUIDELINES

### Official Events and Entry Requirements

Following are the official events offered at all Unified Track and Field competitions in the order which they should be conducted:

Track Events Conducted First in the Following Order	Field Events Conducted Second and Simultaneously	Relays Conducted Third in the Following Order
100 Meters	Shot Put (6 lbs)	4 x 100 Meters
400 Meters	Running Long Jump	4 x 400 Meters
800 Meters	Mini Javelin (400 g)	

- Participants are only allowed to enter one individual track event and one individual field event. They also may be selected to participate on one relay team.
- A participant is not allowed to change events after submission of qualifying times and distances to Special Olympics PA before the start of the competition season. The track event and field event he/she does in the first meet is locked in for the entire season – no changes, without a note from a medical provider.
- There are no proportionality requirements for the number of athletes and number of partners entered in an event. For example, if there are 6 athletes and 1 Unified partner entered in the mini javelin, that is fine.

Unified Track and Field teams are **not required** to enter participants in every event.

- The only time there is a requirement for an equal number of athletes and partners is the relay events. Relay teams must consist of two athletes and two Unified partners. Coaches can place their runners in any order.
- A Unified Track and Field team may enter a maximum of two 4 x 100-meter relay teams and two 4 x 400-meter relay teams.
- A coach can select and lock in one athlete and one Unified partner per relay team, at the start of the competition season, to serve as alternates in case one of the starting members is unable to participate. **These 6 team members which comprise a relay team (4 starters and 2 alternates) must remain the same**

during the entire season. Additionally, if a school has two relay teams, members are prohibited from switching from one to another.

- Qualifying Time for the 800 meters at the PIAA/SOPA State Championships: Any 800-meter runner on a team advancing to the state championships must have a qualifying time of 3:30 or less achieved during one of the regular season or regional championship meets.

### **Wheelchair Participants**

- Students using manual wheelchairs or power wheelchairs are eligible to participate.
- For Track Events:
  - **MANUAL WHEELCHAIRS:** Participants compete against students with and without disabilities.
  - **POWER WHEELCHAIRS:** Participants compete in a division which only is composed of power wheelchair competitors. Because the chair is propelled by the engine and not a person, the type of competition is different. If there is only one competitor in a division, he/she tries to exceed their personal best for the season. If successful, he/she receives the point total for 1<sup>st</sup> place or 5 points. If not, he/she receives the point total for 2<sup>nd</sup> place, or 3 points provided he/she completes the event successfully without being disqualified (i.e., the wheelchair leaves the track).
  - **LANE ASSIGNMENTS:** Assign two lanes for a wheelchair competitor during a race, preferably an inside lane.
  - **RELAYS:** Only participants using a manual wheelchair are eligible to be selected as a possible member of the 4 x 100 or 4 x 400-meter relays.
- For Field Events
  - Manual and power wheelchair participants compete against students with and without disabilities.

## **Participants with Visual Impairments**

- Track Events
  - Participants with visual impairments (defined as blind or with severely restricted vision) may use a guide runner to assist them. The guide runner is given one adjoining lane.
  - Another acceptable option is for the participant to use a guide rope held by volunteers with a relay baton attached to it. The runner grabs the baton and slides it along the rope while running or walking during the race.

## **Participants with Hearing Impairments**

- Track Events
  - The competitor should be placed in the lane closest to the positioning of the official starter.
  - An assistant standing next to the starter should drop a brightly colored (red or yellow) cloth when the gun sounds.
  - Another allowable option is to have the assistant stand behind the competitor with the hearing impairment and tap him/her on the shoulder when the gun sounds.

## **Divisioning and Team Scoring**

Participants with and without disabilities compete against each other in co-ed competition divisions within each event. These divisions are determined by the entrants having similar qualifying times or distances.

Qualifying times for track events and distances for field events are submitted to Special Olympics PA before the competition season starts for each participant on a team. This enables the creation of equitable divisions for each event during meets.

- Remember, each team member may only compete in one track event and one field event and may also be selected for one relay team. They cannot change events at any time during the season.
- Qualifying times and distances are required to be with team rosters through time trials or an inter-squad competition with another school. These initial times and distances will be used for your first meet.

- After your first meet, the times and distances taken from competition will be what is used for divisioning for the rest of the season. They are updated for each participant whenever improvements occur.
- Ideally, the variance between the highest and lowest score in a competition division should be no more than 15 - 20%. However, this variance can be expanded to have fuller divisions of three or more competitors.
- The minimum number of competitors in a division should be three and the maximum number is eight.
- Every event competition division is scored the same way. All competitors are provided with the opportunity to score points for their team based on their place of finish within the division. For example, if there are seven divisions of the 100 meters, all seven are scored.

Team scoring is based on the National Federation of State High School Associations' Track and Field Rules for dual meets. Since all competition divisions score points for a team, the Unified Team Track and Field rules modification is as follows:

- For all Unified Track and Field meets (dual, triangle, or invitational) the following scoring format will be employed for every event division:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> place scores 5 points
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> place scores 3 points
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> place scores 1 point
- If there is a tie, the point placement for the affected places will be combined and divided by the number of participants in the tie. Example: If 2 participants tie for 1<sup>st</sup> place, no participant receives 2<sup>nd</sup> place. The points for 1<sup>st</sup> (5) and 2<sup>nd</sup> (3) places are combined (8) and divided by 2. Each participant's team will receive 4 pts for the tie.
- Adding together the total amount of points earned by the participants on each Unified Track and Field team in their respective events determines the final team place of finish for the competition.

**DIVISIONS OF ONE:** There are circumstances when an individual or a relay team may have an outlying qualifying score and be placed in a division of one.

- For those individuals or relay teams that compete in a division of one, scoring will be based upon exceeding their qualifying time or distance (personal best).

- If the qualifying time or distance is beat and they are not disqualified, that person or relay team will be awarded 5 points (comparable to 1<sup>st</sup> place).
- If they do not beat the qualifying time or distance, they will be awarded 3 points (comparable to 2<sup>nd</sup> place), provided they are not disqualified.

## **Team Scoring at Competitions**

When teams have different roster sizes at a competition, a formula is used to ensure there is competitive balance. This is because there are more opportunities for a team with more participants to score points, giving them an advantage. Please use the following team scoring method:

- If Unified Track and Field teams at a competition have different roster sizes which vary by five or more, competition organizers will use a handicapping formula to equalize competition.
- The following formula is used to give more weight to the scores earned by members of teams with smaller rosters:
  - Take the team with the greatest number of participants. Divide the largest team's roster size by the roster size of each of the other teams which are smaller by at least five or more.
    - The roster number to be used is the actual number of participants each team has competing on the day of the meet or championships.
    - 12 is the minimum number of participants which can be used, even if a team has less than 12 on the day of competition.
    - Use this number as a multiplier factor to weigh the scores for the performances of individuals on smaller teams. Due to a smaller roster, there are less entries and therefore fewer opportunities to score. The multiplier elevates the impact of the scoring earned by members on these smaller teams.

The points earned based upon a participant's place of finish are multiplied by the factor to increase value. If the multiplier is 1.5 and a team member finish in 1<sup>st</sup> place, earning 5 points, the actual points awarded to the team is 7.5 (*calculated as 5 points x 1.5 multiplier value*).

### **Example**

- Three Unified Track and Field teams participate in a competition.
  - o Team 1 has 24 members
  - o Team 2 has 18 members
  - o Team 3 has 16 members.
  
- Divide Team 1's roster size (24) by Team 2's size (18) which equals 1.33
  - o Whenever a member of Team 2 scores points in an event, it is multiplied by 1.33.
  - o Example: If a member of Team 2 finishes in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the shot put which earns 3 points, it is multiplied by 1.33 and the team instead receives 3.99 points.
  
- Divide Team 1's roster size (24) by Team 3's size (16) which equals 1.5
  - o Whenever a member of Team 3 scores points in an event, it is multiplied by 1.5.
  - o Example: If a Team 3 member finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> in the shot put, earning 3 points, it is multiplied by 1.5 and the team receives 4.5 points.
  
- An electronic score sheet will be used to calculate team scores and provided to the schools. **Webinar training will be offered for all coaches in March.**

## **Weather Issues**

### **At Practice:**

- If you hear thunder or see lightning, you must stop practicing for at least 30 minutes.
- If at 25 minutes, you see/hear more activity, continue to wait for 30 more minutes.
- DO NOT rely on clear skies or lack of rainfall.

### **Prior to a Meet:**

- The host school's athletic director will make the call about postponing the meet.
- If the meet is postponed, the host school's athletic director will reschedule it.

### **During a meet:**

- The PIAA official will make the decision when to call the meet and when to resume.

# HOSTING A MEET

## Volunteers

Trained volunteers are **necessary** for any UCS T&F meet to be successful. SOPA has developed a volunteer needs sheet for you to utilize while recruiting volunteers.

Volunteer Role	Description	Name
Meet Director	In charge of overall operation of the event	
Announcer	Announces throughout the meet, calls for events, announces scores, etc.	
Score Keeper 1	Organizes score sheets for data input	
Score Keeper 2	Enters scores into the team score tabulator using a laptop computer	
<b>Track Event Roles</b>		
Timer 1	Accurately records the times of assigned runners of each race.	
Timer 2		
Timer 3		
Timer 4		
Timer 5		
Timer 6		
Track Recorder	Records all the times and places of each race. Also responsible for communicating with the starter that all timers are ready.	
Track Stager 1	Assists the starter by organizing each heat. Places runners in proper order to go onto the track. Ensure they are in proper lanes.	
Track Stager 2		
Track Stager 3		
<b>Field Event Roles</b>		
Shot Put-Measure 1	Mark and measure each throw and report distance to the score recorder.	
Shot Put – Measure 2		
Shot Put Score Recorder and Official	Records the distance of each throw, and if properly trained and experienced, acts as the official calling fouls.	PIAA OFFICIAL
Shot Put Retrieval	Retrieves and returns the shot after each put..	
Long Jump – Measure 1	Mark and measure each jump and report distance to the score recorder.	
Long Jump – Measure 2		

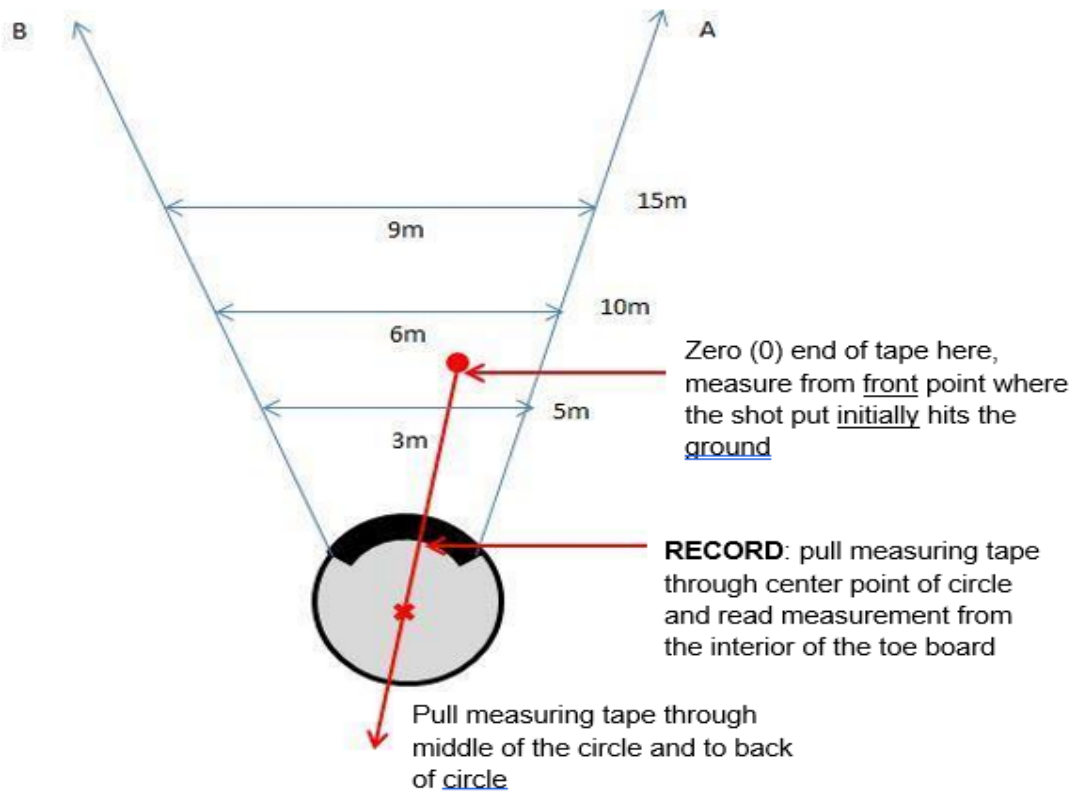
Long Jump Score Recorder and Official	Records the distance of each jump, and, if properly trained, acts as the official calling fouls when appropriate.	
Long Jump - Rake	Rakes the sand pit after each jump	
Mini Jav- Measure 1	Marks and measures each throw and reports the distance to the score recorder.	
Mini Jav – Measure 2		
Mini Jav- Score Recorder and Official	Records the distance of each throw and acts, if properly trained, as the official calling fouls when appropriate.	
Mini Jav – Retrieval 1	Retrieves and returns the mini javs after each throw.	
Mini Jav – Retrieval 2		
<b>Relay Event Roles</b>		
Timer 1	Accurately records the times of assigned runners of each race.	
Timer 2		
Timer 3		
Timer 4		
Timer 5		
Timer 6		
Track Recorder	Records all the times and places of each race. Also responsible for communicating with the starter that all timers are ready.	
Track Stager 1	Gathers and organizes relay teams at the center of the field.	
Track Stager 2		
Escort 1	Escort members of relay teams to their proper zones. Each Escort will take a group to a specific zone. Hip numbers allow escorts to place runners in the proper lanes in the zone.	
Escort 2		
Escort 3		
Escort 4		

## Tips for Hosting a UCS Track & Field Meet

- At least three weeks prior to the date of your meet, make sure you review the Coaches Resource Guidebook
- Prior to the meet, make sure you assign volunteers their roles in advance and be sure to send them a copy of the explanation of their assignment, which can be found in the “Hosting a Meet” section of the guidebook.
- When making copies of the heat sheets, use different colored paper for each event i.e., green paper for long jump, pink paper for shotput, blue paper for running events, etc.
  - For field events: make a copy of the “Volunteer Role and Set Up Management” pages of your guidebook and place on a clipboard for each event.
- Prior to teams arriving, identify a location on the infield or bleachers for each team to use as their home base. Have your club or student group create a welcome sign to identify each teams’ location. If possible, have your trainer to provide a water station close to the team area.
- If hosting a meet with many participants, use hurdles to line the infield of the 100-meter straightaway to keep other teammates off the track while races are occurring

## Field Event Set Up

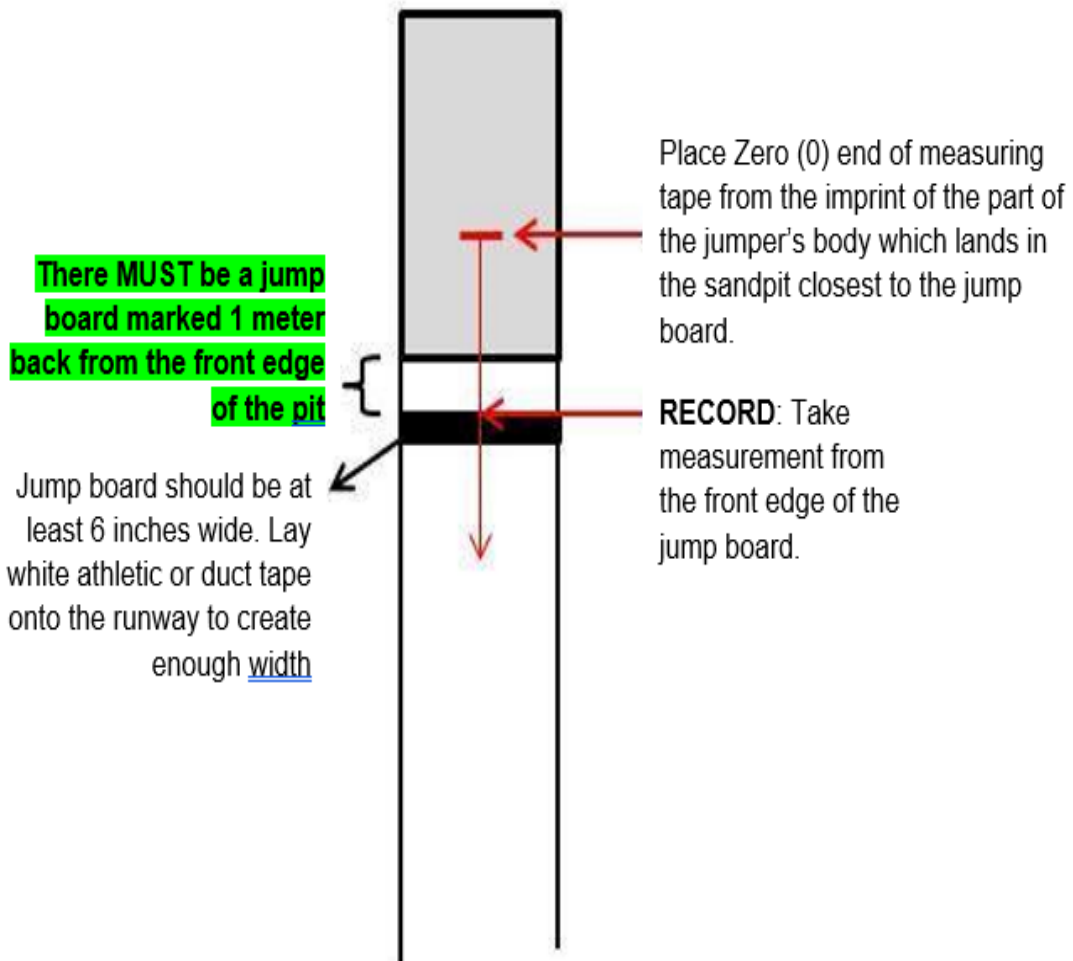
### SHOT PUT SET-UP AND COMPETITION MANAGEMENT



#### **Creating Sector Lines (A & B)**

- Most shot-put throw areas will have the sector lines already marked which you should use. If not, the following is the procedure for laying them out.
- Take the measuring tape and hold it at the back of the shot circle. Pull the end of the tape through the center of the circle and to the right side of the toe board (most will have a marking on top on which you will lay the tape).
- Lay down cones 5 meters out from the inner edge of the toe board, then 10 meters, and then 15 meters to form the A sector line.
- Take the measuring tape and -- from the 5 meter cone -- mark a spot 3 meters across the shot landing area and mark that with a cone.
- Repeat the same step at 10 meters, except this time measure 6 meters across.
- Repeat the same step at 15 meters, except this time measure 9 meters across.
- Lay down two sector lines from the toe board out into the shot landing pit area where the cones are placed.

# LONG JUMP SET-UP AND COMPETITION MANAGEMENT



# MINI JAVELIN SET-UP AND COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

**MEASURE:** Take the 0 end of the measuring tape and place it at the spot where the front tip of the mini javelin first lands.

**RECORD:** Pull measuring tape through center of foul line and record measurement

## **CREATE SECTOR LINES:**

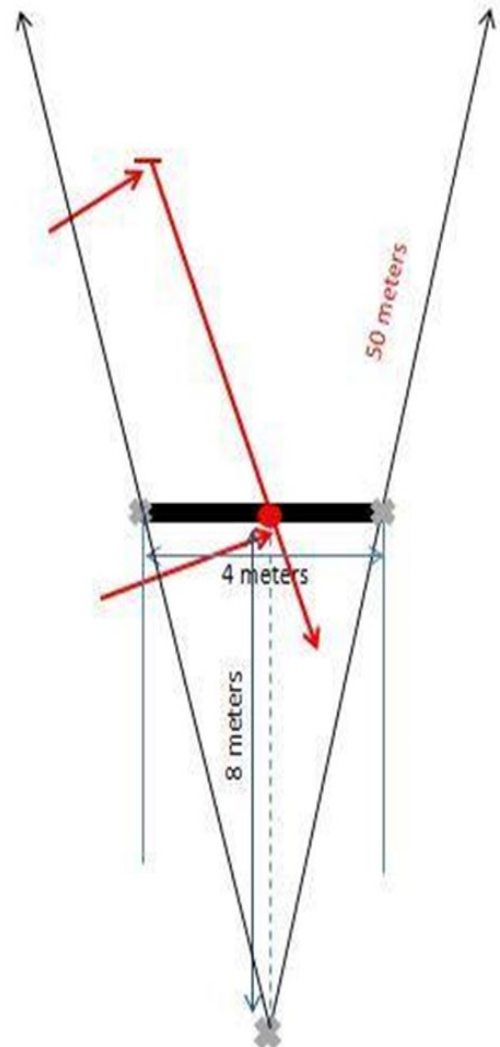
Lay down a straight foul line which is four meters long.

Create a runway by first placing a cone at each end of the four-meter foul line. Then mark a straight line back 8 meters from each of the foul line cones.

Next, find the center of the foul line (2 meters) and pull a measuring tape 8 meters to the back of the javelin runway.

Mark the center spot at this point. Hold the end of the measuring tape at this center point and pull the tape directly through the point where the foul line and runway parallel line connect on one side (this is where the cone is placed).

Mark this sector line out 50 meters from the center point at the back of the runway and repeat the procedure for the other side.



# UCS Track and Field Meet Volunteer Assignments for Field Events

## Shot Put Volunteer Assignments

PIAA Official officiates the event, calling legal puts.

### **Volunteer 1: Recorder**

Records the measurement, in meters and centimeters, of all legal puts on the scoresheet. The actual measurement for the put attempt is taken from the inside of the toe board. An illegal put, as determined by the official, is recorded as a foul on the sheet.

### **Volunteer 2: Measurement**

Places the 0 end of the measuring tape at the spot in the landing area where the shot put first lands.

### **Volunteer 3: Measurement**

Pulls the measuring tape tight through the center of the shot circle.

### **Volunteer 4:**

Retrieves and returns the shot put after it is thrown. If the landing area is wet or muddy, this volunteer will clean the shot with a towel before handing it to the PIAA official.

## Long Jump Volunteer Assignments

### **Volunteer 1: Official and Recorder**

Officiates the event by calling a foul if the jumper's foot goes over the front edge of the jump board or if the jumper takes off with two feet instead of one. A red flag is held up when a foul is committed and the jumper loses that attempt.

Records the measurement, in feet and inches, of each legal jump taken on the scoresheet. The measurement is taken from the front edge (closest to the sand pit) of the jump board. An illegal jump is recorded as a foul.

Calls out the name of the next jumper when he or she can start down the runway with their jump attempt.

### **Volunteer 2: Measurement**

Stands outside of the sandpit and marks the 0 end of the tape at the impression in the sand of the part of the jumper's body which is closest to the jump board. Call measurements in meters and centimeters.

### **Volunteer 3: Measurement**

Stands near the Recorder by the jump board. Pulls the measuring tape straight and tight to the front edge (closest to the sand pit) of the jump board. Calls out the measurement from that edge in meters.

### **Volunteer 4: Sand Pit**

Rakes the sandpit after each jumper to remove any impressions or footprints left from the previous jumper.

### Mini Javelin Volunteer Assignments

#### **Volunteer 1: Official and Recorder**

Officiates and determines legal throws. An illegal throw resulting in a foul includes any of the following violations: (1) the thrower's footsteps on or over the foul line before or after the throw; (2) the front tip of the mini javelin does not touch the ground first; (3) the front tip of the mini javelin does not land within the sector lines; (4) the mini javelin is thrown improperly by using an underhanded or slinging delivery. A red flag is held when a foul is committed.

Records in feet and inches each legal throw on the scoresheet. The actual measurement for the throw is taken from the inside back edge of the foul line. An illegal throw is marked as a foul.

#### **Volunteer 2: Measurement**

Places the 0 end of the measuring tape at the spot between the sector lines where the front tip of the mini javelin first lands. Call measurements in meters and centimeters.

#### **Volunteer 3: Measurement**

Pulls the measuring tape tight through the center of the foul line.

#### **Volunteers 4 and 5:**

Retrieve and return the mini javelins after they are thrown.

## **TRACK & FIELD MEET MANAGEMENT Competition Rules**

All Unified Track and Field rules as delineated in the Coaches' Resource Guide will be enforced. Coaches, please make sure you continue to teach and reinforce the rules to your team members.

**Uniforms:** Proper attire will be enforced. All team members must be wearing their full track and field uniform and proper footwear.

**Entries:** A team member **may not** switch events. Once they have their one-track event and one field event coming out of time trials, they are locked into those specific events for the full season.

**Relays:** There must be the same four members on a team (two Special Olympics athletes and two Unified partners) with no changes. It is allowed to have two alternates who are listed on your relay team roster submitted to Special Olympics PA – one Special Olympics athlete alternate and one Unified partner alternate. Remember, a team member may participate only on one relay team.

**Competing by Divisions:** One of the fundamentals of Unified Track and Field is participants compete in divisions against others with similar times and distances. When field events are held, competitions will take place one division at a time, so the participants know who they are competing against. There is no "open pit" approach where every competitor makes their attempt regardless of their division.

- For example, if there are five participants in Division 1 of the long jump, each of these five competitors takes three non-consecutive jumps. Once that occurs, places of finish are recorded, the scoresheet is taken to the results table, and competition begins for Division 2 and the participants in this group.
- You will receive divisions and heat sheets from your SOPA liaison at least one-day prior to the event.

**Scoring:** You will receive the score tabulator from your SOPA liaison. All UCS track and field meets should be scored in real time with results announced at the conclusion. There will be a webinar training available for the volunteers serving in this role. **All distances are marked in Meters and Centimeters.**

Coaches pin bib numbers on the **front of the uniforms** prior to competition. **The same bib number is used for the same team member each week. Do not switch bib numbers as this causes confusion.** Coaches, you will see the bib number listed next to the team member's name when you receive the meet entries prior to competition.

- As soon as the team arrives, the visiting team coach should check in with the event director to report scratches. 10 minutes prior to the beginning of the meet, escort all 100-meter participants to the start line at the end of the track.
- All Track Events are Conducted First
  - 100 meters
    - All 100-meter participants are behind the start line before the first heat is run.
    - First call for 400-meter participants to report to the infield near the finish line is made after the first heat of the 100 meters; second call is made midway through the 100 meters; third and final call is made immediately after the last heat of the 100.
    - Coaches are responsible for expeditiously getting their team members to the proper reporting area in a timely manner.
  - 400 meters
    - First call for the 800 meters is made after the first heat of the 400 meters; second call is made after the second heat; third and final call is made after the last heat of the 400.
  - 800 meters
    - Before the 800 meters start, coaches are announced to start getting their team members ready to report to their appropriate field events.

- Upon the 800 meters' conclusion, team members should report to their field events where they are checked in by the key lead volunteer stationed at each one.
- All Field Events are Conducted
  - All field events (shot put, mini javelin, and long jump) are held simultaneously.
  - Competitors do three non-consecutive attempts.
  - Each competition division is conducted separately (no open pit format allowed)
- Staging for the Relays
  - At the field events' end, coaches promptly have their 4 x 100-meter relay teams report to the check-in area.
  - There the competitors receive hip labels to designate their proper lanes and run order.
  - Competitors are escorted to their exchange zones or start line by volunteers and placed in their proper lanes. Hip labels are used for proper lane designation.
- Conduct Relay Events
  - 4 x 100-meter relay
  - 4 x 400-meter relay
- The final team results are tabulated and announced.

# OFFICIALS' INFORMATION

## Track Events - 100, 400, and 800 Meters

### General

- All runners must be in uniform – No sweatshirts or pants when competing.
- Fouls and disqualifications must be called and enforced for all competitors, regardless of whether they have a disability or not. Protecting the integrity of competition and ensuring fairness is paramount.
- A runner who is charged with two false starts in the same race will be disqualified from that race.

### 100 Meters

- Competitors may or may not use starting blocks.
- All runners should run within their lanes.
  - However, a competitor shall not be disqualified if the following situations occur, **and no other runner is obstructed or impeded:**
    - If a runner fails to stay within his/her lane in the straightaway
    - If a runner leaves their lane and runs to an outside lane on the turn, with no material advantage being gained.

### 400 Meters

- Staggered start is used.
  - However, a competitor shall not be disqualified if the following situations occur, **and no other runner is obstructed or impeded:**
    - If a runner fails to stay within his/her lane in the straightaway
  - If a runner leaves their lane and runs to an outside lane on the turn, with no material advantage being gained.

### 800 Meters

- Waterfall start is used. Runners must move inward if they do not interfere with other runners.

### 4 X 100 and 4 X 400 Relays

- 4 x 100 Relay – All runners must stay in their lanes; no exceptions
- 4 x 400 Relay Runners may move inward after first leg
- **Hip numbers must be used**

# **Field Events: Shot Put, Mini Javelin and Running Long Jump**

## **General**

- **All distances are marked in Meters and Centimeters**
- In the shot put, mini-javelin, and running long jump, each competitor shall be allowed **three non-consecutive attempts**. All three attempts shall be measured and recorded for breaking ties. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used to determine the final place of finish.
- Competition must be conducted by each individual division. For example, only those participants in Division 1 compete. Once each of them has completed their three non-consecutive attempts and the places of finish are determined, then Division 2 competes and so forth. "Open pit" formats which are sometimes used for field events are **NEVER ALLOWED**.

## **Running Long Jump:**

- **A competitor must be able to jump at least 1 meter**, which is the minimum distance between the **takeoff board/line** and sand pit, to participate in this event. If a 1 Meter takeoff board is not already marked on the runway, use tape or chalk to create a takeoff board. The front edge of the board (closest to the sand pit) must be one meter in distance from the sand pit. The width of the takeoff board should be a minimum of 6 inches.

## **Shot Put**

- All competitors will use a 6 lb. shot put.
- Please make sure they exit from the back half of the circle.

## **Mini-Javelin**

- All competitors will throw a mini javelin with a weight of 400g.
- The mini javelin must be held by the grip by one hand only.
- The mini javelin must be thrown over the shoulder or upper part of the throwing arm and cannot be slung or hurled in an underhanded delivery.
- It is counted as a foul if a competitor....
  - does not use the proper throwing technique.
  - does not throw the mini javelin so the point (tip) lands before any other part of the implement.
  - does not throw the mini javelin so the point (tip) falls completely within the inner edges of the sector lines.
  - Crosses the foul line with either foot during or after the release of the mini javelin.

# UCS Track and Field Announcer Script

Announcer's Responsibilities:

- Opening Ceremonies
- Announce staging for all events (see schedule below)

## **Opening Ceremonies - Example Script:**

Good afternoon, ladies, and gentlemen, and welcome to today's Interscholastic Unified Sports Track and Field Competition. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am the emcee for today's event.

Please rise for the playing of today's National Anthem (or please rise and join \_\_\_\_\_ in the singing of our National Anthem)

Let's get started, let's welcome the teams for today's event...let's hear it for the home team \_\_\_\_\_ Let's welcome their opponents' \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

At this time, would all team members please rise for the Special Olympics athlete's oath. Repeat after me: Let Me Win (pause for response) But if I cannot win (pause for response) Let me be brave in the attempt (pause for response) It is my pleasure to announce today's competition officially open.

Good Luck to all competitors!!

## **Schedule for Staging of Events**

- First call for all 100 Meter Runners is called as soon as the athlete's oath is completed.
  - 100 meters
    - All 100-meter participants are to be staged behind the start line before the first heat is run.
- First call for 400-meter participants to report to the infield near the finish line is made after the first heat of the 100 meters; Second call is made midway through the 100 meters; third and final call is made immediately after the last heat of the 100.
- First call for the 800 meters is made after the first heat of the 400 meters; Second call is made after the second heat; third and final call is made after the last heat of the 400.
- Prior to the start of the 800 meters, announcements are made for coaches to begin getting their team members ready to report to their appropriate field events.

- Upon the 800 meters' conclusion, team members should report to their field events where they are checked in by the key lead volunteer stationed at each one.
- All Field Events
  - All field events (shot put, mini javelin, and long jump) are held simultaneously.
- Staging for the Relays
  - At the conclusion of the field events, promptly call for all 4 x 100-meter relay teams to report to the designated check-in area.
  - Following the first heat of 4x100 relay, call for all member of 4x400 relay teams to that staging area.

### **At the Conclusion of the Meet**

- Ask for a round of applause for all participants who competed in today's meet.
- Ask for a round of applause for all the volunteers who helped make the meet possible.
- If the meet was scored in real time, announce the final points with winner.

# 2026 PIAA/SOPA IUS Track & Field State Championships

Who: 9 teams that qualify through participation in a regional qualifying meet.

Dates: Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> – Field Events

Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Track Events

- Location: Seth Grove Stadium, Shippensburg University,  
1871 Old Main Drive, Shippensburg, PA 17257

## Special Olympics PA will provide the following:

- Friday (May 22) – Lunch, Dinner, and Housing (more information to come)
- Saturday (May 23) - Breakfast & Lunch
- Event logistics management (officials training, schedules, divisioning, awards)

## Your high school will provide:

- Transportation to/from Shippensburg University.
- 3 coaches per team - one (1) coach for every four (4) team members (based on gender of team members)
  - Coaches need to provide date of current:
    - Pennsylvania Criminal Record check
    - PA Child Abuse Clearance
    - If have not lived in PA for 10 years, FBI fingerprint check
- **Each team brings 12 members – 6 Special Olympics athletes and 6 Unified partners or 5/7 either way**
- All athletes MUST be dressed in proper uniform; Unified Sports team uniform (provided by SOPA earlier in the season), white solid white T-shirt under racing top (if needed), and sneakers.
- Completed 2023-24 PIAA Athlete Medical for all athletes and partners.
- **Reminder** - Qualifying Time for the 800 meters at the PIAA/SOPA State Championships: – **Any 800-meter runner on a team advancing to the state championships must have a qualifying time of 3:30 or less achieved during one of the regular season or regional championship meets**

## 2026 Interscholastic Unified Track & Field State Championships

### LETTER OF INTENT

**May 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> @ Shippensburg University**

Please complete and return this form to your UCS Liaison by Friday, **April 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

**By placing an (X) in the NO, we do not want to attend Regional Championships, therefore you will not be able to attend State Championships.**

**By Placing an (X) in the YES, we want to attend State Championships, your school understands and can commit to the responsibilities for State Championships including participation in a Regional Championship.**

High School	YES  We want to attend the State Championships	NO  We do not want to attend the State Championships

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**Name of person completing this form** **Date**

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**Principal/Athletic Director Signature** **Date**

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**Printed Name**