



A Parent's Guide to Track & Field

Augusta Independent MS Track & Field Program

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What is Track and Field?

Track and Field is a team sport consisting of 14 individual events and 4 relays. These are divided into 6 field and 12 running (i.e. track) events. Track events are running events that take place on the track where the athlete who covers a given distance in the fastest time wins. Field events are categorized as jumping or throwing events that take place off of the track and where the athlete or object who travels the furthest wins. A competition is called a "Meet."

Our program competes in all track events when we have enough athletes, except hurdles. For field events, our program allows athletes to compete in the shot put, discus, and long jump.

ORDER OF EVENTS FOR MOST OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD MEETS

4x800m Relay	<i>(4 runners run 800m (2 laps) each, passing off the relay baton)</i>
100m/110m Hurdles	
100m Dash	
4x200m Relay	<i>(4 runners run 200m each, passing off the relay baton)</i>
1600m Run	<i>(4 laps around the track - 1 mile)</i>
4x100m Relay	<i>(4 runners run 100m each, passing off the relay baton)</i>
400m Dash	<i>(1 lap around the track)</i>
300m Hurdles	
800m Run	<i>(2 laps around the track - ½ mile)</i>
200m Dash	
3200m Run	<i>(8 laps run around the track - 2 miles)</i>
4x400m Relay	<i>(4 runners run 400m each, passing off the relay baton)</i>

Field Events will be individually scheduled. Girls and boys will flip flop from meet to meet so each event will differ in terms of the order in which it comes within a meet.

Shot Put
Discus
High Jump
Long Jump
Triple jump
Pole Vault

Most meets follow a "rolling schedule," which means that the next event starts immediately after the previous event. At some larger invitationals, there may be a time schedule posted indicating what time events begin at.

What it Takes to be Successful

More than anything else, success in Track & Field takes time...time to learn; time to train; time to sleep, rest and recover; after school time; weekend time. With the academic responsibilities of

being a student as well, most student-athletes are busy much of the time. We try to achieve a balance between all things while aspiring to do well in track & field.

We strongly emphasize academic excellence. We regularly have team GPAs in the 3.6-3.8 range. Our team's school attendance is normally above 97%. The willingness to devote the time that success demands in the classroom and the sport of track and field is called DEDICATION.

Being a member of the Augusta Track & Field Team carries other expectations and responsibilities. Doing what is expected of every team member is called COMMITMENT. Attending team practices every day when the student isn't participating in another school event or doesn't have another legitimate excuse is one of the commitments we expect. At the start of each season, each student/parent will receive a form outlining the team rules and policies. Our goal is to develop team loyalty, individual responsibility, and accountability among all our team members. School-based athletics are wonderful vehicles for personal growth. We hope that you as parents will appreciate this and support our goals.

You will find that because team practices and races consume several hours each week, your child's training and racing may not leave a lot of time after homework, eating and sleeping. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Your child will need to manage his/her time better. This usually results in less time in front of the computer and TV. The discipline of balancing school activities and a team sport help develop time management skills that will last a lifetime.

How the Team Works?

Prior to the season, sign-ups were held. Athletes can sign up for the following categories:

- 100-400M Running Events (Sprinting)
- 800M-3200M Running Events (Distance)
- Throwing Events
- Long Jump

There are many different events to compete in, so the team is broken down into different event categories where students get to train with smaller groups and compete in areas of their choosing while receiving individual and specialized coaching based on the event they are participating in.

Team Expectations

The first time your child struggled in class, he/she probably felt frustrated or disappointed. However, with the support you offer at home, the continued encouragement offered by his/her teachers and classmates, and his/her own perseverance and hard work, he/she was able to overcome the challenge to comprehend increasingly complicated and demanding coursework. As a team sport, the same is necessary for success in track and field. It is through this team effort that we are able to attain goals that otherwise seem out of reach. So, despite the fact that some people may look at track and field and consider it an "individual sport," it is really a team sport where competitors are dependent on one another for success. Since it is a team sport, there are certain requirements that all athletes are asked to meet.

Students must maintain success in the classroom, including both academics and discipline. Students are also expected to represent Augusta Independent well. When attending meets at locations outside of the school, or when practicing outside of the school, athletes become a representative of the school and team. It is expected that they act in accordance with all guidelines and procedures established by Augusta Independent and our program.

Apparel

At the beginning of the season, sweatpants and sweatshirts will be needed during practices. Once the weather warms up, they will need shorts and a t-shirt for practices. We always tell athletes to be prepared to practice in any type of weather, from 90 and sunny to 40 and rain.

Sprinters and distance runners should wear clothing that minimizes wind resistance. There has been a growing trend to incorporate compression clothing to an athlete's wardrobe. This clothing minimizes the wind resistance an athlete faces, and some athletes will state that their muscles recover more quickly from workouts when wearing this clothing, although scientific studies have not confirmed this finding yet.

If athletes choose to wear compression garments, or t-shirts under their jerseys, they garments should be black.

Athletes will be assigned a uniform at the start of the season. It is their responsibility to wash and maintain this uniform throughout the season.

Shoes. It is up to the parents as to what types of shoes they want their child to wear. There are special running shoes that contain spikes for track and field that can be worn for competition, although some parents of new runners will just start off with basic running shoes. If possible, go to a store that deals primarily with running footwear and apparel such as Tri-State Running Company in Edgewood, KY. These stores typically have experienced runners as sales persons who can help you choose the right shoe with the right fit for your athlete.

Each event discipline has slightly different spikes that help them gain the best traction for their events and helps provide extra push off of the track to increase speed. The name "spikes" is derived from the metal triangular spikes that are inserted to the bottom of the shoe. The throwing events will not have spikes protruding from their shoes

The best way to prolong the life and function of a new pair of running shoes is to wear them for running only, not as school shoes or for PE class. It is important that shoes be selected for their function, not their pretty colors!

Some online options (not endorsements) for purchasing running shoes:

www.eastbay.com

<http://www.saucony.com>

<http://www.firsttothefinish.com/>

Competitions

A meet schedule is typically sent home at least two weeks before the first meet. On meet days, while they can leave their backpacks in their lockers, some take them along in order to do homework while they're on the bus, depending on where we're traveling.

Plan for the weather to be unpredictable, as it is spring. Weather could range from warm and in the 80's to rainy and in the 40's. Please plan appropriately and encourage your child to plan for the weather appropriately. Track meets can last 2-3 hours for weekday meets and 4-5 hours for weekend meets, so if you are not properly prepared for the weather it can create a miserable experience.

Athletes are encouraged to bring healthy snacks and bottled water.

Which athletes compete at the meets?

The coaching staff strives to place our athletes in a competitive setting that fits their needs and the team's needs. Unless they want to try something new, we will only make them compete in the group of events they signed up for. At some meets, they limit only two athletes per event per school. This means, for example, if we have 5 shot put throwers, but we can only enter two, the coaching staff will have to decide which two will compete that day.

Some athletes may compete in 3 or 4 events, but we try to ensure each athlete gets to compete in at least one event, but that can vary from season to season depending on how many athletes are on the team.

At the Meet

We typically have a team area with a tarp, and sometimes we take our team tent. At some meets, however, we just sit together in the bleachers.

To watch your child run at the meet, you will first need to know what event he/she is in and whether the meet is following a rolling schedule or a time schedule. If the meet is following a time schedule, you can plan your arrival around the time of the events you wish to watch. If the meet follows a rolling schedule, your guess is as good as any as to what time your child will be racing. When you are at the meet, you will hear the announcer make a series of calls for each event. First call is a general warning to athletes that their event is coming up soon. At this point, if your child has not already started warming up for the event, he/she will begin to prepare for the race. Second call is when athletes should start to make their way to the clerk of course to check in for their event. By third call, athletes need to check in for their event or risk not being allowed to compete.

When your child completes the race, he/she may look ill or even get sick to his stomach but should recover in a few minutes. When athletes reach this point, they need to stretch and do a cool down run so the muscles don't seize up. Please allow athletes to do this. This is a great opportunity for you to watch other events and support some of our team's other athletes during their competitions. Many meets will also sell concessions, so this is a good time to support the school hosting the meet, plus your child may be hungry after the cool-down. When you do meet your child, tell him/her

what a good job he/she did, whether they think so or not. Anyone who can finish a race or event has done a great job.

Results

Baseball isn't the only game known for all its statistics. Every time your child competes at a meet, the performance is recorded and ranked. For most meets, the results can be found later that same day on the web or the next day on ky.milesplit.com/calendar. Many meets even have a website for live results that are posted as the meet goes along. The coach will typically discuss the results of the meets with the team in practice. If you attend a meet, you can get your child's results by either using your own stopwatch for an approximate time or listening for distances/heights.

The true definition of success: There may be more than 50 athletes in some of the events. Only one athlete will win the event and only a few may receive a ribbon or medal. The true definition of success in competition often has nothing to do with ribbons or medals. Every athlete can feel good about a performance. If your child has done his/her best in a particular event, has given it all they have, then--even if the result isn't as good as a previous time—they have succeeded. Those who make the personal commitment to train five or six days a week are to be commended, no matter what their performances are. In addition, personal records (or PRs) are set each time an athlete beats his/her previous personal best result. These are the most important records of all.

How is a meet scored?

How individual athletes can score for the team can vary from meet to meet, but it is opposite of cross country, as the team with the highest score wins the meet in track and field.

Different meets will have different scoring schemes based upon the number of teams present. Deciding who is awarded which place is straightforward in track and field. The athlete who comes across the finish line first wins, and so on. In the field events, the winner is the athlete who threw or jumped the furthest.

Points are awarded based on the individual results of the races. The table below is a common point system where athletes who finish in the top 6 in their event score points for their team.

1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place	4 th Place	5 th Place	6 th Place
10 Points	8 Points	6 Points	4 Points	2 Points	1 Points

If Team A gets 65 points, Team B 59 points, and Team C 46 points, Team A wins the meet.

Communication

We try to keep our parents and runners up-to-date on information. We post information regularly on ParentSquare. We send home a *tentative* monthly schedule at the start of the month, but there are sometimes changes to that, so we also post the weekly schedule each Sunday evening on ParentSquare and social media. We send home a newsletter during the season that contains all the necessary upcoming meet information: the time the bus leaves, when the meets begin, the location of the meet, when we expect to return home, etc. We also post information regularly on our Facebook page (search Augusta Independent Cross Country and Track) and on our Twitter (AugustaXC_Track). If you visit www.augustaathletics.us you can visit the track and field page.

Nutrition

Eating takes on a whole new meaning when your child starts training. They need to refuel after practicing or racing. Some athletes like to eat right away, but others don't feel like eating for a while. Some can eat anything before or after running, but some are quite particular. All of these things are normal.

Ultimately, the best advice for athletes is just what you've been telling them since they were little—eat healthy foods, three well-balanced meals a day, and cut out the pop and junk food. Beyond these tried and true eating adages, here are a few tips for fueling peak performance:

Runners

Calories: Lots of the right kind. Naturally your child should eat three meals a day. Breakfast is very important and can be a whole- wheat cereal with fruit and low-fat milk. Orange juice is also a good idea. Dinner may often include pasta, runners really crave the carbs and their bodies need them for fuel. Don't forget the protein and vegetables. Milk and water are important hydrators. Snacks should be low fat and can have carbs. Fatty snacks like chips or doughnuts are going to make it hard to run the next day. A late night bowl of cereal is often a good choice.

Think about what is being served at school lunch on competition days. Some meals, like chili or taco in a cup, are not good for racing days.

Protein is important. Most runners don't get enough protein. Protein is needed to replace amino acids burned during exercise and to repair muscles. This means your runner should have some protein at every meal.

In summary, a low-carb diet is not recommended for a runner; a healthy, well-balanced diet featuring as few pre-made, processed foods as possible is optimum and an important part of training. It's best not to eat anything less than three hours before racing or practicing. Eating too close to running can lead to side stitches, a painful but not serious condition.

The following website links to an article from Runner's World that discusses nutrition for runners: <http://www.runnersworld.com/nutrition-runners/best-foods-runners>

Throwers

Because throwing involves high-intensity bursts, your body relies heavily on stored energy and structural repair.

- **Protein (The Building Block)**
 - Sources: Chicken, lean beef, eggs, Greek yogurt, and whey protein.
- **Carbohydrates (The Fuel)**
 - Sources: Oatmeal, sweet potatoes, rice, and fruit.
- **Fats (The Hormone Regulator)**
 - Sources: Avocado, nuts, olive oil, and fatty fish.

Hydration

Proper hydration for all athletes is as important as proper intake of solid food. Water is the medium through which the body carries oxygen and nutrients to the cells and waste products away. It also plays a central role in regulating body temperature. Athletes who replace lost fluids and carbohydrates within the first 30 to 60 minutes after exercising recover more quickly than those who wait.

Athletes should be sipping water continuously throughout the day to properly hydrate their bodies. Often athletes will drink only water in social situations where others may be drinking pop. It pays to have a lot of bottled water on hand! Athletes should divide their body weight by 2 and drink that many ounces of what per day.

What is the big deal with pop? It's the carbonation and sugars. There is a link between soft drinks (diet and regular) and poor bone health. Carbonated beverages also dehydrate you.

Track & Field Vocabulary

Clerk of Course: The person students check in to prior to their event.

2-Command start: Runners take your mark, followed by the gun. Used mostly in the distance events and in sprint races when no participant is using starting blocks.

3-Command start: Runners to your mark, set, followed by the gun. Used whenever any or all participants are using starting blocks.

Starting blocks: A device that consists of two metal blocks mounted on either side of an adjustable frame. Blocks are secured to the track and used to provide the runner with a rigid surface against which to brace the feet at the start of the race.

Lanes: A section of the track where an athlete starts or runs during the entire race. A typical outdoor track has eight lanes. The lanes are numbered from the inside out with lane 1 being the inside lane and lane 8 being the outside lane. In sprints, hurdles, and sprint relay events the athlete or team runs the entire race in the same lane. In distance and distance relay events the athlete or team can use any lane.

Staggered Start: A staggered start is used in running events where each participant or relay team must run the entire race in the same lane. Because the distance covered from start to finish in lanes 2 through 8 increases with the circumference of the turns, the participants in lanes 2 through 8 start the race ahead of the athlete in lane 1. The amount of the head start is determined by the lane and the number of turns in the race. Staggered starts are used in the 200M dash, 400M dash, 300M intermediate hurdles, 400M relay, 800M relay and 1600M relay. A staggered start is also used in the 800M run and 3200M relay. In these races the stagger is only for the first turn, after which the athlete can move to the inside lane.

Waterfall Start: A waterfall start is typically used for the 1600M and 3200M runs. The athletes in lanes 1 and 2 begin on the normal starting line. Those athletes in lanes 3 through 8 are afforded a 2 to 5 meter start advantage.

Relays: A single race where each of 4 team members runs an equal and specific distance.

Exchange zone: 25 meter length of the track in which team members in a relay race must pass the baton. The beginning and end of the exchange zone is painted on the track in each lane. The number and location of the exchange zone(s) depends on the event and the stagger.

Exchange zone judge: Person who watches the exchange of the baton by each team in a specific exchange zone. If all exchanges are legal a white flag is held up for the meet officials to see. If an illegal pass has taken place, a yellow flag is held up. A team will be disqualified if the baton is passed outside of the exchange zone.

Splits: A split is defined as the time one of the four relay team members takes to run their "leg" of the relay race. In non-relay events, a coach will take incremental times throughout the race to monitor an athlete's progress.

Seeds: As part of the registration process in large meets, coaches must submit times, distances and heights to the host school so that competitors can be grouped. With respect to running events, seed times represent either an athlete's best performance time to date or perhaps a specific running time that the coach believes the athlete is realistically capable of. For field events, seeds represent the athlete's best height or distance to date or that which the coach believes the athlete is realistically capable of.

Flights: Grouping of competing athletes in the same field event who have achieved similar heights (pole vault, high jump) or distances (long jump, triple jump, shot put, discus). Previous performance determines flight assignment.

Heats: A heat is a grouping of athletes with similar times competing in the same running event. In large meets not all of the athletes in a particular event can compete on the track at the same time. Each race is then broken down into heats. The number of heats is determined by the number of athletes in the event divided by the number that can compete simultaneously. Seed times determine how athletes are assigned to a heat. In sprint events, the fastest seeds are split up over the total number of heats so that the faster athletes do not compete against each other until the semi-finals or finals. For distance events, the slower seed times are generally in the first heats. The faster seed times in the last heat.