

# CYO Track and Field – Coaching Guide

## Advancing your Track & Field Program

### Coaching Objectives

The success of any particular program is more than the success of a team score or an athlete's achievements. The number of athletes attracted to your program, the athletes' enthusiasm for the sport and team, involvement from the parental/parish community, and the improvement of each athlete are equally important measures of success.

Just as you set goals for your athletes, set goals for your program. If attracting more athletes is a goal, spend time understanding how and why athletes choose your T&F program. Other goals can include building a staff, securing access to facilities, etc.

#### Preseason –

- Communicate your goals to all assistant coaches
- Assign coaching assignments and develop training plans

#### In season –

- Check in with assistant coaches to understand what is working and what is not working
- Be flexible and allow for training adjustments
- Convey a high level of expectation for individual efforts, attitudes and behaviors

#### Post season –

- Don't be afraid to seek feedback from the athletes and their parents
- Convey ways parents and other adults can get involved.
- Help individuals get certified ahead of the next season
- Document training plans and information for succession planning purposes

### Injury Prevention

Injury prevention should be an important part of your training plan, because it not only keeps your athlete healthy and safe, but it helps an athlete achieve his or her training goals.

Most injuries will be overuse injuries since T&F is a non-contact sport. Majority of injuries will be to the lower extremity, but this will depend on the events in which the athlete participates. Injury include: Quad or hamstring strains, knee pains, shin splits, stress fractures, Achilles tendon pulls, heel pain, wounds or sores, joint strains (elbow or shoulder) and lower back pains. ***Always follow the directions of the child's physician with regards to return to competition.***

Injuries are typically the result of inadequate flexibility, inadequate muscle strength, insufficient warm up or pre-workout stretching, poor form, return to sport before full recovery or basic accidents.

#### To prevent injuries:

- Time off (Do not allow the athlete to play through pain)
- Wear the correct gear (urge parents to have kids fitted with proper shoes)
- Strengthen key muscle groups
- Incorporate flexibility and agility training into your program
- Encourage proper running technique

Warmups should include dynamic stretching while cool downs can include static stretching.

Generally, do not increase weekly mileage by more than 10%.

### Training Plans & Skill Development

The focus for younger athletes should be on physical literacy and foundational athleticism. Your focus with the older athletes can be on the specific athletic skills needed for different types of T&F events.

The head coach should be reasonably proficient in each event. Use nationally recognized T&F sources to learn more about each event (i.e. NY Road Runners Youth program, Hershey USATF Run, Jump, Throw program).

All assistant coaches should know more than one event so coaches can rotate as needed. During practice, one coach can introduce basic skills while a more advanced coach can teach advanced skills to a different set of athletes. Have new coaches observe experienced coaches so they can visually learn how to execute the drills and training plans.

Allow the experienced coaches to develop their own training plans for specific events but be sure to cross-train others.

The actual instruction of the skill should include:

- A demonstration
- An explanation
- An attempt at the skill
- A critique of the attempt

*If a coach cannot demonstrate the skill, have an experienced athlete on the team demonstrate for his or her teammates.*

Explanations should be simple. Athletes should be given ample time to practice. Feedback should be positive, precise and in age-appropriate language. Attempt to teach skills by ability and not age.