

## INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

## HISTORY OF TRACK SPORTS

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



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

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

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

## HOW DIFFERENT TRACK EVENTS ARE DONE

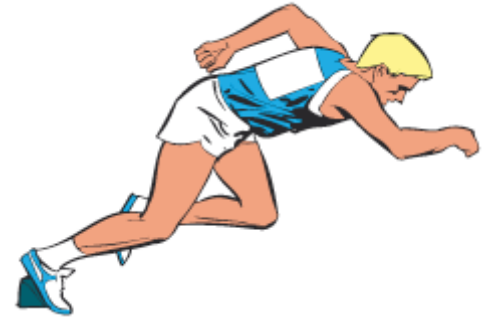
### *THE DASH*

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

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



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



## *THE HURDLE*

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

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



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



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

## *RELAY RACING*

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

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



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

### **The Visual Pass**

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

## **The Blind Pass**

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

## *LONG DISTANCE RUNNING*

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

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

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



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

## *STEEPLECHASE*

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

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

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

## EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

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



## TRACK EVENTS NOTES AND NEWS (Information taken from a variety of sources including ESPN, NCAA, Wikipedia and newspapers)

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



### *Men's Events*

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

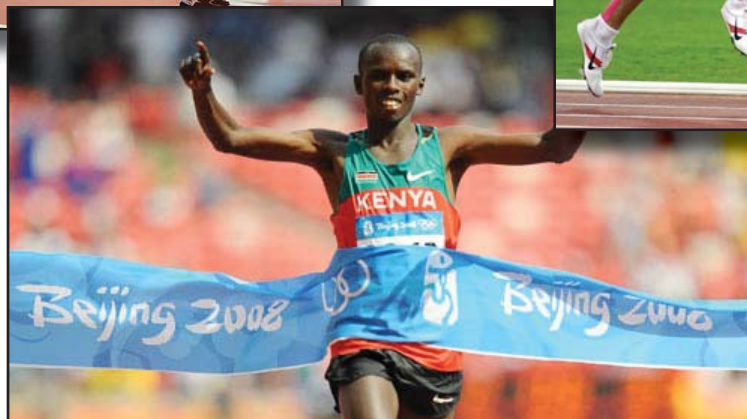
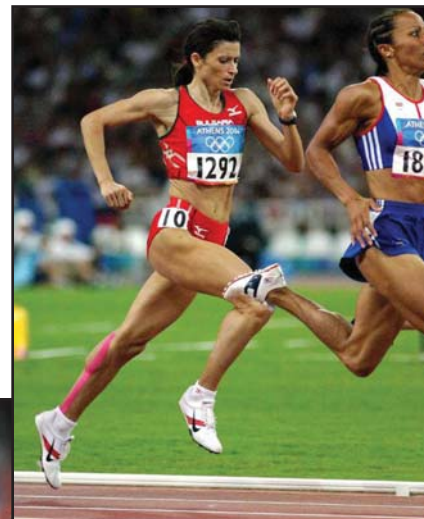
## Women's Events

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



For more information on the 2008 Olympics visit this website:

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



## *NCAA 2011 Men & Women's Track Championships*

Texas A&M swept the men's and women's titles at the NCAA outdoor championships, becoming the first school to post dual three-peat champions. The men needed to win the 1,600-meter relay for their consecutive straight crown, and anchor Tabarie Henry held off LSU's Riker Hylton to clinch the victory in 3:00.62. The Aggies finished with 55 points, one ahead of Florida State and two ahead of Florida.



The Texas A&M women clinched their third consecutive national team title by winning the 1,600-meter relay as well. Anchor Jessica Beard ran a meet-record split of 49:14 seconds to give the Aggies the crown over Oregon with 49 points. Oregon finished four points behind Texas A&M. LSU was third with 43.5. Though the Aggies ended up on top, things looked quite uncertain early.



Texas A&M's quest for a fifth consecutive title in the women's 400m relay ended when Dominique Duncan lost her balance passing the baton to anchor Ashley Collier. That gave the edge to LSU, and Kimberlyn Duncan's strong final 100 gave the Tigers the win in 42.64. The Aggies were second at 42.93, though they more than made up for that in the 1,600m relay.

LSU's Kimberlyn Duncan won the women's 200m in a world-leading 22.24 seconds, just ahead of Texas A&M's Jeneba Tarmoh (22.34). Florida State's Maurice Mitchell took the men's 200m in a wind-aided 19.99.

Villanova's Sheila Reid became the first woman to win the 1,500m and 5,000m at the same NCAA meet, using a late burst to take the 1,500m in 4:14.57.

In the men's 110 hurdles, LSU's Barrett Nugent won in 13.28, followed by Illinois'



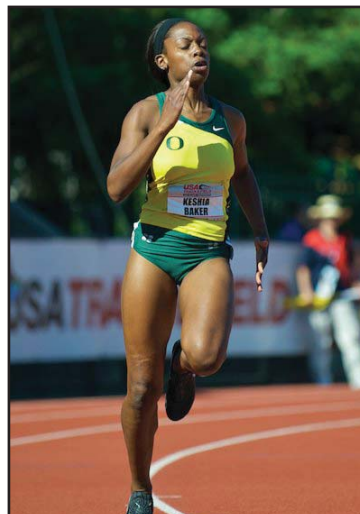
Andrew Riley in 13.33. Nugent was second a year ago in 13.49, behind Riley's 13.45. Riley was third in 2009.

Pat Henry, A&M's legendary college track coach, is the only coach to sweep the men's and women's titles in the same year and now he has done it five times (1989 and 1990 at LSU; 2009, 2010 and 2011 at Texas A&M).



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

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



# STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET

## TRACK EVENTS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

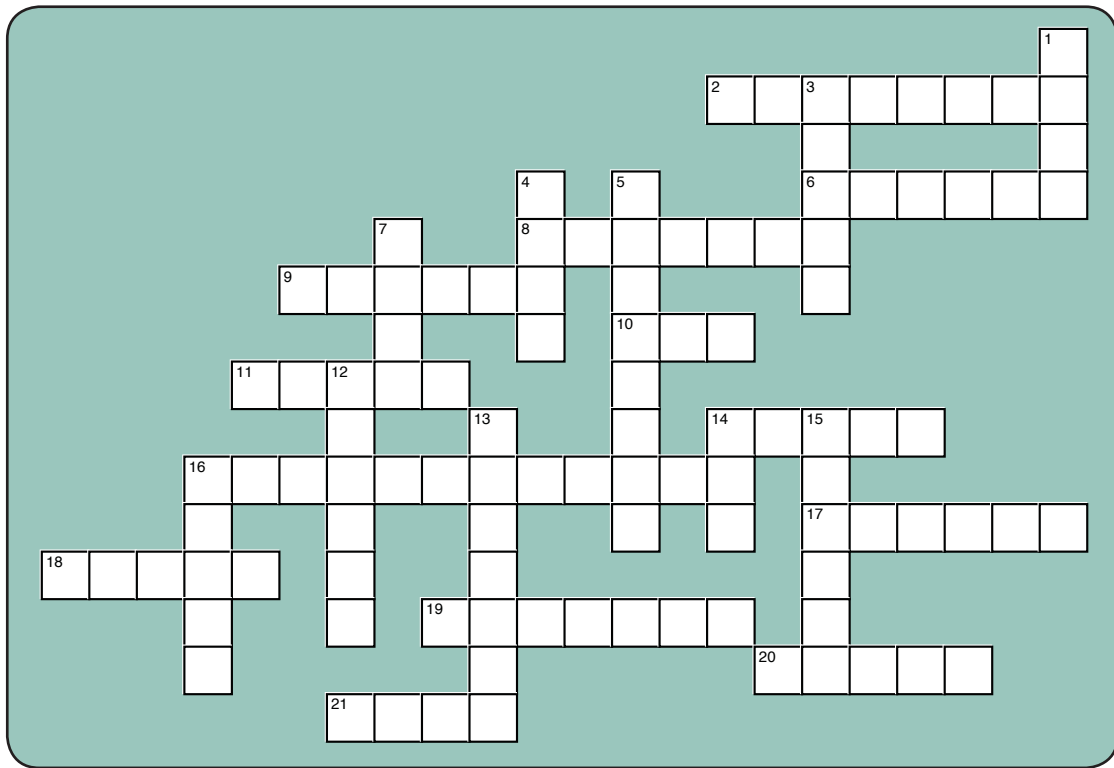
### WHAT TO DO

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

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



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



**Across:**

2. Height in inches of hurdles in 120 yard event
6. The last runner in a relay race
8. The soles of track shoes are this
9. One of the associations that control track events
10. Traditional number of hurdle types
11. Track clothing is usually this
14. Number of water jumps in a steeplechase
16. This race involves water jumps and hurdles
17. Another name for the dash
18. This is passed in a relay race
19. Direction of body weight after crossing hurdle
20. The sprinter puts his or her feet here at the start of the race
21. Federation that controls track all over the world

**Down:**

1. Number of sprinters on a team for a relay race
3. Position with hips slightly above shoulder level
4. An association of colleges that oversees track events
5. Direction of minimum movement in crossing hurdle
7. One of the five track events covered in this packet
12. Track events held here in 776 BC
13. Name of first sprinter in a relay race
14. Second command when starting the dash
15. Type of relay pass
16. These are an especially important part of the attire of track participants

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



Find these words in the above puzzle. Circle the words.

Track

Set

Dashes

ICAAAA

Hurdle

Relay

Bushes

Blind

Sprinters

IAAF

Pass

Baton

Sprints

Steeplechase

Runners

Mark

Shorts

Receiver

Shoes