

# SYSA TRACK & FIELD INFORMATION

## Starts/Finishes/During the race

### \* Commands:

- \* Sprints: "Runners, take your mark" or "On your mark"  
"Set"  
Whistle/gun/air horn/"Go!"

- \* Distance: "Runners, take your mark" or "On your mark"  
Whistle/gun/air horn/"Go!"

### \* Starts:

- \* Stay behind the start line until the "go" command. Nothing should be over or on the line.
- \* When coming to the start line, do not have the kids crouch down on the ground. This start is only used with blocks and will actually make kids slower. Encourage them to follow the commands as follows:
  - \* Standing a couple steps behind the line, wait until they hear "Runners, take your mark". They then step up to the start line, both feet together, heads bowed and eyes down.
  - \* "Set" will have them bring one foot (their preference) behind and knees bent slightly, arms at an angle, head still down.
  - \* Whistle...have them go.
- \* This YouTube video has a great demonstration of a standing start:  
[How to Start - Introduction. Standing, Crouch, 3-point and Blocks - all you need to know. - YouTube \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pefU7Gc9YQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pefU7Gc9YQ)
- \* Staggered starts vs Waterfall starts:
  - \* A staggered start is when the kids are assigned one per lane and will begin behind the designated line (100m—all runners are straight across)

- \* A waterfall start uses the curved line as the start line; runners will line up behind the line, along the curve.
- \* During their race:
  - \* Stay in their lane the entire time for the sprints (100m, 200m, 400m)
  - \* Stay in their lane until the cones for the 800m, then move toward the inside lane unless they are passing. (This is for a staggered start. If the start is a waterfall start, they can move to the inside lane as soon as safely possible.)
  - \* For the mile, it will be a waterfall start. They will take off in their "lane" and move toward the inside lane as soon as safely possible.
  - \* Run with "blinders" on—don't get distracted by other runners, parents, etc.
- \* Finishes:
  - \* Run through the line—take at least 3 steps after you cross the finish line; don't slow down or stop before the finish line
  - \* Slightly lean at the line—your chest is what will stop the time, not your head, arms, hands, feet, legs.
  - \* For sprints, stay in your lane after crossing. For distance, stay in your order.

## Miscellaneous

- \* Put kids in order of speed for all running events—fastest to slowest. There are usually multiple heats and we don't want kids to get blown out or not have competition in their heat. Your order of fastest-slowest kids could change, depending on what event is being competed.
- \* Know the hand-off zones for the relays. 4x100m is not the same as the 4x200m or the 4x400m.
- \* Relays will go first at every meet but the All City meet. Please have your relays in their correct order and groups, and have them at the start line ready to go.

## Long Jump

- \* Use this website: [How to Teach Young Athletes to Long Jump | Coaching Young Athletes](https://coachingyoungathletes.com/2016/07/24/how-to-teach-young-athletes-to-long-jump/)  
(<https://coachingyoungathletes.com/2016/07/24/how-to-teach-young-athletes-to-long-jump/>)
- \* When measuring for long jump, we measure from the concrete or the end up of the pit. We don't use the marked take off lines because some kids might not be able to make the sand.
- \* A scratch is when an athlete crosses the take off line (the end of the pit/concrete). We don't count jumps that are scratches; please teach your athletes that so they aren't surprised at the meets.
- \* Athletes need to know that the mark closest to the take off line is where they will be marked. It is NOT where they land farthest from the take off. This means if their hand lands behind them, that is where it will be marked. If they land on their booty, that is where it will be marked.
- \* Shorter runway runs are better for younger athletes than long run-ups. Older athletes (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>) could use a longer run up to take off.

## Softball Throw

- \* Throw a softball as far as you can, making sure you don't cross the line during your throw.

## Softball Shot Put/Shot Put

- \* Use this website: [How to Teach Shot Put to Young Athletes | Coaching Young Athletes](https://coachingyoungathletes.com/2017/05/29/how-to-teach-shot-put-to-young-athletes/)  
(<https://coachingyoungathletes.com/2017/05/29/how-to-teach-shot-put-to-young-athletes/>)
- \* And this one: [10 Quick And Easy Teaching Tips For Shot Put | Coaching Young Athletes](#)

(<https://coachingyoungathletes.com/2021/08/31/10-quick-and-easy-teaching-tips-for-shot-put/>)

- \* Softball shot put should be taught the same as the regular shot put.
- \* Very important that they are NOT throwing the shot put; it is a pushing motion.
- \* Easy way to teach 5/6 graders first is with the softballs, then graduate to the real shots. Also, because there is fewer shots, you can use the softballs in your practice throwing so more kids are engaged at the same time and there is less standing around.
- \* When measuring the shot put--put one end of the tape measure at the front where the pit and the sand meet, then measure to the point where the shot first lands. It needs to stay within the chalk markings or it is a scratch. If the athlete steps over or on the pit, it is a scratch.

## Javelin

- \* Here's a website for how to hold the javelin and standing throw:

[Turbojav Throwing - Turbojav Hellas \(https://turbojavhellas.com/throwing/\)](https://turbojavhellas.com/throwing/)

- \* Here's a YouTube video: [Track and Field- Introduction to Javelin- using a Turbo Javelin - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5OVNxxjvQ)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5OVNxxjvQ>)

- \* Same as with shot put, they should throw on command together and retrieve on command together. Though it wouldn't hurt too badly to get hit by a turbojav, get them in the habit because the real javelins can cause injury.
- \* Make sure they are not throwing in a side arm motion; this will lead to shoulder injuries and is an impossible motion with the real javelins.
- \* When measuring the javelin throw, it is where it hits first. Turbojavs have a tendency to bounce so make sure you have the first touch, not where it lands or ends up. If it lands flat, you will measure from the throw line to the back of the javelin (the spot closest to the throw line). If an athlete crosses the line, it is a scratch and there will be no measure.

## Relays

- \* For the K/1/2 group, we call it a success if the baton gets passed off with all 4 kids without being dropped. Usually they will do an open hand-off (like the 4x400) where they can see the runner coming in. They need to be aware of the hand-off zones. For placement, putting the athletes in the middle of the exchange zone is best.
- \* For the 3/4 group, it is good to introduce the blind hand-off for the 4x100, 4x200, and medley relays, though most won't be able to successfully do it. For placement, have the athletes count off 4-5 big steps from the back of the exchange zone forward.
- \* For the 5/6 group, they should be working toward the goal of doing blind hand-offs for all relays but the 4x400. For placement, have the athletes take 5-7 big steps from the back of the exchange zone forward. This might have to be adjusted based on the speed of the incoming/outgoing runners.
- \* 4x400 relay:
  - \* This website has some great information about the 4x400 relay (ignore a lot of it since we are working with youth runners) and at the bottom of the article is pictures showing the hand-off sequence.  
[Track and Field Coaching Education \(seanbernstein.com\)](https://seanbernstein.com/4x400/)  
(<https://seanbernstein.com/4x400/>)
- \* 4x100 relay / 4x200 relay:
  - \* This YouTube video has a great explanation:  
[John Smith explains relay exchange - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bc7UFj_RrU)  
([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bc7UFj\\_RrU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bc7UFj_RrU))
- \* Medley relay:
  - \* The medley relay consists of a 100m, 100m, 200m, and 400m—totals an 800m. The goal is for blind hand-offs until the last exchange.