



## **ATHLETICS- ATTIRE AND FOOTWEAR**

All competitors must wear suitable clothing and footwear for Athletics. You should talk with your athletes about what clothing is acceptable. Remember that this may be different for training and for competition.

Talk with your athletes about why the correct clothing and footwear is important. Explain that the correct attire can help them to perform at their best.

Clothing should be suitable for the activity the athlete will do. This means:

- Comfortable clothing that does not restrict movement
- Suitable material (i.e. breathable, not denim)
- Well-fitted athletic shoes (Trainers, Spikes)\*
- Suitable for the conditions (i.e. weather, temperature, indoor/outdoor)

**Note: Barefoot running is permitted under the rules.**

### **SHIRTS**

Shirts should be:

- Comfortable
- Clean and Neat
- Allow freedom of movement. (A sleeveless shirt/vest gives a lot of freedom of movement. Athletes can wear a t-shirt underneath if desired.)
- Light fabric (T-shirts made of moisture wicking fabrics are preferred to cotton t-shirts. They allow the body and skin to stay cool and dry.)
- Suitable Length. (Shirts should be long enough to cover the torso but not to impede movement. Long shirts should be tucked into the waist band of shorts/pants)

### **SHORTS**

Shorts or tracksuit pants should be well fitting. They should not be too loose or baggy. They should be comfortable and allow freedom of movement. Some athletes may find running tights more comfortable.

### **SOCKS**

Athletics socks should be worn with any footwear. Well-fitting socks made of a breathable material will reduce moisture and may help prevent blisters and odor. They also support good foot hygiene and if cared for will last at least an entire season. They will also increase the life of the sports shoes.

### **SHOES**

A well-fitting running shoe is the most important item of clothing for any athletics athlete. Different sports require different shoes which are designed for both the movement of the athlete and the surface they will train upon. A good running shoe should have:

- A thick padded heel cushion. This may reduce incidence of shin splints, calluses and other lower limb injuries by absorbing impact.
- Thick durable rubber sole.
- A firm heel counter. This adds more stability and keeps the heel straight in the shoe. Good flexibility.
- Most importantly - a good fit!



Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Fit Feet Program provides great advice for proper foot care and footwear. Athletes should consider participating in Fit Feet screening when it is available. Ask your local Program for more information or visit our Healthy Athletes resource page [http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Health/Catalog\\_of\\_Fit\\_Feet\\_Resources.aspx](http://resources.specialolympics.org/Taxonomy/Health/Catalog_of_Fit_Feet_Resources.aspx)

### **WARM-UP CLOTHING**

Some athletes choose to wear track suits warming up prior to their training session or competition. They may also be used to help athletes to stay warm after a practice or competition.

- Track suits/warm-up clothing should be:
- Light to medium weight
- Cotton sweatshirt or moisture wicking material Easily removed and put on
- Labelled with athlete's name (it is easy to loose kit when many people train together!)

Consider the weather and location of training/competition. Warm-up clothing may be heavier in cold weather. In wet weather you may need to consider waterproof or water resistant material. Nylon windbreakers are also a good choice for retaining warmth and keeping the athlete dry wet, windy weather.

### **TOP TIPS - CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR**

- Show your athletes examples of the correct attire (Photos, Videos)
- Bring them to another team practices to see the athletes in action.
- Agree with your athletes what action you will take if they attend training without the correct attire.
- Lead by example. Always wear suitable attire to training and competition.