



ATHLETICS EQUIPMENT

Track and Field Athletics has many events. Each event needs specific equipment. It is important that athletes train with the correct equipment for their event. Athletes should be able to recognize and select the correct equipment for their event. Practice identifying and naming each piece of equipment with your athletes during training. Encourage them to select the equipment they need at training. Remember that your athletes will need to be able to select their equipment independently at competitions.

TIMING DEVICES

When timing your athletes in training or competition, accuracy is important.

- You can do this manually, using an electric or digital stopwatch. Manual times are recorded in one tenth (1/10) of a second. This is the case even if the stopwatch displays one-hundredth (1/100) of a second.
- A fully automatic timing (FAT) system may be used at some competitions. When FAT is used, times are recorded in one one-hundredth (1/100) of a second.
- As coach, it is your duty to regularly record accurate times for all of your athletes.

STARTING PISTOL



A starting pistol is used in most Athletics competition. It should also be used during training sessions. This helps to familiarize athletes with the gun before in a competitive event. A good start is important in any race and it takes practice to improve. In some situations a replacement may be permissible. Suitable replacements for the gun are a bell (mandatory in an indoor track), whistle or verbal start. You must discuss this with competition management before any event. A coach may use other replacements in practices only and not during competition.

STARTING BLOCKS

The use of starting blocks is optional. The starting blocks must be anchored behind the start line. When in the start position, the athlete's hands are set just behind the start line. The blocks must be adjustable to allow the athlete to find the best starting position.



HURDLES

Use hurdles that suit the ability of your athletes. Use practice hurdles when you introduce the basic technique of hurdling. Practice hurdles are collapsible or designed to fall over easily. If you cannot access specifically designed beginner or practice hurdles, you can improvise. A light stick balanced on cones of the correct height is a great alternative. Competition hurdles should only be used when athletes can hurdle with good, basic technique.



RELAY BATON

Each relay team needs one relay baton. Competition batons should be 10cm in circumference. They may be made of anodized aluminum, or lightweight, unbreakable plastic. For practice, you can improvise. The following materials cut into 30cm lengths, with smooth edges could be used: dowels, old broom handles, or PVC pipe.



LONG JUMP PIT

You must ensure the running long jump pit is safe for all of your athletes. Here are some important tips.

Ensure there is sufficient sand in the pit for a safe landing. It should have a depth of at least 30 cm of sand.

You must ensure the depth of sand is maintained during training and competition. Remember, each time an athlete jumps into the pit will displace some sand. Regular brushing and raking of the sand is important.

The landing pit must be long and wide enough to ensure a safe landing for all athletes.

A standard takeoff board is often more than 2m from the edge of the pit. In this case, you may need to put a temporary takeoff board/chalk line in the runway 1m from the front edge of the pit.

The long jump pit should meet IAAF requirements.

HIGH JUMP PIT

The high jump pit consists of:

- Landing mats (should cover a minimum area and depth of 500 x 250 x 50cm). Only approved and certified high jump mats may be used; pits made of other materials (such as gym mats) are not acceptable.
- 1 pair of adjustable standards
- A crossbar (the ideal practice crossbar is a fiber glass crossbar)

SHOTS

Special Olympics Athletics rules permit outdoor shots (iron) or indoor shots (covered with hard plastic) for use in competitions. However, the minimum weight requirements will be applied as listed below:



Category	Males:	Females
12+	4.0 kg	3.0 kg
8-11	3.0 kg	2.0 kg
Wheelchair	2.0 kg	2.0 kg

SOFTBALLS

The official size for softballs is 30 cm and weight (blue dot, traditional flight). Tennis balls may be used by athletes



SOFTBALLS

The official size for softballs is 30 cm and weight (blue dot, traditional flight). Tennis balls may be used by athletes for whom the softball is still too challenging. These events are developmental throwing events

Some competitions will have a maximum distance in place for these events.



MINI-JAVELINS

Mini-javelins are made of rigid, plastic material. It has a shaft, a grip, and fins (see image). The tip is made of softer rubber with a blunt, rounded end. The mini-javelin is a safer alternative to an outdoor javelin. The following minimum weight requirements apply:

Category	Males:	Females
16+	400g	300g
8-15	300g	300g
Pentathlon Event	300g	300g

