

(ALMOST) EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COMING OUT FOR TRACK AND FIELD

At this point, the coaching staff has well over 100 combined seasons of track and field under their collective belt, which means that sometimes we can forget what track looks like to someone unfamiliar with the sport. Here's our attempt at preemptively answering those questions. If you have questions that are not answered here, please do not hesitate to contact Eric Klein (eklein@schs.k12.mn.us) or Sammi Storsveen (sstorsveen@gmail.com).

1. **Running Shoes**—the most common question we get each spring is about shoes. This is also THE most common cause of injury among track athletes. The general rule of thumb regarding track shoes: students need a pair of running shoes that are and have been used *only* for running. Sometimes we have athletes who will come to practice in the same tennis shoes they wear to school every day, or perhaps a pair of old basketball sneakers. The problem with this is that your shoes get worn in different places when you walk than when you run, which means the support and structure of the shoes breaks down differently. Training in non-running shoes can lead to a range of injury issues from nagging shin splints to stress fracture problems. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that all athletes have proper footwear.

My recommendation would be to visit either TerraLoco or The Running Room in Rochester. Both offer 20% off if you mention you are competing for St. Charles, and they have a very knowledgeable staff who can help find the shoe that works best for you. They're pricier, but you get quality for your price (whereas "running" shoe purchased at, say, Wal-Mart or ShopKo, are cheaper but very, very poor quality). A pair of shoes purchased at TerraLoco or The Running Room will last (if used for just running) 400-500 miles of running.

2. **Spikes and Event-Specific Footwear**—in track, athletes compete in spikes, and each event has their own specific type of spikes that provide a definite advantage over an athlete not in spikes (throwers are the only exception to this; they don't wear spikes, but specific throwing shoes instead). Spikes not only have better traction but also are significantly lighter (studies show that removing 1 oz. of weight from footwear decreased time by 1 second per mile, not including time dropped by increased traction efficiency). The point is this: there is NO reason from a competition standpoint to *not* wear spikes. The only exception here would be middle school athletes. A good pair of spikes can last an entire career, but not if the athlete grows out of them. If a student wants to buy a pair of spikes to compete in in middle school, that's fine. However, if they wish to wait until they reach 9th grade when there's more certainty in their foot size, that's fine too. Once they reach high school, however, or if they are a junior high athlete with aspirations of making varsity, spikes are *essential* for competition.

Spikes are typically a lot cheaper than training shoes, and can be found at the same running locations in Rochester or online. Make sure you consult your events coach or a running store employee before purchasing spikes or throwing shoes to make sure you're getting an appropriate pair. You would not want to wear, for example, a pair of sprinter spikes to run the 3200m, or distance spikes to do pole vault. Please note, too, that every track requires a different length of specific metal spikes inserts. 3/16 is accepted at nearly all facilities. Do not buy ¼ or longer.

3. Practice Procedure and Expectations

- a. Athletes need to be at practice, and any absence **MUST** be cleared by the head coach ahead of time.
- b. That being said, academics and family **ALWAYS** take precedence over track. If such issues are preventing you from practicing effectively, make sure you communicate those issues to the head coach.
- c. We have fun and work hard at practice. Athletes should be prepared to do both.
- d. **Practice Schedule**—Track practice has a certain degree of inconsistency in terms of "time frame" simply because each athlete is doing different events which require different workouts on different days. Every day will end at a different time. As a general prediction, however: early in the season, practices typically finish up between 5:30-6. Later in the season, it moves more to 5:00-5:30 as the kids get more efficient in their work. If there is a day that is expected to go significantly longer or shorter, we will convey that to parents ahead of time.
- e. **Attire**—all athletes need to be prepared to compete outside *regardless* of weather. We are not afraid of rain or snow. If it is a dangerous situation outside (ex. lightning, fire raining from the sky) we would practice inside. However, every athlete should be prepared every day for any weather. This means **EVERY DAY** they should have

warm weather attire (shorts, t-shirt) as well as cold weather attire (running pants, sweatshirts, hats, gloves) and rainy weather attire (rain jacket) in their locker just in case.

4. Meet Procedure and Expectations

- a. **Meet Procedures**—A track meet follows the same order of events every time (with occasional exceptions). Field events will kick off simultaneously at the beginning of the meet, with girls and boys alternative, while track events proceed as follows: 4x800, 110/100HH, 100m, 4x200, 1600, 4x100, 400m, 300IH, 800m, 200m, 3200m, 4x400. Meets typically start at 4:30, and (depending on how many teams are competing) go until around 9:00. Athletes are expected to be involved in ALL events, either by directly competing or by cheering for their teammates. Because of this, it is never acceptable for an athlete to leave the meet after they've finished with their events for the day, including home meets. A basketball player wouldn't go home after being taken out of the game in the 3rd quarter...nor should a track athlete leave after finishing their events.
- b. **Bus Expectations for Away Meets**—All athletes must ride to the bus to meets *and* ride them back with their team. The coaching staff recognizes that sometimes it may be more convenient for the parents to take their kid after the meet; however, we also believe that this convenience is almost always at the expense of the student, and an expense a parent sometimes doesn't recognize. We firmly believe that the moments that stick with a kid for years after they've graduated are not always the times they had in competition, but rather the good times they had on bus rides back from those competitions. Furthermore, it's important for the team to have that time to process the meet's successes and failures together. Therefore, athletes are not allowed to ride home from competitions with parents, and must ride the bus home from every competition.
- c. **Home Meet Expectations**—Athletes are, of course, expected to stay and support their teammates until the conclusion of the meet. They should also stick around afterward to help with any cleanup that may need doing and should not leave the stadium until they've gotten the OK to depart from a coach.
- d. **Team Camp**—our team camp serves a very, very specific purpose. It IS a place where athletes can go to mentally and emotionally prepare for their impending competition. It IS a place where athletes can go to peacefully process an event they just completed. It is NOT a hang-out spot for athletes who have finished competing for the day, it is NOT a place for an athlete to eat their supper (remember, there are runners around you who *can't* eat because they've got a race coming up), it is NOT a place for parents to meet with their kids, and it is absolutely not a place for other schools' athletes. It's the equivalent of the bench in basketball: you may not be in the game, but that doesn't mean your grandmother can join you there. Please do your part in making sure camp remains what it needs to be for our athletes to be successful.
- e. **Meet Info**—All meet information (starting times, competition, lineups, etc.) is posted for athletes at least two days before the meet. We will also email out all meet information to parents as well.

5. Nutrition—Another common question is regarding nutrition. Recognizing that a high schooler will eat as a high schooler will eat, I offer two recommendations:

- a. **Premeet**—for supper the night before a meet and for lunch the day of, eat something that you can digest easily (pastas, salads, PB&J sandwiches). Please, for your sake and ours, don't eat Taco Bell.
- b. **Meet**—you should certainly pack food for a meet, but pack wisely. After you've eaten lunch, I strongly recommend eating sparingly until you are finished with all your competitive events that night. Sometimes athletes, looking for "energy," will have a Subway sandwich with chips and a pop 45 minutes before their race. They're only slowing themselves down trying to do something a granola bar could have done. Recommended foods to pack for a meet: PBJ sandwich, granola bars, nuts, yogurt, crackers. Once you're done with your events for the day, you can go to town on whatever deliciously greasy fare the local concession stand is serving that night.
- c. **Sleep**—odds are, you need more of it. Go get it!
- d. **Water**—again, odds are, you're not drinking enough of it. Fix that! Have a water bottle in school with you and guzzle it every day—even if it isn't hot out. You'll need to be hydrated for practice regardless.

If there are questions that aren't answered here, please don't hesitate to contact Coach Klein at eklein@schs.k12.mn.us or Coach Storsveen at sstorsveen@gmail.com. More information about the St. Charles Track and Field Program can be found at our webpage, www.scsaintstrack.com. Team updates can be followed via Twitter @SCSaintsTrack.