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Let us learn about the start in running

Running events that come under athletics are classified into three groups based on the distance, namely short distance, middle distance and long distance running. Taking a good start in running is crucial for winning an event. A late start is most often the major cause for losing the event, particularly in sprints. The type of start that should be taken also changes according to the running distance. The crouched start is used for sprints while the standing start is used in medium-distance and long-distance races.

Recall what you learnt when you were in Grade 7 about how the hands and legs function while running correctly and also recall the exercises you did in order to practice running.

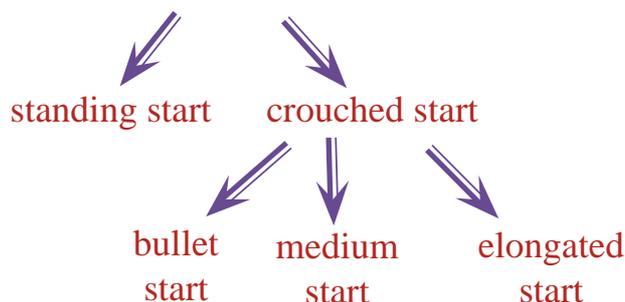
In this lesson we will learn the different methods of start taken in running and out of those methods, we will demonstrate correctly and practically the medium start of the crouched start.

Methods of start in running events

The start in running events can be classified into different methods as follows:

Diagramme 5.1

The start in running events



Standing start

Standing start is called so because this start is taken being in a standing position. The standing start is used for medium-distance and long-distance races. Accordingly, the standing start should be used for all the races above 400 metres.

eg:

- 800 metres
- 1,500 metres
- 5,000 metres
- 10,000 metres

Two commands are given for the standing start.

1. on your marks
2. go (a signal or the sound of starting gun)

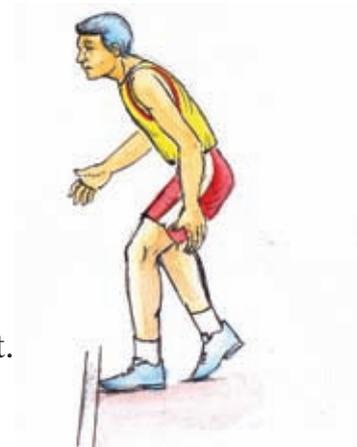


Figure 5.1 – The standing start

When taking the standing start, you should get ready as shown in the figure.

At ‘on your marks’ command

- The front foot is placed close to the starting line.
- The back foot is about shoulder width apart from the front foot.
- The weight of the body is on the front foot.
- The arm of the opposite side of the front leg should be kept in the front and the other arm should be kept at the back.

At the ‘go’ command

- The leg at the back is brought forward and running is started.
- The body that is bent forward is now raised.

Crouched start

Crouched start is used for sprints.

It is compulsory that the crouched start is used for upto 400-metres races

eg:

- 100 m
- 200 m
- 100 m X 4 relay race
- 400 m X 4 relay race
- 100 m hurdles
- 110 m hurdles
- 400 m hurdles.

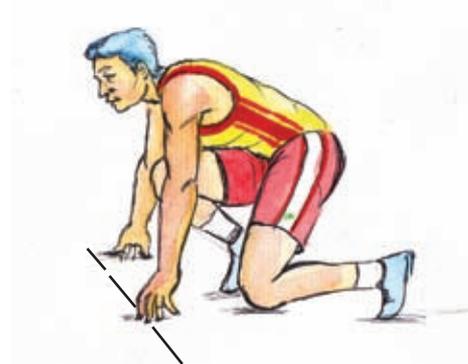


Figure 5.2– The crouched start

Three commands are given for the crouched start:

1. on your marks
2. get set
3. go (a signal or sound of starting gun)

In the crouched start, the way the legs are placed changes according to the height of the runner. Accordingly the crouched start is divided into three categories, namely the bullet start, medium start and the elongated start. Shown below is how the legs are placed in the medium start.

Medium start is taken being in a kneeling position.

The three phases in the medium start should be performed as follows:

At ‘on your marks’ command

- Strong leg should be kept as the front foot.
- The knee of the back leg should be placed about 3-4 inches away from the arch of the front foot.

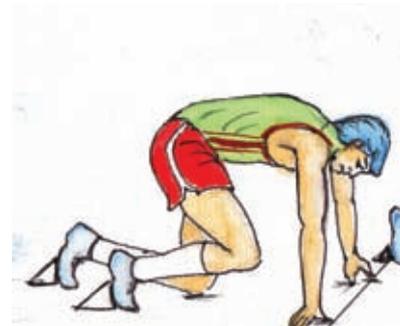


Figure 5.3

- The two hands should be placed on the ground closer to the starting line with the gap between two hands roughly equal to the shoulder width.
- The fingers should form an arch with the thumbs.

At the ‘get set’ command

- Both knees are raised.
- Hip should be raised to a position slightly above the level of the shoulders.
- Shoulders are brought slightly past the starting line.
- The weight of the body is on the two hands.



Figure 5.4

At the ‘go’ command

- As the sound of the starting gun (go command) is received, the body is pushed forward by pressing against the ground with the two feet.
- The two hands which were in contact with the ground are taken off and a short step is taken forward.
- The hand in the opposite side is brought forward.
- As the body is pushed forward, the hip and the legs are straightened.



Figure 5.5

In the medium start, the runner should immediately stand up at the signal given at the ‘go’ phase and running should be started.

Sprinters should practice how to perform this quickly.

Activities that can be performed in order to practice move forward quickly at the 'go' command and increasing the running speed

1. Sit on the ground so that the two legs are stretched forward.

With the 'go' command" stand up quickly and run a distance of about 10 meters.

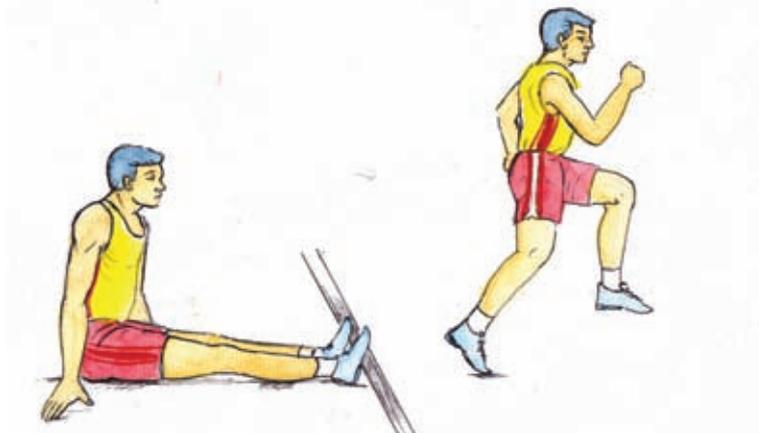


Figure 5.6

2. Lie on the ground facing upward.

As the command is received, stand up quickly and run about 10 metres.

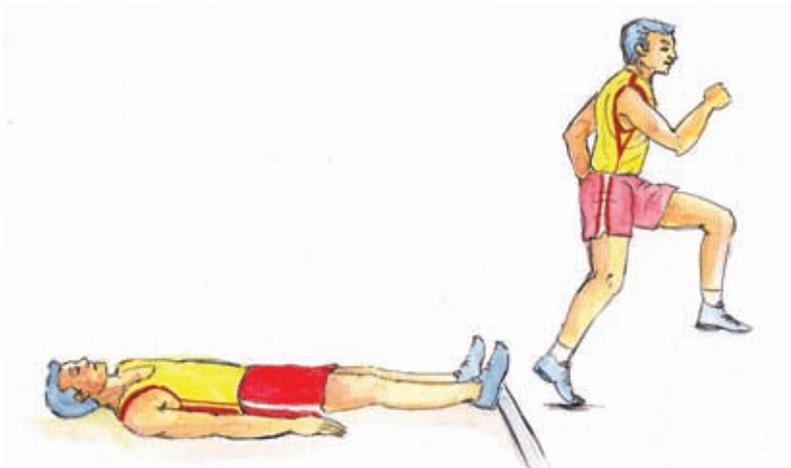


Figure 5.7

3. Be on the ground in a kneeling position so that the toes, the knees and the palms of the two hands are completely touching the ground.

As the command is received, stand up quickly and run about 10 metres.



Figure 5.8



Activity

according to the command demonstrate standing start and medium start.

Summary

The start is a very important phase of running events. It is done according to two key methods, namely standing start and the crouch start.

Two commands are given for the standing start which is used only in races above 400 meters.

Three commands are given for the crouched start which is used only in races up to 400 meters.

Crouch start is divided into three different forms, namely bullet start, medium start and elongated start. Out of these three methods, the medium start is the mostly used by many.

Exercise

1. Select the correct word from within brackets and fill in the blanks.
(standing start / 1500m / get set / two / three)
 - i. is used for medium-distance and long-distance races.
 - ii. command is not given in the standing start.
 - iii. The standing start is used in races.
 - iv. There are commands for the standing start.
 - v. There are ways of taking the crouch start.
2. Perform the way the medium start of the crouch start is taken.
3. Perform an activity that can be used to increase the reaction speed of the crouch start.