

## Let us learn about running events in athletics

Activities related to athletics can also be seen in the everyday life of people, in outdoor and in certain indoor sports activities. In athletics there are rules and regulations specific to certain sports events. There are also general rules and regulations relevant to all the events. The knowledge and the practical skills you develop by engaging in athletics will pave the way for you to live a successful and healthy life.

Recollect the classification of athletics events, the techniques and rules and regulations of race walking and running that you learnt in Grade 10.

In this lesson we will learn the general rules and regulations of athletics events and about sprinting, long distance running and hurdles. We will also engage in practical activities related to them.

### General rules and regulations of athletics

There is a set of general rules and regulations common to all athletics events. There are also specific rules and regulations relevant to running, jumping and throwing events according to the classification of athletics events.

#### Clothing

Clothing of the participants of athletics events should fulfill the following criteria:

1. Athletes must wear clean clothing.
2. Clothing should be appropriate for the event and made of a non-transparent material.
3. Athletes must not wear clothing that could impede the view of the judges
4. Athletes' vests should have the identical colour on the front and back

## Shoes

When athletes participate in athletics events, rules and regulations related to wearing of shoes are as follows:

1. Athletes may compete barefoot.
2. Athletes may wear footwear on one foot only.
3. Athletes may wear footwear on both feet.
4. The purpose of wearing shoes for competitions is to give protection and stability to the feet and get a firm grip on the ground.
5. Other than for the above, shoes must not be worn to get unfair, additional assistance (eg: shoes that have been made with springs or similar parts fixed inside should not be worn).
6. A maximum of 11 spikes could have been fixed to the shoe.

## Athlete bibs

1. An athlete should wear two bibs containing the athlete's number visible on the breast and back.
2. In high jump and pole vault events, only one bib may be worn either on the breast or at the back.
3. The maximum length and width of a bib should be 24 cm and 20 cm respectively.

## General rules and regulations related to the running track

1. The length of a standard running track should be 400m.
2. The running track should consist of two parallel straights which are connected with two semi-circles of which the radii are equal.
3. The width of a running lane should be 1.22 m.
4. A running track should consist of a minimum of 8 lanes.
5. In all the races up to and including 400 m, each runner should use a starting block.
6. In mixed relay events of 4 x 100 m, 4 x 200 m and 4 x 400 m, the first runner should use a starting block.
7. In running events of 800m and above that, it is compulsory to take the standing start.
8. The direction of running or walking on the track should be anticlockwise.
9. If there are many participants, preliminary rounds of the competition should be held.

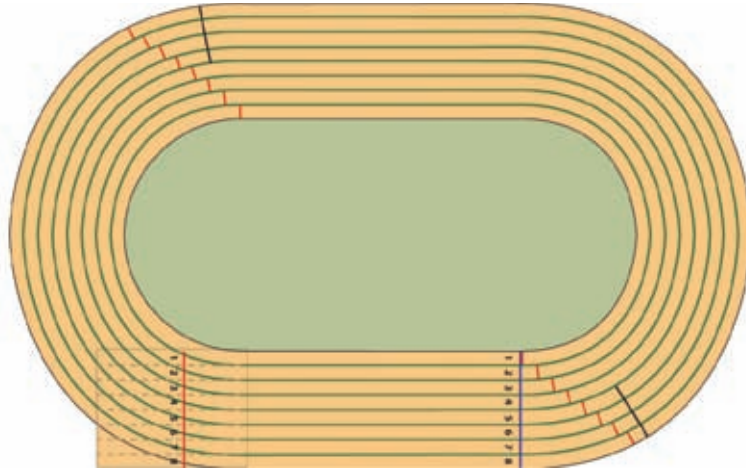


Figure 9.1 - Running track

General rules and regulations for field events (jumping / throwing events)

1. Before the beginning of the event, each athlete may have practice trials at the competition area.
2. Once a competition has begun, athletes are not permitted to use the playground or the landing area for practice purposes.
3. In all field events, except the high jump and the pole vault, where there are more than eight athletes, each athlete shall be allowed three trials and the eight athletes with the best valid performances shall be allowed three additional trials (Except for internationally recognized competitions, the number of trials for the competition may be decided at the discretion of the organizers).
4. In high jump and the pole vault three trials are given to make a particular height.

## Running

Running events are classified based on the running distance. In different races, runners run at different speeds. There are accepted rules and regulations, and techniques for each race. The aim of a participant in a running race is to finish some specific distance within a minimum time period. Running speed is very important for this. There are two key factors that determine the running speed.

1. the stride length of the runner
2. the stride frequency (the number of steps made within one second)

Running speed can be increased either by increasing the stride length or by increasing the stride frequency or by increasing both those factors. However, it is important that those two factors are maintained at a moderate level.

There are two main techniques for starting the run in a running event:

1. Standing start – for running events of over 400 m.
2. Crouch start – for running events of 400 m and below 400 m  
eg : 100 m, 200 m, 400m  
4 x 100 m, 4 x 200 m, 4 x 400 m relay races  
100 m, 110 m, 400 m hurdles

According to the classification of athletics events, running events are divided into three types namely, short distance running, middle distance running and long distance running. In middle-distance running events, running takes place at a moderate speed. Unlike in sprinting, the starting speed is comparatively lower in long distance running.

A running stride consists of three phases:

1. take-off
2. flight
3. landing



Figure 9.2

## Short distance running (Sprints)

In sprint techniques, the functioning of legs, movement of hands and the position of the head and the torso are very important. As the race ends in a very short period such parts of the body function at their maximum capacity.

You have already learnt that the crouch start is used for sprints. For the crouch start there are three commands namely, “on your marks”, “get set” and “go”.

## Sprinting technique

- In sprinting the start is very fast. Initially the body is leaned forwards and it then gradually becomes upright.
- When finishing the race the speed is slightly reduced and the body is leaned forwards.
- The hands are rotated by about  $90^{\circ}$  forwards and backwards around the shoulder.
- The legs rotate around the axis of the hip.
- The knees are raised higher.
- Running strides are long.



### Activity

In order to practise the sprint start, come to the running posture following a signal after beginning with various postures and run forwards very fast.

## Long distance running

- A standing start should be taken for running events above 400 m and above that. In the standing start only the “on you mark” and “go” (gun shot) commands are given.



Figure 9.3 - Start of long distance running





## Running technique in middle-distance and long distance running

- In long distance running, the upper part of the body is kept upright while running.
- As the running speed is increased towards the end of the race, the body is leaned forwards.
- In long distance running, the running strides are short, and the knee is raised to a moderate level.
- Hand movement in long distance running is not as fast as in short distance running.
- The body functions in a relax manner rhythmically.

## Running exercises

In previous lessons you have learnt about running exercises and about the benefits gained by engaging in running exercises. Let us study some more exercises that can be used to practise the running technique as well as to increase the running speed.

Table 9.1

<p><b>Ankling</b> Walking fast with very short strides so that the balls of the feet touch the ground.</p> 	<p><b>Skipping A</b> Moving forwards fast so that each foot strikes the ground alternatively during skipping stride</p> 
<p><b>Skipping B</b> Moving forwards skipping with one foot while the other foot is swung forward alternately.</p> 	<p><b>Bounding</b> Exerting pressure on the ground with the supporting foot and bending the knee and walking with leaping strides.</p> 

## Hurdling

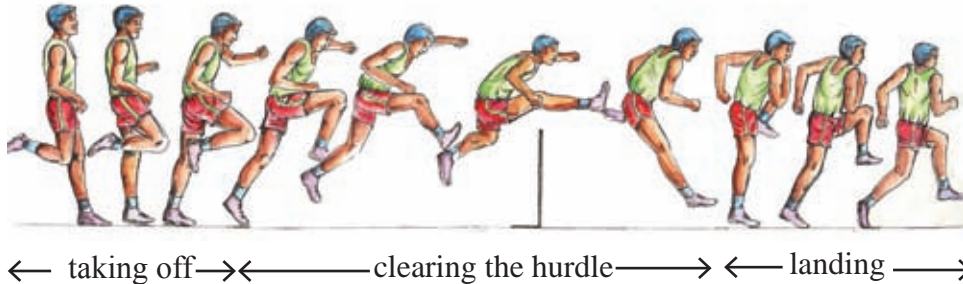


Figure 9.4

Hurdling is a fast and rhythmic technically activity and is a very interesting one of the running events in athletics. Hurdling is a short distance event. Player should run over ten hurdles in this event. Hurdling has a special significance to the field of athletics in Sri Lanka because Sri Lanka won its first ever Olympic medal when Duncan White won a place in a 400 m hurdling race.

Hurdling events are held as follows in sports competitions at national and international levels.

- Men's – 110 m hurdles, 400 m hurdles
- Women's – 100 m hurdles, 400 m hurdles

The ability to run a short distance very fast and to clear the hurdles applying the technique are the basic skills that a hurdler should possess.

### Hurdling technique

There are two key phases of the hurdling technique

1. clearing the hurdling
2. running between hurdles

#### 1. Clearing the hurdle

Clearing the hurdle can again be divided into three phases

- A. taking off
- B. clearing the hurdle
- C. landing

### A. Taking off



Figure 9.5

- The runner who is approaching fast gets prepared for the take-off.
- The knee and the ankle of the take-off leg are completely straight.
- The lead leg is bent fast at the knee and is raised so that the upper leg is parallel to the ground

### B. clearing the hurdle



Figure 9.6

- The knee is straightened so that it is completely straight and is slightly bent over the hurdle.
- The upper body is leaned forwards.
- The trail leg is dragged sideways over the side of the hurdle.
- As the hurdle is being cleared, the thigh of the trail leg is almost parallel to the ground.



### C. Landing



Figure 9.7

- Landing should be made so that the ball of the foot of the lead leg touches the ground first.

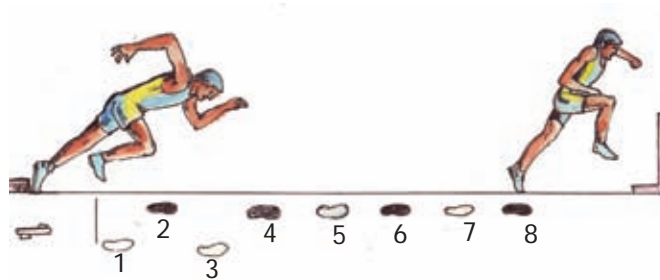


Figure 9.8

### 2. Running between hurdles

- In 100 m and 110 m hurdling events, the first hurdle should be reached with eight steps from the starting block.
- It is important to position leading leg on rare block of the starting block so that the first hurdle is approached with the leading leg. (This can be changed for beginners)



Figure 9.9

- In 100 m and 110 m hurdling events, the next hurdle should be approached with three steps.

## Training exercises for hurdling

1.



Figure 9.10

Place in a limited area of the playground some obstacles like cardboard boxes that are not very high, and run about freely jumping over the boxes from time to time.

2.

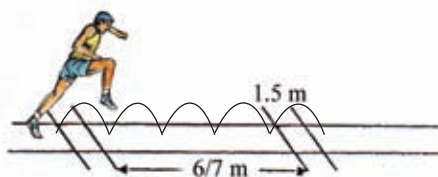


Figure 9.11

Mark some gaps on the ground as shown in the picture. Run the 7-meter gap in three steps jumping over the 1.5-metre gap.

3.

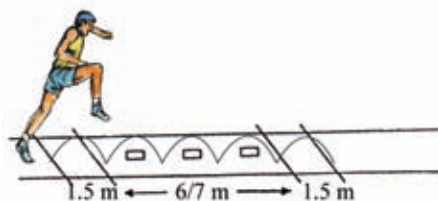


Figure 9.12

Now place some small obstacles in the 1.5m gaps and continue doing the same activity.

## Some key rules and regulations of hurdling events

1. Runners should clear the hurdles in the same lanes that have been allocated to them until the end of the race.
2. While clearing the hurdle, a foot/the feet should not be taken out side of the hurdles
3. It is illegal to knock down the hurdle with hand or foot deliberately.

## Summary

The general rules and regulations of athletics include rules and regulations related to clothing, shoes and bibs of athletes. In addition to them, there also are rules and regulation that are common to track and field events.

Running events are classified as short distance, middle distance and long distance races based on the running distance. The running speed is very decisive in running events. The stride length and stride frequency are the factors that determine the running speed.

The hurdling technique includes the two phases namely, clearing the hurdle and running between hurdles. Clearing the hurdle is again divided into three phases namely take-off, hurdle clearance and landing.

Athletes should engage in regular training to develop running and hurdling skills



## Exercise

1. Write two general rules and regulations followed in athletics with regard to each of the following:
  - i. clothing
  - ii. shoes
  - iii. athletes' bibs
2. Write five general rules and regulations applied in running events.
3. Write two general rules and regulations applied in field events.
4. What are the two factors that affect the running speed of a runner in a running event?
5. Name the three phases of a running stride.