

# NASHVILLE YOUTH ATHLETICS

## ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL COACHES TRAINING

Thank you for your interest in coaching youth track! NYA is here to provide a venue for youth running competition that is open to anyone. The spring track program is open to all individuals and schools (public or private) in the Middle Tennessee area. Home schooled children are also encouraged to participate. The information in this packet will give you the basic tools to get started.

### Important Web Links

NYA – [www.nashvilleyouthathletic.org](http://www.nashvilleyouthathletic.org)

NYA Coach's Informational Page – <http://www.nashvilleyouthathletics.org/coaches-page.html>

New York Road Runner's Club Youth Program - <http://www.nyrr.org/youth-and-schools>

Dathan Ritzenhein Form and Flexibility Videos - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhzzpZVMtI4> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWE9hUCzCQo>

## **PROGRAM INFORMATION**

### Eligibility

Open to all boys and girls of Middle School age (grades 6, 7, 8) or Elementary School Age (grades 2, 3, 4, 5). We realize that certain school districts have different grade designations for Middle School and Elementary School but we will need to adhere to one state standard. This is the standard for our cross country program, so we are continuing it for track as well for consistency. The program is open to all public, private schools, and homeschooled athletes. Home schoolers and or individuals who do not have schools participating may compete as unattached, part of a school team closest to their normal public school zone or as part of a recognized home school cooperative

### Insurance

Practice and Meet Liability Insurance coverage is provided through the USATF (USA Track and Field), our sport's governing body. If you need a liability certificate for your practice site you will need to send NYA your practice location and days/times of practice and we will send you a certificate.

### Costs

\$65.00 per athlete for the entire season (one meet or all 4) please visit:

<http://www.nashvilleyouthathletics.org/registration>.

For those athletes who are not able to afford the program costs, please contact us about our scholarship program.

## **MEET INFORMATION**

### Distances Run

100m, 200m, 400m, 800, &1600m (mile) Coaches will need to submit entries for their athletes by WEDNESDAY prior to the upcoming meet.

### Check-In & Clerk of Course

We recommend that all athletes be at the track at least 30 minutes prior to the race start time (2:00pm). Meet schedule will run as follows: 100, 1600, 400, 800, 200. Specific times that individual races will start cannot be calculated specifically. Athletes will need to check in at the clerk's tent when called prior to their race. **There will be a first, second and third call for every event.** Once the third and final call is made all athletes should be at the clerk's tent ready to be walked to their event. We will not make specific calls for individuals that have not checked in. Please listen so you do not miss your race! Coaches, it is a good idea to have a parent or group of parents in charge of this at each meet. This frees you up to coach the kids!

### Team Areas

Each team should designate an area to gather before and during the meet. Once your team has arrived coaches can take their team on a warm up run followed by stretching and pre-race routine. It is important to increase blood flow and range of motion to the major muscle groups in order to prepare them to run. We recommend a dynamic routine as it has been shown to be the most effective way to prepare. A dynamic stretch is one that slowly works the muscle in its full range of motion. What most of us are used to doing prior to an athletic event is static stretching: holding one pose for an extended period of time in order to elongate the muscles. This should still be done, but only after workouts and races. You can find sample routines for both dynamic and static stretching on our website, coaches' page.

### Start of the Race

We will make announcements throughout the meet as races are being started. We pride ourselves at being on time with these races. Please be prepared and have your athletes checked in and ready to run.

### Finish Line

At some of our meets we will be fortunate enough to have an automated timing system with a camera. Please inform your athletes and parents to remain away from the finish line at all times as it could seriously disrupt the outcome of the finish results. We would also like for parents to remain off the infield as this should be reserved for athletes and coaches only. The exception to this would be if a parent is coaching an unattached athlete.

### Spring Developmental Track Meets

3.25 – Overbrook School

4.8 - USN River Campus

4.15 - USN River Campus

4.22 - Championship – Overbrook School

**\*\*\*all above meets will begin at 2:00\*\*\***

Maps and directions to all sites are located on the NYA website.

#### NYA Inclement Weather Policy

In general, meets will run as scheduled. If weather forecasts call for threatening weather, please do NOT assume that we will cancel the meet. Meet officials will be out at the track from the morning of each meet through the start of each meet and will assess the weather status as it stands on the race course. IF THERE IS ANY CANCELLATION, we will make an announcement on our webpage, facebook page, and twitter account. If possible, we will attempt to send an email and/or text alert. There is an option to "opt in" to text alerts through your account on the registration site. This would be the only reason NYA would text you and may be a good way to have the most current info. As a general rule, we will run in rain. If there is lightening in the area, the meet will be delayed for 30 minutes. If at that time there is still lightening in the area, the meet will be delayed for an additional 30 minutes. If after two 30 minute delays, lightening is still in the area, the meet will be cancelled. Although we will try our best to make up or reschedule the meet, NO guarantees can be made.

#### Results and Awards

Every participant will receive a ribbon for completing the race. Top 3 finishers, per gender per division, will receive place ribbon. Place ribbons/awards are given once ALL heats of the event have been run. Traditional awards (medals, trophies, t-shirts, etc.) will be given at the last meet of the season, championship. RESULTS WILL BE POSTED on the website and Tennessee Runner/MileSplit by 9:00pm on the day of the race.

## **COACHING POINTS**

#### Practice Logistics

- 1) Find safe running locations. If you don't have access to a track, grass is much more preferable than sidewalks, pavement, or near traffic areas. Running on grass can be much safer and can prevent injuries in the surface is devoid of ruts, holes, or rocks. Encourage parents who walk or run to help out.
- 2) If possible, have options in your running route. Running the same course every day will make for bored and tired young runners.
- 3) Vary the types of runs you do on the course.
  - a) Run some out and backs with the entire team. If someone has to stop, have them stand in place and wait for the group on the way back and jump back in. One fun way to do this is make it a challenge and the last boy or girl to stop wins ☺.
  - b) Run some continuous relays. Split them up in groups of 2 or 3 and have them race to a point 100 yards and back. Their "rest" is while their teammates are running. Each athlete should be running 3-4 times per race. Have 2 races per practice with a 5-10 break in between. Switch up teams to make it fun.
  - c) Run Intervals. Mark out a 400 meter circle and have the kids run a loop, walk for a few minutes, then run again. Alternate between running and rest until you have done 6-10 loops. Intervals can range from 100 meters to 800 meters at this age level.

- d) Run some Fartleks. Fartleks involve running for time or distance while alternating from running hard to jogging or walking. For example, one Fartlek might entail elementary kids running for a total of 10 to 15 minutes. During this time period, they may run slightly faster than race pace for 30 seconds, then walk/jog for 30 seconds, and continuing to alternate every 30 seconds for the entire 10-15 minute period. Rather than the kids worrying about time, have them alternate on your signal or whistle.
  - e) Striders or shorter sprints where kids runs about 100m, but will break it into thirds where the first third builds top top speed, top speed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> third and then come back down for the last third.
- 4) Be aware of how your runners perform or group up in practice. Always modify your practice to not only meet their state of physical readiness, but also modify for ALL levels of physical capabilities.
- 5) **Always have a back up or cancellation plan for practice.** What will you do in the event of severe weather, heat, or injury. Let parents know what the plan is and how to reach you. This is the coach's responsibility! Always carry your emergency contact info with you. You all have access to each athletes contacts and pertinent medical info through your team site. Have some way to access that quickly at practice
- 6) Encourage all kids to bring their own water or hydration. Hydration is of vital importance. In the beginning of the season, heat is a major concern and heat related illnesses should be taken seriously. Hydration also helps the body recover properly after exertion. Please implore upon your athletes the importance of hydration. If practice is directly after school, encourage them to bring a water bottle to school for practice (and maybe a granola bar or something light to eat).
- 7) FREQUENCY? There will be a lot of variation in the level of fitness and the level of commitment with your runners and your parents. Find what's right for each athlete. We recommend running 3-4 active days per week at the elementary level (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade) and 4-6 active days per week at the middle school level (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade). Don't let these numbers scare you! Plenty of kids play other sports during the fall, and those can be counted as 'active days'! The Sunday meets can be considered 'active days' as well! At the elementary level, 1-2 organized practice days per week is fine. At the middle school level, 2-3 organized practice days per week is fine. Encourage athletes to run at home with mom or dad, or even do conditioning at home!

#### Athlete safety

It is of vital importance that we protect our athletes at all times. This includes proper supervision, physical safety, mental, and emotional safety.

- Make sure no athlete goes anywhere by themselves. Utilize the buddy system.
- Encourage all athletes equally. This is a developmental program and we should try and fit the needs of all athletes regardless of talent level.
- Be the example.
  - Do not engage in an altercation with another coach or parent.
  - Do not use foul language.
  - Do not bully nor tolerate bullying.
  - Discuss unwanted behavior calmly with the athlete and calmly with the parent.

To protect both yourself and a child from risk:

- Do not isolate yourself and a child and avoid being alone with any particular child.
- If a child approaches you and wants to talk to you privately about a matter, do so in an open area and in the sight of other adults (e.g. other coaches, officials or parents/guardians).
- Before going into change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in. Try to have at least one adult with you in a change room with children.
- Do not copy or distribute team/athlete photos for personal use.
- Make sure parents know they are expected to pick their child up on time from training.
- Avoid transporting children and if you must only do so with the express permission of their parents.

#### Competition

1) Manage expectations. For many athletes and parents, the goal is to place in the top X. For others, it is to simply finish or try a new distance. There are many ways to quantify performance without going over the top – all the while, encouraging the entire range of possibilities. Goals and accomplishments can be met week to week at meets *as well as at practices*. When athletes learn to find these small accomplishments and on a continual basis they will be more successful in the long run. If your runners will stay consistent and realize that success and fitness doesn't come over night, they will set themselves up to have a fun and rewarding season. Stick with it for Success!!

2) Time is always our motivator, but try to encourage your athletes to find other points of merit in their race; a good start, good finish, consistent pace, etc. There are many ways to feel successful in a race other than time and place.

4) Educate and engage parents. Get them involved in the sport and supporting EVERYONE out on the course. Help every child feel good about their effort! Also encourage your athletes to come back to and cheer on the rest of the runners that are finishing. This is a great way to teach sportsmanship and camaraderie.

5) The most important thing to instill in your athletes is a love for the sport!

We are so appreciative that you all have decided to give the gift of your time and energy to the children of your community. Running is something that the kids will be able to do for the rest of their lives to be healthy active adults. Know that you all are planting the seeds for many of these kids, and that is such a wonderful thing.

We are always available for anything you all need. Don't hesitate to ask!

-Holley & Brandon

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