



TRACK AND FIELD

PROGRAM GUIDE

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Table of Contents

Welcome	3
What is Track and Field?	4
What do Practices Look Like?	7
What are Track Meets Like?	10
SYC's House of Speed.....	12
Meet the Coaches	13
Expectations	15
Code of Conduct	15
Frequently Asked Questions	16
Complaint Procedures	17
Registration and Refund Policy	17

Photos courtesy of Charles Schmidt Photography

Welcome

Welcome to Springfield/South County Youth Club's (SYC) Track and Field program. Since its creation in 2012 on the 50th anniversary of SYC, the track and field program has been offering quality instruction, conditioning, and competition to local athletes around Northern Virginia. The program has always been special as it was built from the ground up for athletes of all abilities, experiences, and backgrounds. Our main goal is to provide safe and fun instruction to athletes old and new. When athletes leave our program they will be more confident and prepared as they transition into high school or to other athletic programs. During practices we stress safe habits and proper technique, and at meets we put our skills to the test through fun and encouraging competition.

Please take some time over the next few days or weeks to review this program overview. It contains all the necessary information as well as supplemental information you or your athlete may find helpful.

As always, I am available by email anytime of the week to address concerns, questions, and comments. Thank you for the opportunity to coach your athlete.

- Coach Chris



What is Track and Field?

Track and field is a sport that encompasses a wide array of biomechanics and skills from running, to jumping, and to throwing. The most notable track and field event is likely the 100-meter dash, with world-record holder Usain Bolt becoming a household name. However, there is more to track and field than running 100 meters. With running (or sprinting) distances ranging from 55 meters to over 10,000 meters, and with field events like the high jump, triple jump, and shotput, to name a few, there is something for everyone in this sport.

The SYC Track and Field program focuses on the following running events: 100-meter (m) dash, 200m dash, 400m dash, 800m run, and 1600m (mile) run. With the exception of indoor tracks, athletes will compete and practice on 400m (quarter mile) tracks (i.e. those found at high schools or colleges). During occasional seasons, we may have additional practices for field events such as the long jump, triple jump, high jump, and shotput, as well as relay events.



What is Track and Field?

Sprinting Events

The sprinting event include the 100m, 200m, and 400m races.

The 100m race is the length of one “straightaway”, typically ran on the main side of the stadium. It is an all-out sprinting event where athletes typically reach their max velocity at approximately 30 – 60 meters before deceleration from fatigue begins. SYC athletes have typically completed this event in between 12 and 20 seconds depending on age and skill level. When training for this type of all-out sprint we focus on proper starting technique, form, and race techniques all while incorporating workouts that improve the speed of an athlete.

The 200m race is typically ran as an all-out sprint beginning at the far left curve and finishing at the finish line. Sustaining a high speed and minimizing muscle and neurological fatigue is key. SYC athletes have typically completed this event in between 25 and 47 seconds depending on age and skill level. Similar to the 100m, we focus on maximizing the duration of an athlete’s top speed as well as stressing the importance of proper technique.

The 400m race is one lap of the track either beginning in a waterfall or staggered start depending on the competition.



Example waterfall start [bringbackthemile.com]



Example staggered start [Ed Jay]

Athletes must sustain a sprint for a much longer duration than a 100m or 200m. This leads to a buildup of lactic acid, which is most commonly associated with a tightening or burning of the muscles. In reality, most young athletes have trouble maintaining a sprint for 400m, so during practice we incorporate aerobic (endurance training), smooth running techniques, and longer sprint workouts 300m – 600m in distance. SYC athletes have completed this race in between 61 seconds and 2:00 minutes depending on age and skill level. The 400m race is difficult, but it is very rewarding. This event is great for athletes who want a challenge whether they are sprinters or distance runners. We recommend that all SYC athletes try a 400m once per season.

With all the sprinting events, we stress proper form and safe technique. We help give athletes the building blocks for later success as they get older.

What is Track and Field?

Mid-Distance/Distance Events

The distance include the 800m and 1600m (mile).

The 800m race is two laps around the track. An 800m has a more even mix of anaerobic and aerobic demands. Because of this, we provide athletes with a mix of speed-based workouts as well as longer, more endurance based workouts.

The 1600m, or the mile, is four laps around the track. It has a hefty aerobic demand and as such we prepare athletes for this event through longer runs and endurance based workouts.



Regardless of which race your athletes enjoys the most, we train all aspects of running to give young athletes a healthy base to build off of as they get older.

What do Practices Look Like?

Practices are split between 1 – 3 graders and 4 – 8 graders.

This split is to ensure that 1 – 3 graders have a low-pressure environment to learn the basics and have ample fun without being intimidated by tougher workouts or older athletes.

1 - 3 Grade Practices

1 – 3 graders typically practice for one hour. At practice, we will go over proper warmup drills, and then move into the workout for the day. The workout will alternate each week between sprint or endurance based exercises. On sprint days, we will focus on proper form, starts, and increasing speed. On endurance days, we will focus on building their aerobic capacity and pacing. At the end of each practice, the group will typically play a game before stretching and leaving.

4 - 8 Grade Practices

4th – 8th graders will be able to choose between sprints or distance each week. After the first few weeks of practice, we recommend athletes find and stick to a particular area of focus as to maximize their training.

Sprinters will review proper warmup techniques unique to sprints and then move into sprint-based workouts. At the beginning of the season, we focus on acceleration techniques, and then move on to speed techniques, before culminating in speed-endurance techniques towards the end of the season.

Distance runners will review proper warmups before going on a longer warmup run to help build their aerobic base. Then they will move into distance-based workouts. At the beginning of the season, we focus on building athletes' endurance, and then move on to more specific training depending on the group's goals.

We recommend that all older athletes stay active outside of practice to maximize their potential. Training one day a week for 90 minutes is not enough to improve performance. Each week specific suggestions will be emailed to parents, which will help drive athlete success outside of Sunday practice.

We will provide weekly training logs with suggestions in order to facilitate training outside of practice.

What do Practices Look Like?

What To Bring To Practice

Athletes should dress appropriately for the weather. First and foremost they should be wearing proper running shoes. Shoes such as Converse, skating shoes, basketball shoes, etc. are not appropriate for sustained running, and will increase the risk for injury. Athletes may wear track spikes at meets, but they should be designed for their particular event. Please ask a coach if you need assistance.

During the winter months the team will often practice outdoors. Athletes should wear layers to avoid becoming too hot or cold. A base long sleeve t-shirt, hoodie/light jacket, and a heavier jacket are appropriate. Long pants will be required for warm-ups, but athletes may strip down to shorts for workouts.

During the warmer months athletes should wear what is most comfortable for them. Most choose to wear a t-shirt and shorts.

Athletes are required to bring water to every practice. Hydration is extremely important regardless of the weather outside. We cannot guarantee that water fountains or other hydration will be available at practice.

Practice Checklist:

- Water (reusable bottles are recommended)
- Appropriate clothing
- Appropriate running shoes
- Sunscreen (if needed)
- A good attitude

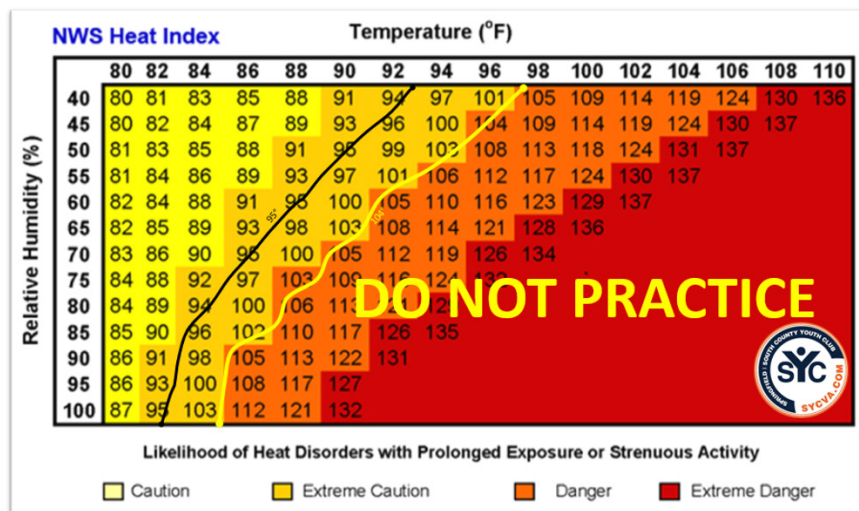


Hydration guidelines [REI]

What do Practices Look Like?

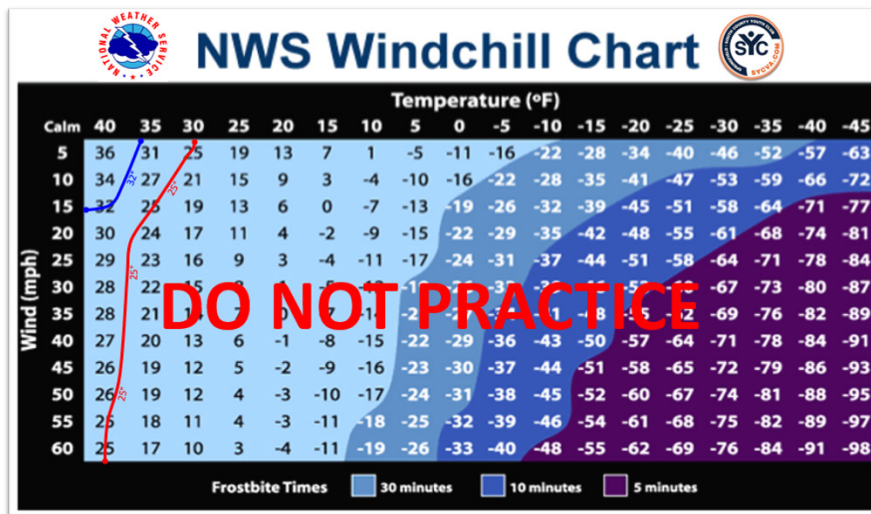
Weather Cancelations or Delays

Occasionally, we will be forced to cancel, delay, or move practice due to weather.



At/Below 94° Heat Index – Practice may occur
 Between 95° - 104° Heat Index – Limitations per Guide
 Above 104° Heat Index - DO NOT PRACTICE

Common Sense Rule
 Applies in all heat related conditions



Above 36° Wind Chill (WC) – Practice may occur
 Between 35° - 33° WC with Precipitation – Limitations
 Between 35° - 26° WC without Precipitation – Limitations
 At/Below 32° WC with Precipitation - DO NOT PRACTICE!!
 At/Below 25° WC without Precipitation - DO NOT PRACTICE!!

Common Sense Rule
 Applies in all cold related conditions

All changes to the normal operation of practice will be posted to the main SYC Track website and emailed to parents. Please check both before leaving for practice each morning.

Please note that light to moderate rain generally will not warrant the cancellation or movement of practice.

What do Track Meets Look Like?

Track meets are typically long events. Meets with only two – three teams will last up to three hours, while larger meets of seven or more teams can last all day. Parents should come to meets prepared with ample water, snacks, sunscreen, shade, and reading material. At each meet we will have a team tent where athletes will check-in and relax before their race, but we recommend that parents and athletes prepare for the sun and heat.

Track meets run on a rolling schedule. For example, events will begin at 9 AM and each event is ran after the previous one finishes. This makes estimating race times very difficult for meet directors, coaches, and parents.

At most meets, athletes will be able to choose which event(s) they wish to run. Coaches will provide suggestions before each meet. Athletes compete against other athletes in their age bracket (6 & Under, 7 - 8, 9 - 10, 11 - 12, 13 - 14). An athlete's age is determined by birth year.

For examples of track meets, please search “track meet vlog” or watch any NCAA Outdoor Track and Field meet coverage on YouTube.



What do Track Meets Look Like?

What To Bring To Track Meets & How To Prepare

Athletes should begin preparing for track meets up to 48 hours in advance by hydrating regularly. Failure to hydrate properly will have a significant impact on performance.

We recommend that athletes arrive to the meet early to properly scope out the venue, relax, and warm-up with enough time. Arriving early may also help calm nervous athletes. Throughout the season we will discuss race strategy, meet expectations, and more.

Meet Checklist (parents & athletes):

- Proper running shoes (track spikes may be included)
- SYC racing singlet
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Snacks
- Shade (we will have a team tent for athletes)
- Plenty of water
- A book or other entertainment
- A good attitude

Many coaches will be working hard volunteering at the meet or coaching athletes, however, a coach will always be near the team tent to answer any questions.

SYC's House of Speed

More information on this fabulous opportunity will be released in the coming weeks.

Meet the Coaches



Coach Chris

Coach Chris is the head coach and commissioner of the SYC running programs. He has coached with SYC for approximately six years and has been head coach for two years. He ran cross country and varsity track and field in high school specializing in the 400m and 800m races. He is currently a certified USATF Level I coach. He will be coaching distance athletes.



Coach Tanya

Coach Tanya is the head coach and director for the House of Speed track and field program and the assistant head coach for winter and spring track. She has been coaching and helping the program for three years. She ran Division 1 track and field at the University of Michigan specializing in the 800m. She will be coaching SYC's House of Speed program and 1st - 3rd graders



Coach Grady

Coach Grady is an assistant coach for SYC cross country, winter, and spring track. He has coached with SYC for three years. He ran cross country and varsity track in high school specializing in the 400m and 800m races. He will be coaching sprint athletes.



Coach Caren

Coach Caren is an assistant coach for winter and spring track. She has been coaching with SYC for one year. She ran Division 1 track and field at West Point specializing in sprints and the long jump. She will be coaching sprint athletes.



Coach Rooney

Coach Rooney is an assistant coach for cross country, winter, and spring track. He has been coaching with SYC for one season, but is already a natural coach and mentor. He will be coaching 1st – 3rd graders.

Meet the Coaches



High School Volunteers

We utilize experienced high school athletes to help coach. They provide valuable mentorship, experience, and logistical support. In exchange for their valued assistance they are given volunteer hours for school projects.

All SYC track and field coaches go through the necessary training to be effective and skilled coaches.

We are always in need of dedicated parent coaches. If you are interested, please email track@sycva.com. No experience necessary and the time commitment is very low. All selected coaches receive registration credit, which can be used to reduce or eliminate the cost of future registrations.

We promise you will not regret it!



Expectations

For us to maintain the fun, safe, and encouraging atmosphere, we require athletes to adhere to the following expectations:

1. Respect all teammates, coaches, and competitors.
2. Listen and follow coaches' instructions.
3. Ask questions when confused.
4. Bring a good attitude to each practice.
5. Talk to the coaches if you are hurt, upset, or angry.
6. No foul or inappropriate language.

Parents, we ask that you introduce yourselves to the coaches at the beginning of the season so we can match names to faces. If there are any issues, please approach the coaches respectfully. We will bend over backwards for your athlete and promise to provide the best experience possible, but mutual respect is inherent to success.

Code of Conduct

Parents/guardians, spectators, players, and coaches shall adhere to the code of conduct as written in SYC policies and procedures. Code of conduct for players, parents/guardians, spectators, and coaches can be found on the website, www.sycva.com, under "About SYC" in "Policies and Procedures".



Frequently Asked Questions

- ***What shoes should my child wear?***

Athletes should wear proper running shoes to practice. Any local running specialty store will be able to match your athlete to the best running shoe. If affordability is a concern, please email track@sycva.com.

- ***How will coaches communicate with parents?***

The main method of communication is via email. However, most relevant information can also be found on our website.

- ***How will athletes be evaluated?***

At the beginning of each season, we will have a time trial for 4th – 8th graders to determine a beginning benchmark. Each race result is subsequently recorded and kept for use by the coaches. Parents and athletes may approach coaches for more individualized evaluations as needed.

- ***How many meets will there be?***

There will be few chances to race during the winter season, but each spring there are 4 – 5 competitions.

- ***What race should my child run at the meets?***

Athletes can choose to run whichever races they prefer, but we recommend competing in races that they have been training for. Ask the coaches for specific guidelines before race day.

Additional questions by parents and athletes are always welcomed. Please approach us in person or through email. We want to help you learn!



Complaint Procedures

Sport-related complaints should first be addressed to the coach. Since the coach will be the person most likely to understand the member's concerns, an e-mail or phone call to the coach should be the first level of address. Addressing a coach during a practice or game is discouraged as this has an overall negative effect for the children and families participating in the program. If a resolution cannot be found, the problem should then be brought to the attention of the SYC office manager. If the office manager is unable to resolve the issue, the complaint may then be directed to the SYC Board of Directors utilizing the Complaint Procedure. The Complaint Procedure may be found on the SYC web site at www.sycva.com.

Registration and Refund Policy

SYC encourages families to register for SYC Track and Field on-line at www.sycva.com; however, a parent(s) or guardian(s) may come to the office during office hours to register their children for track. SYC cannot accept phone registrations. SYC Track and Field follows the SYC Refund Policy. To qualify for a full or partial refund of activity fees, participants will be required to fill out the online refund request form. For more information regarding the SYC Refund Policy, please refer to the REFUND POLICY found at www.sycva.com.