

Dear Parents and Athletes,

Welcome to the Fair Lawn All Sports Track and Field.

Our Mission is to nurture and develop track, running, race-walking, jumping & throwing skills in a competitive environment and to promote team spirit and respect of others on the track and off. We will be competing within the New Jersey Striders Track & Field Club (NJS), which consists of 14 Teams. Our meets are contested in April, May & June, and are developmental in nature.

JUNIOR OLYMPIC TRACK & FIELD PROGRAM

With roots tracing back to ancient Greece, track & field is the centerpiece of the Olympic games. From the 100 meter dash to the discus throw, athletes set new standards for excellence in sport. USATF's Junior Olympic Track & field program is a wellspring of this excellence.

America's next generation of track & field stars compete throughout the summer – and over 6,000 of these athletes will qualify for the USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships held during the last week of July. Entry for the National Championship is based on athlete performances at preliminary, association, and regional levels.

In order for your child to participate in the National Junior Olympic Track & Field Program, which is contested in June & July, they must first become a member of the USATF. To understand more about the National organization, or the Junior Olympic program visit USATF online at www.usatf.org. If the athlete qualifies for the USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships they will need to become a member. They must pay the annual membership dues and fill out the application. This can be done via the USATF website <https://www.usatf.org/membership/application/>. They will then receive a membership number and card.

THE NEW JERSEY STRIDERS TRACK CLUB, INC.

The New Jersey Striders Track Club, Inc. has been in existence since 1978. It is considered to be one of the largest clubs in New Jersey. They have organized many regional & state events over the years, and have been organizing the youth spring track program since 1980. When athletes sign up for their National membership card, which is included in their Fair Lawn All Sports Track and Field membership dues, they will be signing up as a member of the New Jersey Striders Track Club, Inc., but will run in developmental meets in the FLAS uniform.

NJ Striders team members:

Saddle Brook	Paramus	Rutherford	East Rutherford
Mahwah	Wayne	Fair Lawn	Hackensack
Englewood	Wood Ridge	Westwood	Haworth
Hasbrouck Heights	Monroe-Woodbury	Ridgefield	

UNDERSTANDING OUR MISSION:

The commitment can be very demanding for the athletes. Practice requires hard work, and a desire to improve; NJS meets are team events.

Here are some ways to help the athletes achieve those goals:

1. Get to know the coaches. Feel free to discuss any problems, or suggestions.
2. Understand that competition can be a thrilling and enjoyable. It does not always mean winning. Improving on skills, times and attitudes are equally important goals.
3. Understand the courage required when an athlete competes. When they are competing they are taking a risk. Competition and risk taking require courage and develops strength and character.
4. It helps to remember the competition is for the athlete.

Track Practice: begins **on Monday March 23, 2009 (7-10 year old) Tuesday March 24, 2009 (11-15 year old).**

Practice is held at the Fair Lawn High School track on Monday & Wednesday 7-10 Year old, Tuesday & Thursday, 11-14 Year old from 6:00 pm until 7:30 pm.

Warm up at 6:00 pm-6:15 pm (report to assigned coach). Running & field events will be split in ½ hour sessions: 6:15-6:45 pm & 6:45 pm-7:15 pm, warm down 7:15 pm-7:30 pm (report to assigned coach). The team will be separated into groups and will rotate between running and field events. This will only be possible with at least seven coaches at practice per day; otherwise we may need to modify the practice unless we can recruit some parents to help. If you are interested, please contact Director, Michael Aversa Maversa146@aol.com prior to March 18, 2009.

It can be windy and cold at the track, so have your athlete dress in layers. Running shorts and a t-shirt with sweats on top. Bring gloves and a hat in the beginning of the season. Bring a bottle of water or Gatorade for your child at practice, and **label it with his or her name. Please be sure they take them back home at the end of practice**
Wear white socks only

About Running Shoes: This is not mandatory but only if you wish to provide the athlete with running shoes. They are different than gym shoes, basketball, or tennis shoes and hiking sneakers. The best and safest models for your children are the ones that have a strong plastic heel cup. It is very easy to tell if the shoe contains that opposed to a cardboard one. Squeeze the back of the heel cup from both sides, and also from the back. It should be very firm and not collapse easily. This is the most important part of the running shoe. Also, bend the front of the shoe upward – the shoe should bend to the second shoelace. This is the second most important item. Third are laces -- **no Velcro.**

Brands for children: New Balance is most recommended, then Adidas, Asics, Nike, Saucony, etc. You should be able to purchase a pair for \$25 to \$60. **DON'T LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT STYLE & COLORS, THAT IS WHAT CAUSES INJURIES**

Fit and make of the shoe is the most important factor.

If your child has any orthopedic problems – high or low arch, joint pain, etc., or any allergy/asthma problems, please let the coaches know.

When athletes compete in the first 6 meets the membership dues covers their entry fee.

At the Junior Olympic Association meets (USATF), parents start to pay a minimal fee. The coaches will help decide on what events an athlete will compete in. If you cannot attend a meet, please tell the coaches the Monday before the scheduled event. The

coaches will be planning workouts for your athlete based on which events they will be competing in that week, and possibly recruiting them as a relay member.

Meets are held on Sundays In Northern NJ. Awards from these meets are given out on following day of practice at the end of practice. If your athlete does not attend the practice after the meet, the awards will be held in a file under their last name. The file folder will be available after each practice. We will notify everyone via **e-mail** of any changes and other information. If you have changed your e-mail address, please provide Assistant Coach Jo Sacchinelli via email jomarie7@optonline.net with the new one.

The age group your athlete competes in is based on his/her year of birth. If he/she is 6 years old today, but turns 7 prior to December 31, 2009, he/she would compete as a 7-9 yr old (sub-bantam) age group.

Uniforms will be handed out **after** practice the week prior to the first meet, **to parents only**, and parents must sign for them. We cannot exchange for sizes. The tank top and shorts **MUST** be returned at the end of the season or you will be charged for the cost \$30. The hoodies do not have to be returned so please make sure you write your child's name inside. .

A tentative practice schedule will be distributed the first week of practice. Please keep in mind we share the field with the High School so when they have a game we will need to set a different date. If you have a conflict with a practice date, please notify your child's coach so they may schedule for your child to practice on another night.

Your athlete will be given **one** bib with a number on it, along with four pins to wear on the front of his/her uniform at the **meets**. This bib will be worn for the first six meets we are contesting in. **Do not throw it away and do not wash it.** If you lose it you can get another bib at the meet press box for \$5 at your expense. This must be done prior to 12 noon. There is a color-coded dot on the bib that tells the officials on the field what age group your athlete is competing in. Please check the color-coded dot on your athlete's bib to be sure it is correct. If not, bring it to a coaches' attention so it can be fixed before the start of the meet.

During the first two weeks of practice you will have your child report to the coach who was listed in this email. After this time period they will be broken into smaller groups and assigned to an assistant coach. Please remind your child to remember which assistant coach has been assigned to them, as this will be the coach they are to report to on the third week of practice.

An important reminder to parents: Please do not drop children off at practice and leave. We are not responsible for your children after practice is over. Practice can end unexpectedly, especially in the event of sudden inclement weather. We have no place to go if it rains, or if there is the threat of lightning. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CHILDREN**

Meet Information

Meet Schedule

April 19 – Mahwah

April 26 – East Rutherford

May 3 - Paramus

May 17 -Hackensack

USATF-NJ Prelim is May 31 – Rutherford **(information will be provided)

NJ Strider Invitational June 7 – Fair Lawn

Competition sites: Parents be aware some of the sites parking lots will fill up by 12:15 pm.

Plan to arrive early. The team will warm-up as a group at 12:30 pm on the field with the coaches. **Please, absolutely no parents on the field.** While Track and Field is an individual sport it is also a team sport. We would like the entire FLAS Track and Field Team to be located in one area. The team has a tent that will be set up please report to this tent for the meets. Remember to bring lawn chairs to sit on and dress appropriately. You are welcome to bring your own seat. (The stands are all metal). The meets run from 1 to 5 pm. When your child is done competing, he/ she may leave after checking in with one of the coaches.

Please keep your children from playing under the stands. Bring a book or game boy, etc. for them to keep busy.

Be sure your child's shoelaces are tight & double knotted. They cannot be touching the ground.

Don't forget your sunscreen

Eating: before, during & after events

Each child should have plenty of water or Gatorade with them.

Try not to let them eat anything too fatty or heavy before their race. Low-fat, low-sugar snacks like whole-grain food bars and nuts are recommended. They provide a good source of energy. Fruit, or raw vegetables, are also a good alternative to sugary snacks, and can help replace lost minerals and help balance electrolytes. Better nutrition, better performance Limit or eliminate the junk

Weather: If practice is cancelled because of weather you will be notified via **email**. You may also reach out to your coach if you have any questions. If it rains the day of a meet you will be notified by 11 am race day if it is cancelled. (Meets are only cancelled under severe conditions.)

Facility: Is the property of Fair Lawn School district.

Please take home everything you came in with, including garbage.

We do not have a lost and found.

Please try to keep your athlete off the pole vault mats.

They are very entertaining for the children, but should not be jumped on risking injury or damage to the mats.

Remind your children that the sand in the long jump pits is not for playing in.

There should be no kicking or throwing sand at others.

The coaches will appreciate any help keeping your children focused on practice.

Our team has a medical kit at practice to cover the basics that may occur.

TERMINOLOGY YOU MAY NEED TO KNOW:

Track: a surface made of rubber and is usually 400 meters long.

Track lanes: boundaries marked with white lines that range from 36" wide, to 48" wide, depending on the facility.

The following races are run in lanes for our developmental series, and the athlete must stay in their lane at all times. If they take three steps in a row outside of their lane, they can be disqualified.

100M (meters): a sprint down a straightaway of the track

200M: ½ of a lap

400M: one lap

The following races are run from the starting line and the athlete must cut into lane 1 once they have a 1 stride lead. If they take three steps in a row inside of lane 1 they can be disqualified.

800M: two laps

1500M: 3.75 laps, and is known as the metric mile. A mile is actually 1609 meters, or four full laps. (1600M)

3000M: 7 ½ laps

Shot put: a round steel ball that weighs 6 lbs for 9-12 yr olds & 13-14 yr old girls

The 13-14 yr old boys use a 4kg (8.8lbs)

Discus: like a weighted frisbee

Turbo javelin: a developmental level spear training tool plastic modified (for safety) that is made especially for young competitors.

High jump: a parallel crossbar that is jumped over from one foot, landing on three foam mats placed behind the stance.

Long Jump: a sprint down a straightaway jumping off a white board into a sandpit.

Racewalk: a fast walking race where the athlete must keep one foot on the ground at all times and also straighten their leg upon impact to the ground each time. (This race is judged)

Relays: four athletes run a percentage of the race and hand a 1-foot long aluminum tube (baton) to each other.

Starting blocks: metal foot pedals used by sprinters at the start of a race to assist in the push off.

Who wins a race: torso first Arms or feet do not count.

Starting commands in races of 400M or less: On your marks, set, slight pause, then gun sound

Starting commands in races of 800M or longer: On your marks, slight pause, then gun sound

Be a Coach: Preferably someone who has competed in the sport at some time in their life. Will need to be at most practices and meets:

Be a Volunteer: Team Manager handles collecting all awards at the meets & results & filling out them before practice on Monday

Be a Meet Volunteer Official: Our track meets need volunteers to help officiate. If you are interested in helping, we will train you on the spot. We need volunteers as finish judges and helping in field events. We have certified officials in all major areas and they will help you. It's easy. We have been asked to supply two volunteers per meet. Your help would be greatly appreciated.

ARE YOU A WINNING TRACK & FIELD PARENT?

If You Learn And Practice The Following Seven Keys To Becoming A Successful Track & Field Parent, Your Child Should Have A Successful And Rewarding Relationship With Track & Field.

Do You really want your children to have a rewarding and enjoyable experience with their athletics (track & field) ? Would you like your son or daughter to feel good about himself/herself and perform like champion? Do you know what it takes to be a winning athletics (track & field) parent?

Whether you know it or not, much of your child's success at the track rest squarely in your lap. That's Right

You are the most influential and important member of the coach-athlete-parent team.

You have the power and ability to shape your child's relationship with this sport so that it brings him/her lasting joy, enduring self- confidence and self esteem-building success.

In fact if you play your role on the team the right way, then you can help ensure that your child will go into the world feeling well adjusted, confident and happy long after he/she has hung up his/her competitive running shoes.

It's an unfortunate fact of this sport that well-meaning parents all too often say and do the wrong things with their child-athlete under the guise of trying to be "helpful."

Attempting to motivate their children to go faster these parents instead inadvertently set them up for failure and unhappiness. They do this by unknowingly breaking all the rules of peak

performance and, as a result, stresses their child, distract him/her from the task at hand and ensure that their son or daughter

Always runs far slower than his/her abilities.

If you truly want your child to have a successful and rewarding relationship with Athletics (Track & Field), then it's up to you to do your part. Learn and practice the following seven keys to becoming a winning Athletics (track & Field), parent.

1. DON'T COACH

Trying to "coach" your children behind the scenes when the team already has a professional staff will ultimately hurt your kids far more than it will help. As parent, it is not your job to coach either at practice or meets.

This means that you don't want to push your children to train harder or do extra workouts so that they can be better, quicker. You don't want to discuss form technique or race strategy with them before or after practice, on the way to the meet or right before the races. You don't want to subject them to last minute motivational talks. You should never offer helpful hints and criticism after their races even if you think you know exactly what went wrong.

This is the coach's job, not yours

Your "helpful" hints in these are never helpful and will ultimately backfire. Coaching is the very last thing your children need from you when it comes to their Athletics (Track & Field).

Winning Athletics (Track & Field) parents don't coach. Instead, they leave the coaching to the coaches.

2. BE UNCONDITIONALLY LOVING AND SUPPORTIVE

Your primary role on the "team" is to be your children's "best fan."

You want to support their efforts and love them unconditionally regardless of how fast they run or in what place they finish. Whether they win or lose, run slow or fast, your love and respect for your children should never change.

What you can do in your support role is to arrange for extra lessons for them if they ask, endlessly drive them to practices, cheer for them at their meets, make sure that they have nourishing, healthy food to eat and do everything else that loving, supportive parents are supposed to do.

And you should do every bit of this without ever expecting or demanding any "return," performance-wise, on your "investment" of all this time, money and energy.

3. DON'T PRESSURE YOUR CHILD TO FOCUS ON OUTCOME

Perhaps one of the more destructive things that you can do as a parent is to get your children worrying about how fast they run or the times that they need to achieve. When you do this, you will guarantee that they feel to pressured and distracted before their races to run to their potential.

Going fast, achieving cuts and winning are always a paradox in running – that is, these goals can only happen if the swimmer focuses more on himself/herself and the process of the race, one stride at a time, and less on the races outcome or their times

Pressuring your kids to go fast is a great way to get them consistently to go slower

4. HELP YOUR CHILDREN FOCUS ON THEMSELVES

Parents who continually emphasize to their children the importance of beating certain teammates or opponents inadvertently add to their children's stress and actually contribute to their children underachieving. Runners can only go fast when they focus on what they are doing and not on what everyone else is doing.

Comparing your children with others on the team or in the league is a great strategy if you'd like them to fail. Instead encourage you runner to stay in their own lane focusing on their stride, form and race strategy and what they are doing.

5. KEEP THE SPORT IN PERSPECTIVE

Help your children understand that running is just a sport and is not larger than life. Teach them that the main purposes of their sport are to master new skills, feel good about themselves and *have fun*.

Help them understand that if they have a bad race or meet, this does not mean that they are a bad person or a failure. Help them view their losses and setbacks as a normal and healthy part of the learning process and a necessary prerequisite to ultimate success.

Remember, your children can only learn these lessons if you, as the adult, keep their running in the proper perspective.

6. DON'T BRIBE YOUR CHILDREN TO RUN, JUMP, THROW

Running should be something your children do because *they* want to do it.

It's not your job to try and motivate them to go harder and reach for certain goals. The goals and dreams that your children have at the track should be *their* goals and dreams *not yours*.

Bribing your children to run with money and incentive gifts gives them the wrong message about the purpose of their sport, and ultimately serves as a de-motivator for them.

Instead, encourage your children to take ownership of the sport and to run, jump, throw for themselves- because they like it, because it makes them feel good and because they have goals that they'd like to achieve.

7. BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD

Keep in mind that how you conduct yourself in relation to your children's running provides them with very compelling and powerful on-going life lessons.

This education starts with the comments that you make to them about their coach. It includes your treatment of their teammates and opponents before and after the races. It's strongly shaped by how you behave at meets, how you handle their setbacks and failures, and whether you're a good sport or not.

Remember, your actions always speak louder than your words, and your children are constantly listening to every "word" that you say. Do you know exactly what life lessons you are modeling for your children?

Remember, winning track & field Parents understand what's really at stake whenever their children get up to the starting line to race. It's not the race's outcome, trophy or medal or ribbon or track records that are important. It's not the qualifying times or a chance for a college scholarship that matters.

What's really at stake here is your sons or daughter's long-term happiness and psychological well being, not to mention the health of your parent-child relationship. A winning track & field parent always keeps this in mind.

Please contact:

Mike Aversa Maversa146@aol.com or jomarie7@optonline.net

ATTENTION ALL COACHES:

For our program to be successful, we need your help.
PLEASE VOLUNTEER!!!

Coaches' certification and registration March 19, 2009 7:30PM Dobrow Complex

(You need only to take **one** certification course per year for any number of sports).