

Planning - Preparation



Most programmes for school athletics meetings are firmly established, but that does not mean they can not be altered or improved.

When planning or amending an existing programme make sure you allow time for the children to **warm up and**

stretch. And encourage them to do so. A proper warm up is important and all too often kids come straight from class or hop off the bus and go into an explosive activity. As well as the injury risk, a warmed up athlete performs better. Kids who believe they are indeluctable may be persuaded to warm up and stretch on the basis of running faster or jumping further.

Peer pressure often holds young athletes back – they do not know how to warm up and stretch and don't wish to be seen doing it wrong. Others are reluctant as warming up can be seen as showing off. Therefore it is important for children to be taught a **warm up and stretch routine** and preferably carry it out as a group activity. (See page 9).

Time should also be allowed for jumpers to mark out a run up. Young athletes need to be encouraged to establish a **consistent run up** for high and long jumps, to memorise it and to practise it. Come sports or championship day they simply pace out their run up and mark it – then spend the time with practise jumps rather than practise run ups.

For **high jump** it is advisable to have tape or pieces of coloured cloth with a flat headed drawing pin available for markers. This avoids a clutter of shoes used as check marks on the runway.

Meet programmes must be mindful of the **events that are frequently doubled up.** The 100 metre runner will invariably do the 200m as well, and most sprinters are good long jumpers. So it is advisable to have these events as far apart as the programme allows. Same for the 800m and 1500m. And 400-800 is a common double, as is the 200 and 400m. Try and create a workable programme that is best for the athlete rather than what is expedient for the school.

