

**Stirling University Athletics Club**  
**Including Cross Country Running**  
**Safety Regulations**



**1. General**

In athletics there exists a responsibility both for awareness of the need for safety precautions and for their observance at all times, by participants and spectators alike. The coach, or instructor, must ensure that the student is made fully aware of the potential dangers involved, of the necessary safety precautions to be observed and the rules which must be obeyed.

**2. Field Events**

- a) Field events - especially throwing events - in athletics can, of their very nature, be a danger unless they are carried out and supervised with care. There is no need for there to be any danger: this is borne out by the hundreds of thousands of throws and jumps that are made each year without mishap.
- b) In practice, THROWING events cannot properly be taught in class instruction except by way of preliminary demonstration. In general it is recommended that the size of groups to be coached should be limited to a number that can be easily and effectively controlled:
  - (i) Throwing implements should at all times be treated with respect: they should not be played about with, or mis-handled, when carried from pavilion to the playing-field.
  - (ii) All throwers should stand well behind the circle or scratch line and remain there until one of them is told to move forward to make a throw. Students awaiting their throws must stand well clear from the circle and away from the direction of the throw.
  - (iii) Particular care should be taken to see that when the grass is wet, implements should be dried before each throw.
  - (iv) Only one student should be allowed to throw at a time and both he and the coach must make sure that there is no one in the general area of the intended line of flight of the implement before the throw is made. A wide margin of error should be allowed for. It is important that this responsibility should rest with the student as well as the coach.
  - (v) It is important that the thrower shall remain behind the circle or scratch line after throwing; he must not immediately run after the implement. The implement must be retrieved only on

instruction, and then it must be carried back in the correct way to the circle or scratch line. In no circumstances must it be thrown back.

- (vi) Left-handed throwers should work together at one end of the scratch line (the thrower's left)
- (vii) Footwear must provide a firm foothold.
- (viii) Stop-nets are now obtainable for discus for coaching in a limited area or indoors.
- (ix) Throwing areas should be clearly marked out by poles linked by rope to stop people wandering into them by accident.
- (x) Equipment should be stored securely to prevent unauthorised use.

### **Javelin**

- (xi) If possible, javelins should be carried in portable storage stands which can be taken from storage onto the practice or competition area. The athlete must never run with a javelin except while throwing. When a single javelin is being moved, both ends should be covered with a block of cork or some other protective material.
- (xii) Javelins should never be left stuck in the ground at a dangerous angle. At the assembly point they should be kept in a vertical position, either in the ground or in storage racks.
- (xiii) Before a javelin is removed from the ground, it should first be pushed up into a vertical position. It should then be carried in the same vertical position, with the point as near to the ground as possible.
- (xiv) Whenever possible, a surfaced area should be provided for the javelin run-up, since this gives a firmer foothold than grass.

### **Discus**

- (x) A discus with cracks, worn rims or projecting rivet heads should never be used.
- (xvi) Practice throwing should be confined to safe areas with adequate space for waiting throwers to stand well back. In restricted areas, and for high-level competitions, safety nets should always be provided.

## **The Shot**

- (xvii) Athletes should never be allowed to play with the shot, especially when other people are nearby.
- (xviii) Care is needed when shots are being taken from or returned to their storage place.

## **The Hammer**

- (xix) Protective cages are essential for competition or in restricted areas. The frame must be firmly fixed to the ground. The cage may be made of metal, wire mesh or fibre netting. Nylon or fibre nets must not be rigid. Guy lines must be well clear of sector lines.
- (xx) Practice turns should only be allowed within the cage.
- (xxi) Only purpose-made hammers should be used. The spindle must be free to rotate. Bent, rusty or worn wires are dangerous.

In practice, in JUMPING, it may not always be possible to provide full-size landing areas for the high jump and pole vault, but in all cases it is essential that they shall be of adequate size. This applies especially to the width (parallel to the bar) of a high jump landing area as some jumpers approach the bar at a very acute angle.

If the edges of a landing area are lined with wood or concrete, this should be flush with the ground, and covered at places where a jumper is likely to hit it. A convenient and adequate cover can be made of small sacks loosely filled with cork, granular chips or rubber scrap. In the pole vault the landing area should be built up to a height of three or four feet with rubber scrap.

- (ii) The sand in the long and triple jump landing areas should be of 'sharp' sand that will not cake, and it should be deep enough to ensure that there will be no jar on landing. It should be dug over every few jumps with a fork or a spade; a rake is adequate only for levelling. It is important to see that these implements are not left lying near the landing areas where they might injure a jumper falling out of the landing area, and they should never be left lying on the ground with the teeth pointing upwards. It is important to ensure that the sand is free from pieces of metal, wire or glass.
- (iii) The instructor and the jumper must be careful to see that no jump is made while the landing area is being dug or raked.

- (iv) Where the runway is of cinder or earth, constant attention is necessary to ensure that the surface is even and firm.
- (v) The long jump take-off board must be of regulation dimensions and must be firmly fixed in the ground. This board should be painted white and kept clean at all times. A rocking board may cause serious damage to the instep. When a cinder runway becomes worn so that the edge of the take-off board is no longer level with the cinder it should be repacked and rolled; but in the case of a grass runway the worn area should be dug out and replaced with a large thick sod which should be watered in and rolled and left at least 24 hours before it is used.
- (vi) It is always dangerous to have the take-off boards for the long jump and triple jump on the same runway. Different landing areas should be provided for each event. When only one landing area can be provided, the runway should be wide enough for staggered boards and the landing area made wider.

**Pole Vault and High Jump SOFT LANDING AREAS:**

- (i) Teachers and coaches of athletics should be aware of the real danger of serious and permanent injury which may result from the method of high jumping known as the 'Fosbury Flop' in which the athlete leaps backwards over the high jump bar and lands on the upper part of his back.
- (ii) For athletes using this technique, the normal sandpit landing area is totally inadequate and dangerous. Practice of this technique, by those who choose to employ it despite the inherent risks, should be undertaken only at Universities and centres where proper built-up soft landing area facilities and expert coaching are available and the athlete has received appropriate instruction.
- (iii) Every endeavour must be made to provide suitable landing areas for high jumpers and pole vaulters, but responsibility rests on the officials in these events to check that the landing area is safely prepared and suitable for them before attempting to compete.
- (iv) Details of the dimensions of soft landing areas are as follows:
 

High Jump	:	Not less than 5 metres long (that is, at the take-off side), by 4 metres wide.
Pole Vault	:	Not less than 5 metres by 5 metres.
- (v) Only landing areas manufactured by well-known and established firms should be used, and these must be checked regularly to see

that they conform to standard. A list of these firms is issued annually by the A.A.A. (Amateur Athletics Association)

**3. Competitions**

- a) in order to avoid accidents, sectors should be roped off. These ropes should be of such height that they cannot be casually stepped over. The ropes should be well away from the sector lines marked on the ground for each event.
- b) Instructions must be given that implements must be thrown during practice only from the circles or scratch line or the immediate vicinity thereof, that they must be returned during practice or competition by hand, and that they must not be thrown back to the starting area.
- c) Besides the roping off, it is important to have permanent notices displayed outside the ropes to warn spectators who may unthinkingly step over or under the ropes.
- d) It is important to site the circles and scratch lines so that there is no likelihood of the implement landing among spectators, or judges or competitors in other events, either in a fair throw or if an implement slips out of the competitor's hand.
- e) Definite instructions must be given as to who (competitor or steward) is to retrieve and return the implement. It must never be thrown back.
- f) One of the judges of field events should, between trials (while the jump or throw is being measured) stand in the circles, on the scratch line, or in front of the take-off board, in order to make sure that the next competitor does not take his trial until all is clear.
- g) Spectators and other competitors must be kept well away and out of the danger area when a competitor is throwing.
- h) A loud hailer or some other form of audible warning is of great value to judges of field events.
- i) In GENERAL, as there is inevitably a good deal of waiting or standing about during both instruction and competition in field events, it is advisable to stress the importance of keeping the body warm. Poor performances and pulled muscles often result from cold bodies. If a student is without a track suit he should wear a sweater, anorak or overcoat and a pair of flannel trousers. This is recommended on warm days and is of vital importance on cold days.
- k) Athletes should be encouraged to 'warm up' for all events both before practice and before competition.

- l) Every care must be exercised in the layout of grounds and training areas, especially where two or more throwing areas are positioned close to each other. It is essential to ensure that the areas are planned and positioned so that there are no 'danger zones' as far as competitors, officials and spectators are concerned.
- m) The positions of the throwing areas on many tracks are dangerous, and some discus and hammer circles are so badly positioned that the discus or hammer can, on occasions, land on the running track. At the larger athletic meetings and tracks where concentrated training takes place, a separate field event practice area should be provided.

#### **4. Track Events**

- a) Great responsibility and control are necessary to prevent accidents from spikes. Careful instruction as to care and safety precautions should be given at the earliest opportunity.
- b) All races of one lap or less should be run in lanes and it is particularly important that in the changeover in relay races this rule should be enforced.
- c) In races of more than one lap the start should be as far away from a bend as possible to avoid bunching and jockeying for position.
- d) When spikes are worn, numbers in events should be limited, e.g., in the 800 metres to eight, and the maximum numbers recommended by the Amateur Athlete Association for events should not be exceeded.
- e) The 'tape' at the finish is not a tape but a length of worsted that should easily break. It should be adjusted for height so that there is no risk of it searing the necks of competitors.
- f) Hurdles should not have loose top-bars. They should be rigidly constructed, and have a smooth rounded finish free from the danger of sharp or protruding edges. They must be of correct weight and resistance.

#### **5. Care in the Use of Starting Pistols**

- a) There is no such thing as a safe fire-arm. Large-bore starting pistols and those capable of conversion to take live ammunition are subject to licence, regular police notification and strict safety precautions.
- b) A starting pistol must never be held close to the eyes. Ammunition must never be tampered with.

- c) A starting pistol should never be left loaded. After use, the slide or magazine should be locked in a safe place.
- d) For security reasons, all starting pistols should be marked with the name of the owner or University. The loss of guns and ammunition should be investigated immediately and reported to the Sports Union President.
- e) It is recommended that S.A.A.A.\* pamphlets should be read as these are updated regularly.

\* Scottish Amateur Athletics Association

### **Cross Country**

- a) The start should be sufficiently wide in order to eliminate the danger of spiking. Teams should assemble in line astern from the strongest runner.
- b) There should be a clear and lengthy approach run to allow for the sorting out of competitors before the first obstacle which should be of sufficient width to prevent the bunching up and queuing of competitors.
- c) The course should be planned to avoid dangerous points on route. The crossing of roads, railways and streams, difficult areas near to traffic, muddy and slippery loose surfaces, deep ditches, glass, barbed wire, etc., should always be avoided.
- d) The organisers should arrange first aid and casualty transport at various points on route and the base facilities should include hot showers, washing and changing facilities and drinks to meet the effects of extreme weather conditions.