IAAF Kids' Athletics - A Team Event for Children
(Part 2: The competition programme)

by Ch. Gosoli, D. Massin, W. Vonstein; Edited by Harald Müller

This article is based on the manual "IAAF Kids' Athletics - A Team Event for Children" written and edited by Dieter Massin et.al.

1. Age Groups and Event Program

"IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" is carried out in three age groups:

- Group I: children at the ages of   8 and   9 years
- Group II: children at the ages of 10 and 11 years
- Group III: children at the ages of 12 and 13 years

In the following examples of the event programme can give an impression on the type of competition events used.
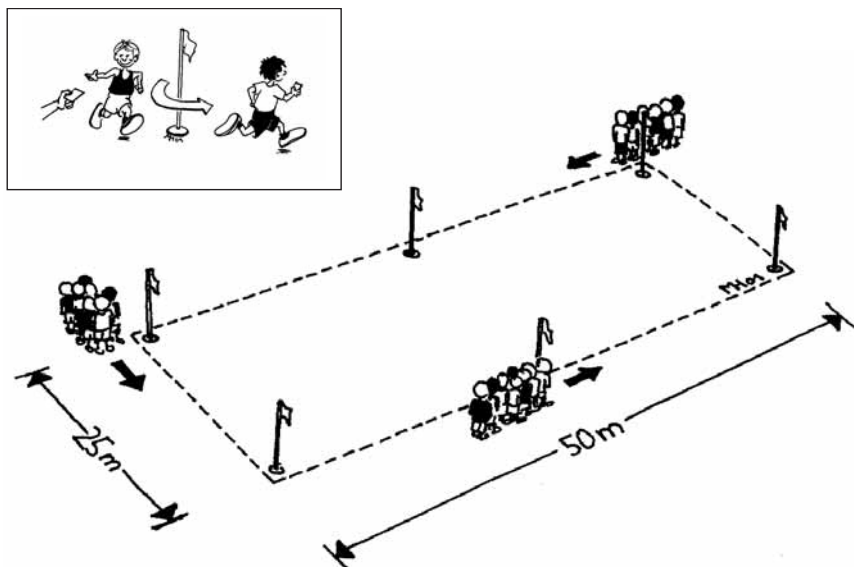
AGE GROUPS	I	II	III
AGE (in years)	8-9	10-11	12-13
Sprinting/Running Event Group			
Sprint/Hurdles		X	X
Sprint/Slalom			X
"Formula-One"	X	X	X
Endurance Running	X	X	X
Jumping Event Group			
Pole Long Jumping		X	X
Rope Skipping	X		
Forward Squat Jumping	X	X	
Cross Hopping	X	X	X
Ladder Running			X
Throwing Event Group			
Target Throwing	X	X	
KIDS Javelin Throwing	X	X	X
Knee Throwing	X		
Overhead Backward Throwing			X
Rotational Throwing		X	X
Total events	8	9	10

1.1 Endurance Running

Eight-minute run using a course that is about 150 m

Kids' discipline name: "Heartbeat"

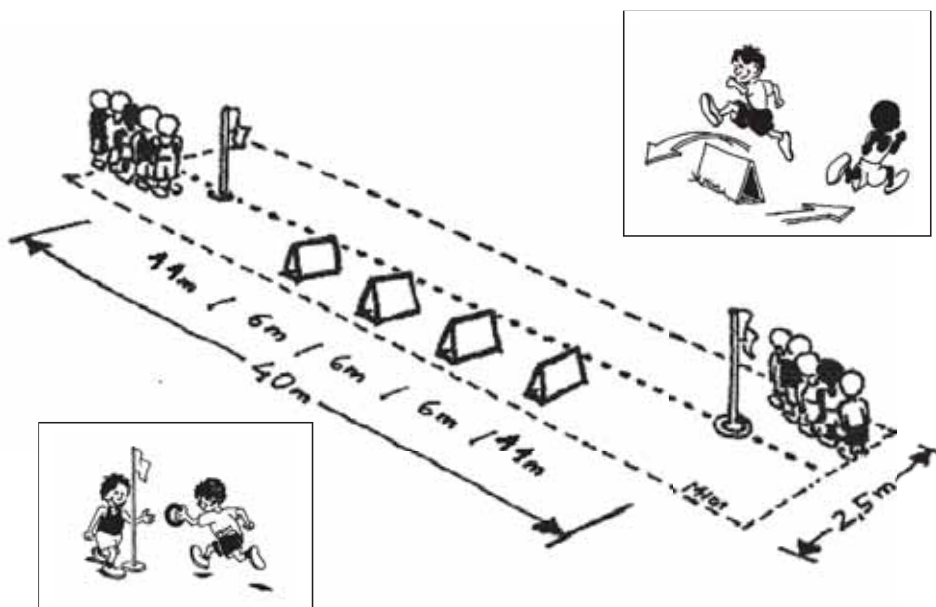**Suitable for:**   Age groups I, II and III

1.2 Sprint / Hurdles

Shuttle relay of combined sprint and hurdle distances

Kids' discipline name: "Kanga's Escape"

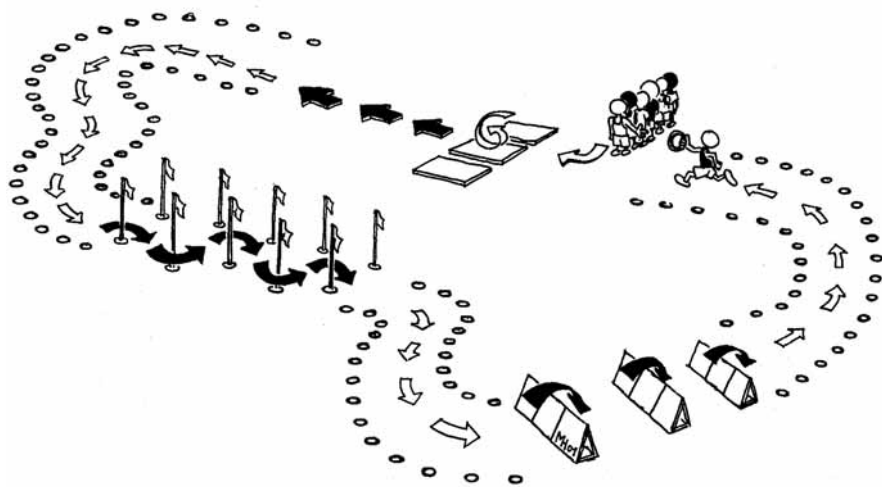**Suitable for:**   Age groups II and III

1.3 Sprint-, Hurdles- and Slalom Course

Relay as a combination of flat-, hurdles- and slalom-sprint

Kids' discipline name: "Formula One"

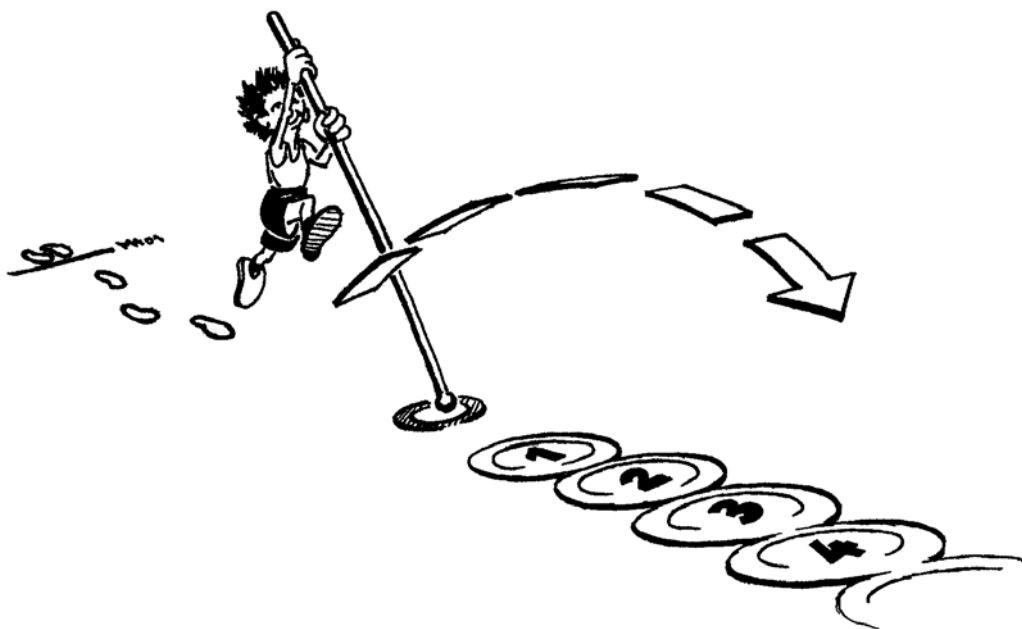**Suitable for:**   Age groups I, II and III

1.4 Pole Long Jumping

Jump for distance using a pole

Kids' discipline name: "Pole Flying"

Suitable for: Age groups II and III

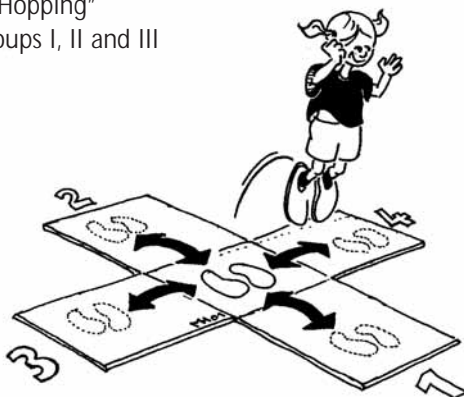## 1.5 Cross Hopping

Two-footed hops with change of direction
Kids' discipline name: "Cross-Hopping"
Suitable for: Age groups I, II and III

1.6 KIDS-Javelin Throwing

One-armed throws for distance with a KIDS-Javelin
Kids' discipline name: "Turbo Throw"
Suitable for: Age groups I, II and III

1.7 Rotational Throwing

Throws at various, difficult targets using a rotational style
Kids' discipline name: "Tornado"
Suitable for: Age groups II and III

2.   Materials and Equipment

In some cases, specially developed and constructed pieces of equipment are required for the conduct of the "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" program. This equipment can be put together very easily, transported without any problem and set up or taken down quickly.

Moreover, its flashy colouring tends to stimulate children to take part actively.

All the equipment, of course, is constructed and produced with the highest possible security in mind.

3.   Location and Duration

The spatial requirement for the "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" location is straightforward. An even area (e.g. lawn, ash court or asphalt) 60m x 30m is all that is necessary.

The event happens within a reasonable time limit. Specifically, the complete event (which usually means 9 teams with 10 members each) can be completed in about two hours, victory ceremony included.

4.   Event Scoring –

4.1 Scoring System

One of the main principles of "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" is that the event should require neither a large number of officials nor grand technical know-how. The entire process is simplified by the fact that only team results are recorded in each discipline. In the running events time is kept in case there are more teams competing than lanes available (otherwise only a rank scoring is made). In the jumping and throwing events the sum total of the single results of each team member is recorded as team result.

As for the scoring and registration of results, they must be easy to understand, simple to calculate and announced in the shortest possible time. A complicated and

expensive scoring system, in which results are converted into points as done in the decathlon is not suitable.

The scoring system in "KIDS' ATHLETICS" is so easy that results can be posted almost instantaneously upon completion of a particular activity. The other positive feature of the team rank-order scoring system is that the final results are independent from the absolute performance of individual participants.

In summary, this simple, yet elegant, scoring scheme, is based on the following guidelines:

◆ Independent of a single participant's result (or his/her absolute performance) the results of each discipline are compared by determining the rank order of the teams according to their total result only. The rank order of teams is determined by a summation of individual team-member results, through timekeeping in some events or through the measurement of distances and/or organisation of individuals' ranking points in other events.

◆ The sum total of the personal best of all team members is the team's result in jumping and throwing events and is scored for the overall result.

◆ The maximum score depends on the number of teams competing in an age group. For example, with nine teams participating the best one gets 9 points, the second one gets 8 points, the third one gets 7 points, and so on, until the last team which gets one point.

◆ Immediately following the completion of a particular discipline the total result is transferred to and shown on the scoreboard.

◆ With two or more teams have an equal result all teams get the score that is given to that place. The following scores remain unconsidered up to the number of teams with the equal result. For example, if there are nine participating teams and three teams share exactly the same result for

3rd place, all three teams get 7 points. The scores for the 6th and 7th place (6 and 5 points, respectively) are not given away. The next team is registered as the 6th place and gets 4 points, and so on.

◆ The winner of the event is the team that reaches the highest total score at the end of all disciplines.

4.2 Overall Scoring

A "scoreboard" is used in order to have a quick registration and overall scoring.

Materials that can be used for the scoreboard include rolls of wallpaper, flipcharts, blackboards or other similar items. On this scoreboard the teams and the disciplines are tabulated.

Immediately after a discipline has terminated the event cards of each station are calculated by the event assistants and given to the scoreboard assistant for further treatment. As soon as all teams have finished a discipline and the results are booked on the scoreboard the ranking of teams in that discipline is determined. The scores are then written – in a large, legible manner with a thick felt-tip pen - in the appropriate column in the cells pertaining to each team.

After the completion of all disciplines only the single scores of each team are summed up horizontally, thus indicating the overall ranking of each team in accordance with overall scores. The winner is the team with the highest score.

Only one person is needed to do the tallying on the scoreboard. This open tabulation and calculation of results is a process of evaluation that is visible and transparent for all participants and their caretakers. Those involved can always keep updated on the progress of teams by looking at the current standings on the scoreboard throughout the event. The method certainly serves as a way of building excitement.

5.   Organization

5.1 Set-up and Take-down

The following organisational tips should be considered when conducting a "IAAF Kids' Athletics" event:

◆ All of the equipment (generally meaning the equipment needed for 9 teams) has to be delivered in a way that loading and unloading can be done at short distances.

◆ Six to eight people should be available who know and have mastered the set-up plan. A "Chief -Organizer" supervises and controls the set-up and the take-down.

◆ These six to eight people should be divided into three small groups in order to set-up the three exercising sections. It must be kept in mind, however, that a minimum of three people are needed to set-up the "Running Section", as this section requires the most extensive work (including marking of the lanes and areas and setting-up of the stations).

◆ With ten or more teams the stations have to be set up twice or the "waiting area" has to be used.

◆ The 'plan of set-up' serves as a recommendation for the arrangement of the field and should make the organization easier.

◆ After the set-up has been checked for completeness   the   arriving   children should be welcomed and motivated to be in the right mood fort the event. The basic conduct of the event should be explained   to   the   children   and   they should, then, be introduced to the event conductors.

◆ After the introductions, all of the children participate in a common warm-up (led by one of the event conductors).

◆ After the warm-up the teams are identified, the children are distributed to the different stations and, at each station, specific instructions are given as to the conduct of the first exercise.

5.2 Organization Crew (Staff and Assistants)

As in standardized/adult track and field athletics competitions, the "IAAF KIDS' ATH-LETICS" event requires helpers – assistants/judges who are committed to ensure that the event is conducted under certain regulations and procedures.

This principle holds true for the "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" program even though it is comprised of events that, in almost all cases, depart radically from the standardized, adult program of events.

Indeed, it is because of these radical differences that the "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" program requires the development of a special type of assistant/judge. The type of person sought for this role is one who is young, enthusiastic and entertaining, since there is a human dimension to the role that goes beyond the mere operating of a stopwatch or reading of a measuring tape.

Young people who are sought for these "assistant" roles are motivators, able to whip-up enthusiasm for the event, to give positive encouragement to the children, to offer skilful demonstrations of activities and to promote team spirit – one of the central ideas behind "KIDS' AHTLETICS". Moreover, the energy exuded by these young officers can be channelled advantageously toward tasks such as setting-up, taking-down, altering equipment or making adjustments to event stations.

The following individuals comprise the staff:

◆ The "Event Organizer", who has the survey and is engaged throughout the event as the main communicator and problem-solver.

◆ The "Head of the Scoreboard", who functions as the general secretary, controlling the forms, deploying the assistants and preparing the announcements.

◆ A "Starter" and four "Time Keepers" are required for the Sprinting/Running section. These individuals can also be used for set-up and take down.

◆ One to two additional assistants are needed to supervise law and order and security.

5.3 Victory Ceremony

The victory ceremony is an absolute "MUST" for any "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" competition. Children, in particular, have special appreciation for recognition of their performances.

For maximum, positive effect, the victory ceremony should take place immediately - no later than two hours after all activities have been completed. Each team and each child should leave the competition knowing the over-all result and understanding how individual effort contributed to that result.

At the victory ceremony the "Event Organizer" has the opportunity to introduce, by name, all the assistants who made a contribution to the success of the event.

Moreover, he/she has the opportunity to honour exceptional performances realized by a team or by a single athlete. In this way even an unlucky participant might be made to feel accomplished.

In short, the victory ceremony is a wonderful way to emphasize the educational value of the "IAAF KIDS' ATHLETICS" event and to motivate children to stay active.

Erratum

Note the correction for the following article in NSA 2-2002:

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- Part 1: The Concept -
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