# PROGRAMMING LITTLE ATHLETICS

### 1. Programming of Events

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
We aim to do 5 events per age group on Saturdays and 4 events per age group on twilights.

On a Saturday's, events centered on the older age groups as they have the biggest spread of events. 11-16 do 6 field events of which 3 are throws and 3 are jumps so we give them 1 jump and 1 throw event each program. This equates to a 3 week rotation thru events. We then split 800m, 1500m, and walks into this rotation.

For Example

Rotation 1 would be Sprint Hurdles, 200m, 800m, Jump, Throw
Rotation 2 would be 100m, 400m, Walks, Jump, Throw
Rotation 3 would be 100m or 200m, Long Hurdles, 1500m, Jump, Throw

Don't get caught up on trying to do events equal times it won't happen.

**Ashley (Williamstown) -**
Split Program
Under 6 - Under 8, 8.30am to 10am
5 events each with a coach following each age group. Coaches provide coaching when waiting in down time.

Under 9 – Under 17, 10am-12.30pm
5 events for 9-12 and 6 for 13-17 as the numbers are smaller.

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR) –**
Run a 3-week rotation, similar to Berwick, with 5 events each week.


**Efficient Use of the Track**

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
Most Centres will have an 8 lane track; some with a 10 lane front straight.

On Rotation 1 above we always start with sprint hurdles and 800s on the track. Hurdles start at the longest distance and height and work their way down. If a group is on a field event when it's their distance and height on hurdles they come over run the hurdles and go back to the field event, This way you have already packed up quite a few hurdles and at the end you only have 60m ones at lowest height to put away. We use lanes 3-10 for hurdles. Whilst these are on the 800s are running in lanes 1&2 and we try to maximize fields of 16 in 800s. Once hurdles are done we go into 200s and while 800s are still running we will start 200s in lanes 3-8 (6 lane races)

On Rotation 2 above while walks are on in lanes 1-3 we run 5 lane 400s 4-8 as 400s shut the whole track down - Using the timing solutions system you can start a second race in the background. They may start a race when the last child is entering the home straights.

On Rotation 3 Berwick seed the 1500s so the faster kids go in race 1 then next fastest in race 2. This way you don't have 10-minute runners in each race. Less lapping's, making it easier for finishing line volunteers.

(Werribee also seed 1500m)

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR) –**
Ballarat, for older athletes, offer a choice of a walk or a hurdle's to thin things out a little.

Ballarat scan the kids before a race, rather than the finish line.

**Ashley (Williamstown) -**
Largely the same at Williamstown. Second PC, second starter, etc. Resource dependent.

2. **Manage Big Age Groups**

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
We don't split age groups and we have a few with numbers greater than 35. Field events is the only issue with big age group so we look at splitting them in a different way. If the Age Group has for example Discus and High Jump we will send half to each event- this example works well for us and especially with HJ which I will explain later. Track events are not that big of issue with numbers – just maximize the lanes. If they can't be split like that sometimes we will split over 2 jump pits or 2 spot put areas etc. The only Age Group/Gender we currently have combined is the 15/16 Boys and 15/16 Girls everyone else is separate.

For High Jump – Berwick follow the "Combined Events" ruling, where athletes only get 8 jumps.

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR)**
Ballarat may let things role in the opening few weeks to see if group sizes change.

For High Jump - Education of team managers so that they understand the height progression and rules of the event (E.g. Passes and when to start).

**Ashley (Williamstown)**
Williamstown have separate mats for different heights and split age groups depending on Person Bests (Again resource dependent)

3. **Speed up Field Events**
   **Throwing**

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
Forget about the old way of this is how it is done you will never improve. Yes Region, State, and Open Days run the old way but at Centre Level you don't have to.

Especially in younger age groups and a lot of older ones we have athletes do all three attempts whilst it is there turn, spike the furthest in Discus or Javelin and leave the mark in Shot Put then measure the furthest attempt at the end of the event. We use numbered spikes and just write the number next to the athlete. Just think about how much time you lose between each attempt when

an athlete walks in and out of the throwing area (if it is a group of 20 athletes, and each one takes 30 seconds after you call them 10 times x 3 attempts – that adds considerable time to the event) You can also send the athletes off to a track event whilst the measuring is done as it only takes 3 helpers to measure. As I said above forget about the old way centre competition is not the Olympics.

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR)**
Ballarat will line the athletes up and call out the order progressions (Top three), may invoke a retriever to assist in moving through the program. Can help with older athletes.

**Ashley (Williamstown)**
Similar to Berwick, 3 throws in a row.

**Notes: Some centres may do three in a row for younger age groups and one at a time for older athletes**

### Long/Triple

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
Don't allow 20-30 minutes for run ups or practice jumps and only allow 1 practice run thru. You need to be into competition within 5-7 minutes. Limit the younger age groups run up distance – parents are of the myth the longer the run up the longer the jump.

Triple Jump make sure all the athletes jumping off the same board mark are in that order it wastes time constantly moving cones etc.

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR)**
Team managers to be tough with run-ups. Don't allow extra time to set these up.
Have parent helper to get kids ready at the end.

**Ashley (Williamstown)**
Williamstown will have a second person on duty at the LJ and TJ to help with the marshalling of athletes at the other end. They run concurrent pits in the LJ, but not on the TJ due to flailing limbs.

**Notes: Age plus/minus two meters based on age.**

4. **Blocks and Starting**
**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
Make sure starters are in control and not athletes; blow the whistle the athletes will soon get ready. Make sure you try to run all age groups using Blocks together so you are not constantly removing out of the way

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR)**
If possible, have extra sets of blocks that athletes are setting up while the race in front is on the start line

**Ashley (Williamstown)**
With hurdles, letting athletes have their practice as early as possible, even when the race in front is still finishing.

5. **Being Flexible**

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
If you see an issue for example timing gates don't leave the athletes standing on the start area waiting, move them onto another event or send them for a drink etc.

**Shane (Ballarat, WCR)**
Depending on the team manager. Some will try and rush the process and throw out the program – make sure you don't change the program just to cater for one age group.

6. **Keep Moving**

**Steve Wolfe (Berwick & GCR)**
Try and keep the groups moving and active, long breaks between events are not ideal, younger kids go wandering then they miss events which annoys parents. You are in control not the athletes and not the parents.

7. **Starting On Time**

Make sure you start on time if you say 8.30 then start at 8.30 – if this drifts out to 9.00 then people will not turn up until 9.00. If people are late and miss events that is not your problem. Those who are late will always be late, but they'll soon learn.