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## Born To Run

### **Introduction**

Track and Field is one of many sports that been around for a while and the average person wouldn't know. People practice for 4 to 6 hours a day to enhance your stamina and speed. I personally believe that Track and Field is one of the sports that put in the most effort, but get the least recognition and I'm not trying to put down any other sports but in Track and Field you practice to get a faster speed by doing numerous leg exercises. To enhance your stamina, coaches often make you run 3 stories of stairs without skipping any steps. Another method to enhance your stamina is to run for a long distance without taking any breaks. The key to this exercise is to run at a pace as to where you're inhaling and exhaling while gasping for breath and to run a pace as to where your legs won't wear yourself out. After reading this you'll know the background of track and field, what track and field consist of, the history of track and field, track and field's role in the Olympics, how people view it, how I view it, and about my track career.

### **Background**

Track and Field is one of the only sports that consist of a team but is also an individual sport. To the start the race each runner kneels down into the blocks which are designed to give the runner a good push off to get a faster start if it is used properly. In all races that are not ran in lanes, the start line is curved so that all of the runners start the same distance from the finish so everyone has the same distance to run. The blocks must be behind the white line which is 5cm thick. Once the runner is set into the position the reporter will say, “Runners take your marks” followed by “Set” then the runner would get into their take off position. Once you hear the gun sound you would take off out the blocks and run as fast as you could. The finishing places of athletes is determined by the order in which any part of their upper body reaches the end of the finish line.

### **What Does Track and Field Consist of?**



*Figure 1. 100m race start*

Track and Field consist of many events that make up this sport. The running events are known as sprints, middle and long-distance events, relays, and hurdling. Regular jumping events include long jump, triple jump, high jump and pole vault. The throwing events are shot put, javelin, discus and hammer. The events that consist of sprints and happens to be the most thrilling are 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1600m, 4x100m, 4x200m, 4x400m, 4x800m, and 4x1600m. Those events make up the running events.

Other events are the long jump which is where you're running then jumping into a pile of sand. Last but

not least is shot put which is where you throw a heavy ball as far as you can. Cross Country is a separate sport, however it's from Track and Field, and cross country is just one long distance race with a lot of people running at once.

It is very rare for a tie to take place. Modern day track meets are equipped with cameras that snap as the first runner cross the finish line so it's very rare if a tie is called. If it is hard to determine from the picture who the winner is the reporters have two options. One option is to pull up both runner's time and whoever have the fastest overall time wins. The other option is to put both runners in another race and whoever has the fastest time is the winner. It is very rare that a tie will happen back to back with the same runners.

### **History of Track and Field**

Track and Field is one of the oldest sports in history (Turnpike). Track and field was invented around 776 B.C by the ancient Greeks and the Pheidippides. This is when the first Olympics were ever held and running was the main event. Track and field disappeared during the Dark Ages, just as soccer did. Although this sport was originally for men, women also dominated this sport further along the road. The romans and Greeks continued this sport in their Olympic games up until A.D 394 when Emperor Theodosius banned their traditional Olympics. The development of track and field was really on a rise as a modern sport in England during the 19th century. Schools and universities began having this event and they were giving out scholarships to kids who performed with excellence in this sport. In 1849 the Royal Military Academy had its first well organized track and field meeting of the modern time. The contribution of women in track and field is a fairly recent change. In 1921 representatives from six countries formed an athletic federation for women, which amalgamated in 1936 (Jordan). Participation

of women has developed hastily in many countries in the most recent years, mainly in the United States because many schools have women track and field teams. In most of them women train for this sport the way men do. In 1896 the first modern Olympic Games were set in motion. The Olympics apprehended the dreams of athletes and matured gradually, thus making track and field a global sport for the first time.

### **Track and Field's Role in the Olympics**

The major international track and field competitions are both held under the choice of athletics. Track and field contestants make up the majority of events on the Olympic and Paralympic athletics programs, which happens every four years as we all know. Track and field events have held a prominent position at the Summer Olympics since it first became modern in 1896. The 100 meter yard dash is the most intense race in the Olympics. It's the most intense because it is a full out sprint that focuses just on speed and not stamina. This race determines who ever the fastest runner is. Lately, track stars from Jamaica have been dominating the Olympics with the fastest times in the world. We know this from the records that were kept at the previous Olympics. (Turnpike) *Figure 2. The recent Olympics*



### **How People View Track and Field**

Track and Field has a lot of viewers, especially when the Olympics comes around. Viewers love watching the events take place because a lot of them place bets on the contestants. The bets are based

on who the faster runner is, who the stronger shot put thrower is, and who has the best stamina for long distance. When the races are going on the crowd usually goes wild. They chant for their favorite runner, most of the time by yelling the runner's name for motivation. Once the race is over the crowd gives praise to whoever the winner is even if it's not the person they wanted it to be.

### **How I View Track and Field**

I love Track and Field because it's the most competitive sport that's individually. My anxiety to watch it is up to the ceiling because I ran track for two years myself. I don't think I have ever heard someone degrade this sport, however, I have heard someone degrade a runner just to spark up the competition. From experience, opponents would often do this thing called "trash talking" before the event starts to kind of scare the opponents so that they will think that the other person is faster and better at the sport. To me, this is what sparks up the competition because now you have a point to prove. I have never been the type to trash talk because I look at the bigger picture. I'd hate to trash talk someone and they end up beating me or even worse, we end up with a tie at the end of the race.

Running always put me in a state of ease. When I would have a bad day, I'd take a trip to the track and just run around to get my mind right. I would think about all the good things in life and I would always have a positive outcome of things. When I was not having a good day at school, I'd run even better than the usual at practice. On a normal day at practice I'd joke around with my teammates because I had enough confidence as to where I felt no need to practice my hardest every day.

### **My Track Career**

I ran track for a little over 2 years. I was noticed by the coach at my high school because I ran cross country which is long distance. I remember walking down the hallway at my high school and this man

grabbing my arm asking to step into his office. Once I got in the office, he brought up my cross country files. He explained that my records would really help out the track team. I went up with his offer and joined the track team. At first, the coach had me practicing to be a distance runner until the whole team had a race. Once we raced, I beat all the girls on the team that were sprinters. This is when my career started. I was the star of my high school's track team at just being a junior.

By the end of my junior year I was ranked number four in my city and ranked number 27 in the state of Michigan. My senior year came and I still had my shine up until 2 months before the city-wide championship. Before practice, I forgot to stretch out my legs and loosen up my muscles. As I ran, I kept feeling a pain in the back of my thigh so I would slow down, however, my coach kept telling me to run. All of a sudden I felt my right leg shut down. My track career ended this day. I had strained my hamstring muscle. The hamstring muscle is the muscle in your back thigh that is one of the main muscles used for running. I thought that it was just an old track myth about having to stretch before you ran but my injury was terrible. The doctor said that the only way for it to fully recover was to stop running. My whole dream was crushed because I was set to run track at Eastern Michigan University but I couldn't practice because it would just get worse. I was on crutches for 3 and a half months, this was 3 and a half months of misery. Today, I'm still not completely healed, if I sit in a certain position, I could feel a slight pain.

## **Conclusion**

Track and Field have been around for a while and this sport gives a lot of young people to live their dreams and some just an ease of mind. Ever since it was a sport, it attracted a lot of viewers. From the time it started until now. If I did not run track in high school, I don't know where I would be. It pushed

me to maintain a good grade point average for the simple fact that we had to have a minimum average of a 3.000. One day, I wish to get over my injury and get back on the track, just like old times.

### Works Cited

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