



RUN FOR FUN



“Don't Cut Out the Scissors”

The following article was written more than 10 years ago by Little Athletics NSW Coaching & Development Officer Darren Wensor and has previously appeared in several coaching magazines and newsletters, as well as the “Run for Fun”. With the recent decision by Little Athletics Australia to mandate the scissors high jump technique for some of our younger age groups, it seems timely to reprint this article, which examines the use of the scissors technique vs the “flop” by young athletes.*

Do you remember high jumping when you were of primary school age? I do . . . and despite being quite a sporting youngster with a solid Little Athletics background – I didn't like it. My main problem was the bar. Even though the foam mats were by then in use and I never experienced the thrill of landing in a sand or sawdust pit, I was not lucky enough to be jumping in the era of the rounded fibre glass bar or the elastic and foam “flexi” bar in common use today. The barrier we were expected to hurl ourselves enthusiastically over was made of metal and sported triangular edges. Who designed this thing? I presume it was to encourage you not to hit it – which was fine in theory . . .

Thank goodness things have advanced since then and most coaches and schools now have access to the less fearsome “flexi” training bar. The teaching and coaching of high jump at a novice level, however, still has its problems. In fact, the high jump, particularly in schools, seems to be the cause of more confusion, more controversy, more questions and more anxiety than any other athletics event. One issue that attracts constant attention is which high jumping technique should be taught to beginning youngsters.

The Battle Rages On . . . Scissors vs Flop

There is no consistency in Australia over this one. I know of some schools in NSW that have banned the flop technique for fear of student injury. On the other hand, I have been astounded to learn that some schools don't allow the scissors style of jumping.

Both Queensland and West Australian Little Athletics enforce the scissors style of jumping up to and including the Under 11 age group. West Australian Little Athletics states in its rules:

“The fair SCISSORS jump is one where:

- The head of the competitor does not go over the bar before the leading foot; (the foot closest to the bar at take-off).
- The head of the competitor is not below the buttocks when the buttocks clear the bar.
- The competitor's lead foot must touch the mat before any other part of the body.”

The WA rules go as far to say:

“If any U10 and U11 competitor attempts a jump which does not comply with the definition of a fair scissors jump, the jump will be considered an invalid jump.”

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Unfortunately, the scissors technique is thought by many to be an outdated relic of high jumping from when jumpers were virtually forced to land on their feet due to the unforgiving landing area. For accomplished high jumpers, this may be true. The flop technique is a far more effective method of clearing the bar, holding a biomechanical advantage over the scissors.

But remember, we're talking about a bunch of kids. Most youngsters are not strong or coordinated enough to achieve the finer points of the flop and therefore capitalise on these advantages.

So what is the answer?

My advice: Teach and encourage all novice high jumpers to initially learn and perform the scissors in preference to the flop technique. Below are the reasons why:

Safety:

"Coaching Young Athletes", a book written by the British Athletic Federation National Coaches remarks that high jump ". . . should carry a government health warning, especially where young performers are involved." (P.102). It argues that despite children wanting to mimic exciting images of the event portrayed on television by attempting the Fosbury Flop, a safe, sound teaching practice must be followed by teaching the scissors. Cited is the inability to guarantee safe landing facilities. I would also add the inability to guarantee a safe landing technique, particularly with awkward or less confident youngsters. In fact, it is rare that a school or Little Athletics Centre doesn't have a high jump "horror story" about a novice jumper hurting themselves by landing awkwardly or by completely missing the mats while attempting a Fosbury Flop high jump.

Encouraging involvement:

The scissors technique is more "user-friendly" especially for the less confident youngster. Compared to the flop, the scissors is less complex and less intimidating; the jumper stays in an upright position the entire time and gets to land on their feet. The scissors also lends itself to a number of gentle teaching progressions that young athletes can easily cope with.

Preventing bad habits:

Forcing the flop upon children at too early a stage is like teaching them to run before they can walk. Bad habits that are difficult to change can be the result. I know of a number coaches, even at the elite level, that have been forced to conduct remedial work with promising high jumpers who have never learnt or been encouraged to perform the scissors at a younger age.

The scissors technique requires the children to actually jump over the bar by lifting their hips and therefore their centre of gravity; the flop can lead to the children "falling" or "diving" over the bar, especially when the bar is at a low height. The scissors technique can be used to instil sound jumping principles such as a tall take off position, an extension of the take off leg, a driving of the free knee up towards the bar and an explosive vertical lift on take off, which can later be transferred to the execution of the flop technique.

I am often astounded by the number of young athletes who tell me that they "can't do" or "don't do" the scissors – that they "only do the flop" (or what they think is a flop – see below, under "Problems"). What they fail to understand is that most elite senior high jumpers use the scissors as an important warm up and technical drill. Even when an athlete uses the flop as their main competitive technique, they should never discard the scissors as a training drill.

Problems

Despite best intentions, however, the biggest problem most teachers and coaches will face is that not only do many kids want to do the flop, most think they can do it. Ironically, what most kids consider as doing a flop is simply a bad scissors – a sideways scissor bar clearance, their body parallel to the bar, with a landing on their back or their backside. In this case, it should be tactfully pointed out to young athletes exactly what is occurring; that instead of doing the scissors badly, they might as well do it properly and land on their feet. It also should be explained that high jump is about jumping up; and they will only continue to jump "up" while their head is up. As soon as they begin to fall back (in a "lazy" attempt to lift their feet), their power will no longer be going up in a vertical direction.



Also, younger, small, awkward, timid or non-athletic children may encounter problems in attempting to scissor onto some of the taller high jump landing mats. The high jump mat may even be higher than the child's scissors PB! Queensland Little Athletics recommends that for scissors jumping by athletes in the Under 8 to Under 11 age group, the mat depth should be a maximum of 200mm. Some sports equipment suppliers advertise "Scissors Mats" of this style. I find that a lower mat depth will often assist youngsters to land on their feet in a balanced position, which can be difficult for some children when using the higher mats designed for the flop. Lower mats also obviously provide the advantage of being able to set the bar at heights below those that are possible with a higher mat.

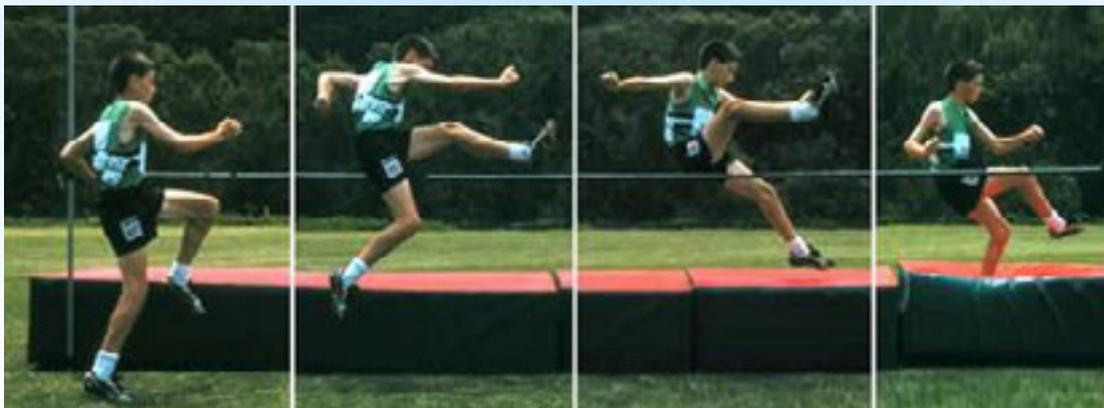
Conclusion

A child's first high jumping experience should involve using the scissors technique. It is safer, and more suitable for inexperienced youngsters. It should not be seen as an outdated technique but viewed as a vital part of the teaching process. Skipping this important progression may endanger the athlete with never reaching their full high jumping potential.

Darren Wensor

References:

- British Athletic Federation Coaches, "Coaching Young Athletes", BAF, 1996
- West Australian Little Athletics Association, "Rules for Competition", December 2002
- Queensland Little Athletics Association, Event & Equipment Specifications



* Commencing from the 2016/2017 season, the scissor technique will be the only high jump technique that is allowed to be used at any level of competition for competitors in the U10 age group and below. In order to transition to this requirement, LANSW will introduce this rule for U9 athletes in the 2015/16 season.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT...

NEIL SANDALL



Let me begin by congratulating those 60-odd centres who have been updating their centre constitutions in line with the Centre Constitution Template developed and made available so their constitutions would meet the expectations of the 2009 Associations Incorporation Act.

We are also finalising, in association with ANSW, a suitable template for those centres who are jointly operating as both a Little Athletics centre and senior club.

These are important governance steps which all our incorporated centres should be seriously thinking about finalising within the next 12 months or so.

We are also rapidly approaching our LANSW AGM/ Conference which this year will be held in Wagga Wagga on 18-19 July, with the entirely relevant conference theme "Getting back to Basics, The 3Rs - Recruitment, Retention & Recognition." Getting these things going well is a must if we are to begin sustainably growing again. Just imagine the effectiveness, in growth terms, if we were to achieve an across the board improvement of just 10% in our retention of athletes given the high "churn rate" we experience from season to season.

And what would be the result of a concerted effort to better recognise and respond to the needs of the many children and families who embrace Little Athletics for

fun rather than competition, and simply want to gain improvement in their athletic skills rather than following our championship pathways. Come to conference this year and hear from those centres whose centre practices and offerings are succeeding in growing their numbers through clever retention and recognition efforts. Your centre could benefit from this contemporary exchange of ideas in an environment where we are all still learning from each other over beneficial discussions. If you are passionate about Little Athletics and it's continuing relevance in our crowded junior sports and entertainment landscape, then this conference is a must for you and your contribution to this worthwhile debate.

On Sunday, 5 July (which hopefully will be fine, and not too cold) we will be conducting our annual State Cross Country & Road Walk Championships on Sydney's north west fringe at Scheyville (near Pitt Town) with the first event at 8.30am. We look forward to a well attended and contested series of events across the U7 to U17 age groups in cross country and U9 to U17 in the roadwalks which follow.

Till next time,

Neil Sandall
President

editorial

Many members of the LANSW board of management have had the pleasure of attending presentation days at a variety of centres since the conclusion of the summer season. It has been great to recognise the efforts of athletes in front of their peers. Not all athletes are involved in the competitive side of track and field (zone, region and state championships) and recognising the achievements of those who regularly attend their local centre is just as important.

During May, all Little Athletics centres should be holding their annual general meetings. Once these have been held the new committee should be notified to the Little Athletics office along with contact details for the main office holders. The new committees will then begin planning for the upcoming season.

In July the Little Athletics state conference will be held in Wagga Wagga. It would be great to see as many centres as possible represented as the information, networking and general good natured fun helps those office bearers of centres understand the demands of their position and how to streamline their jobs.



CHAMPIONSHIP NEWS

State Cross Country & Road Walk Championships

It's not too late to register for the 2015 State Cross Country & Road Walks - If you were in the U7 to U17 age groups last summer, you can enter into the Cross Country and if you were in the U9 to U17 age groups, you can enter the Road Walks, with both events being held at Scheyville National Park, Scheyville (near Pitt Town) on Sunday, 5 July 2015.

Late entries can be made ONLINE only. There is a late entry fee of \$25 for entries up to 24 June 2015. No entries will be taken after this time.

All relevant information can be found on the website in the Competitions section.

Following close of entries, centres will be sent a list of athletes from their centre who have entered.

Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded in each event plus the first three athletes from each centre who cross the finish line will make up a centre team and will be awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd placing.

State Multi-Event Championships

Next seasons State Multi-Event will be held at the new athletics facility at Barden Park, Dubbo on Saturday and Sunday, 5 & 6 March 2016.

If you intend on entering this event, you should book your accommodation now as there has been plenty of interest in this event.

Further information, including online registration, will be posted on the Little Athletics NSW website in the Competition section following our Annual Conference in July.

ASICS Australian Little Athletics Championships

Congratulations to the 2015 Little Athletics NSW State Team for its efforts at the ASICS Australian Little Athletics Championships on Saturday 26 April at the WA Athletics Stadium in Perth. The performance of the NSW team is summarised below:

- The Under 13 team finished third the Trevor Billingham trophy for overall team point score.
- The Under 15 team finished third in the Multi-Event team point score.
- NSW team members recorded at least seventeen personal best performances.
- In the thirty-three events on offer, the NSW team achieved eighteen medals (5 gold, 10 silver and 3 bronze).
- The team achieved forty-one Top 8 performances.
- Angus Beer broke the championship record in finishing second in the 1500m.

The NSW Under 13 team scored 615 points. Western Australia won the point score trophy for the first time with 688 points. The Victorian team finished runners-up with 674.5 points. The NSW Under 13 team also finished seventh in the Allan Triscott Trophy (handicap point score); this title was also won by Western Australia.

In the Under 15 Multi-Event competition, the four NSW team members finished in third place in the Life Members Trophy for overall point score with 205 points. Queensland won the trophy with 251 points, Victoria was second with 212 points.

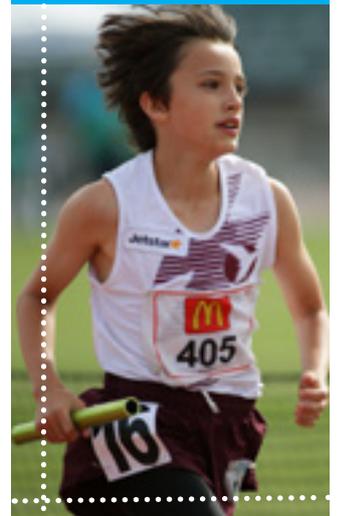
The day had begun for the NSW athletes with a tightly-bunched team warm up lap and a march past during which all team members were in step. This was followed by a very loud NSW team war cry, fittingly ending with the words "Hear us roar!", which was performed at the foot of the grandstand, right in front of the spectators.

After a three-day build-up in Perth and two preparatory team camps in the preceding weeks, it was time for the championships to begin. Over the course of the day, nearly 200 athletes from the seven state teams, some of whom were competing in up to six events in six hours, performed their best for their teams and their teammates.

A number of NSW team members recorded PBs, which is a wonderful accomplishment when performing at the highest level in Little Athletics. Everyone contributed to the overall performance of the team, both on and off the track.

Ultimately, the NSW team members will have many special memories and a bond with their fellow team members that will stand for many years to come.

Many thanks to the NSW parents, supporters and personal coaches whose support and cooperation assisted the team management with the task of building the team which in turn helped to make the campaign a memorable one. Thank you to the other State Teams for their sportsmanship and the spirit in which they competed. Finally a big thank you to the Little Athletics Western Australia Organising Committee and the volunteer officials who helped make the day such a great success.



2015 STATE TEAM

An Athlete's Experience

By Angus Beer
2015 Little Athletics NSW
U13 State Team Boys Captain



ALAC 2015 was the best team experience I've ever had.

I will always remember this trip. I have many great memories from the experiences I shared with my 25 new friends, the five team managers and competitors from other teams, both on and off the track.

Before travelling to Perth the NSW team had two team bonding camps at Narrabeen. We used these two camps to get to know each other, build friendships and our confidence as a team. We participated in many team building sessions together, and by the end of the first camp everyone knew each other. At the end of the first camp we also came up with our war cry. The war cry is a big part of the NSW team history, as every team comes up with their own war cry. Although it took us three hours to come up with four lines, it had meaning and motivated us throughout the rest of the tour. I was lucky enough to lead the war cry for 2015, and this was one of my favourite parts of my tour experience.

On the last day of camp two, we met with team members of the NSW team from 2005. It was inspiring to hear their stories and experiences from 10 years ago. It was great to hear how much they had enjoyed their ALAC experience and how they were still friends 10 years later. These former team members presented our uniforms and it was really exciting to be welcomed into a tradition of strong NSW teams. Last years Team Captains also announced the captains for the upcoming tour, and I was very grateful when I was chosen as the Boys Captain. At the end of the presentation we did our war cry for the first time in public, showing how much of a team we had become.

It was only four days later that we met at the airport all packed and ready for the five day trip to Perth. The team now knew it had a job to do, and we had to represent NSW as best we could. The days leading up to the competition were spent sightseeing around Perth and Fremantle, doing team activities, meeting other state teams and enjoying the teams welcome function. The most exciting part of the teams welcome was the war cry, where we were easily the best and loudest team there. On Saturday we had our first look at a blue track as we went to the stadium for the first time.

Sunday was competition day, and everyone was fired up and ready to compete. NSW team members performed to their best, winning heaps of medals and setting lots of personal bests. Most inspiring were the team members who tried their hardest despite not competing in their specialist events. ALAC is a team competition so every individual effort counts towards the team result. I was proud to finish 2nd in both the 800m and 1500m races, especially with a four second PB in the 1500m. The team tried our hardest, but we were unlucky to place third behind Western Australia and Victoria.

We celebrated our successes after the competition and prepared to head back to Sydney. As we got off the plane and said our final goodbyes, everyone wished we could go through the experience again. My challenge now is to work out how I can change from being a middle distance specialist to a multi event athlete so I can try out for the team as an under 15 in 2017! I strongly recommend nominating for the NSW team for ALAC if you are in the 13s or 15s age groups next year.

Hear us roar! NSW!

2015 STATE TEAM

An Athlete's Experience

By Leia Varley
2015 Little Athletics NSW
U13 State Team Girls Captain



Making the 2015 ALAC NSW team was a goal I set when I started Little Athletics many years ago. Hearing of other people's memories and the fun they had while they were away, each year made my desire to make the team stronger. I will never forget the moment when I was announced as a part of the 2015 ALAC NSW team, anxiously waiting for the phone call then finally excitement, then nerves as the thought of this being my first NSW team event, I knew this was going to be an experience that I would treasure forever.

The first camp, I can remember walking up to Cheryl and checking my name in. When she gave me that name tag saying "Team Member", printed with my name straight away gave me a boost of excitement, which I needed after a two and half hour drive to the Wagga Airport and a one hour plane flight to Sydney. I then realized I was a part of athletics NSW history and future.

Our team's first greeting started quietly, some people knowing each other, others just trying to remember familiar faces. It didn't take long until the boys and girls grouped but it took its time for the girls and boys to interact with one another. There was a mix of height in the team this year: some short, some tall, some very tall, some extremely tall, all of which were an amazing group of people to be around.

The one thing we loved the most about the camps was Alvin's games and let's just say you have never played games like these. They are unique, some loud, some quiet, some so weird you wouldn't know what to call them. The first game that led to all of Alvin's other very fun games was the "Screaming Javelin". As you had to scream for as long as you could while running as far as you could. Let's just say the girls won, well of course. Best scream went to Kristina Moore as she held hers for so long; she didn't even need to take a step because she was already out of breath.

The training sessions allowed us to not only try to improve our individual events but to work and support each other in each group, throwers helping with technique, runners running together, everyone working as a team to get the best results for when we went to Perth. This environment was what I love training in, with team members all focused on their goals. A recovery from the training sessions was supposed to be a swim in the pool but turned out to be a fighting ring, with people jumping on each other's back trying to see who could stay on the longest or who could swim the fastest.

Camp two consisted of a presentation, not only introducing and congratulating the members on being selected but also welcoming back the team members of the 2005 team. We got to hear about their memories in the team, some funny, some stupid, this making us more excited and pumped for what awaited. At the presentation they announced the 2015 captains, who would lead the NSW team into Perth. I had the pleasure of being chosen as the captain alongside Angus Beer, our badges were presented to us by the 2014 captains and watching were also the 2005 captains. After that, Godfrey, Hannah and I were off back to airport for our flight home, yet to come back to Sydney in another two days.

Wednesday the 22nd of April was the day the country athletes travelled to Sydney, going up a day early making sure we were on time for the plane departure. Well that was the plan. Unfortunately my plane got cancelled due to the weather in Sydney at the time, forcing mum and I to drive to Albury to stay the night to try for the 6:30am flight. Just by my luck this flight also got delayed, making flying out with the team out of the question.

The 23rd of April At 8:00 was when the team arrived at the airport ready for their adventure to Perth. I do not know what went on there but I am guessing it was very exciting for teammates, emotional for parents and stressful for team managers. Meanwhile I somehow finally got on a plane and was on my way to Sydney.

Arriving at Sydney the team had already left for Perth; Darren saved the day staying behind to accompany me on my later flight to Perth. This wasn't boring as the TV's on the back of the seats were quite amusing and Darren was always up for a chat.

Each day in Perth was packed with adventure and fun, and amazing memories with the team. Jokes told, laughs spread, and songs sung. Still being fun, it was serious at the same time. Activities we participated in Perth included laser tag, walking through the markets as well as learning the history of the Western Australian jail. For the first two nights we were allowed to go to Woolworths and buy some necessary food for competition day, everyone coming out with bags full of food that in the end we didn't actually get time to eat.

The NSW team stayed at a beautiful hotel but unfortunately we had to share it with South Australia. Yes they were loud, always staring and whispering when the mighty NSW walked past, but this got us in the zone.

The teams welcome was intense; you could feel the competition in the atmosphere. NSW got swarmed by teams as we arrived because of everyone wanting to swap badges so fast. We had the teams welcome in the WA Government House. There were welcome speeches by the official dignitaries and an inspirational speech by Kim Mickle the Olympian javelin thrower. The NSW team also has a management of two Olympians, a walker and long distance runner. The loudest moment of it all was the moment the teams did their war cry. NSW was ready, all of our early morning practice was put into action. Angus the captain blew their heads off with his introduction and then the team let it fly. Clearly we had the best chant. The team greetings also allowed us to mix with the other team's as well as having afternoon tea. The best part of the evening was when everyone was talking while NSW was about to deliver their last warning to the other teams, with them all jumping back not even expecting anything, we again screamed our war cry leaving them in a war cry fight.

The next competition stage was the track familiarisation; this is where the teams get to feel what competition would be like. Runners practicing their starts, jumpers getting their run ups organised, throwers feeling the ring and viewing where their eyes are going to line up. When NSW was on the track, eyes were all on us, we were the team to beat after so many successful years.

It was an early start to competition day, you could tell that everyone was nervous; this is what the experience is about. Wearing our NSW uniform, we warmed up as a team. Before any competition started there was of course the opening ceremony, introducing each team, laying of an ANZAC wreath, bag pipes, synchronised team marching and finally the officials declaring it the games to be open. When this was over, everything got very real. We all knew what we were here to do.

As soon as the first event started the day just flew. My discus was the first event, with the High Jump next to me, cheering on NSW when possible. When I left the tent in the morning I wasn't back until the end of the day as my events were one after the other. Discus to medal presentation to javelin and so on. This was also occurring with other NSW members, some having events doubling up. The NSW team was grateful to have two amazing runners from WA, bringing athlete's lunch if they were out at events. First score update was at noon, WA 3rd, NSW 2nd and VIC 1st, points were very close. Everyone achieved outstanding results and did their best. NSW U13's came home with 3 gold's, 4 silvers and 3 bronzes. In the Under 13 Relay's we also came 2nd in the girls and 4th in the boys. In the Under 15 Multi Event Nick Frost successfully brought home the gold medal to win the boys overall event.

After all events were over, it was the first time for many of us to catch up and see how everyone had done before quickly getting ready for the closing ceremony. We were all nervous to hear the results and see how we went. Both the U13 and the U15 NSW teams finished 3rd overall with Victoria 2nd and Western Australia 1st. We walked the track together again all a little more relaxed this time, waving to the camera crews as we went past. Everyone was thanked for their contributions, particularly Perth for putting on a great event. Next year's hosts were announced with the banner being handed over to South Australia. The competition was then announced closed. Now it was time to let our hair down with our final team dinner. Unbeknown to the competitors, NSW Little Athletics had organised a yummy surprise meal, disco and catch up with our parents, friends and family.

Sunday night was emotional, tired from the day of competition, excited with our achievements, but knowing that it was nearly time to say goodbye. We thanked the management for being so supportive and always putting smiles on our faces, getting us to and from the camps. Because Sydney is in the opposite direction to where I live Mum, Dad and I went home on another flight, not flying home with your team mates was hard, but it wasn't a goodbye it was, I'll see you again soon. Giving my last hugs and saying tearful goodbyes to my new lifelong friends, we were off. I will never forget this experience, waking up home the next day in my own bed not to hear the chatter of your NSW team mates was sad. A special shout out to all the country kids, believe in yourself, train hard and do your best, this is an experience you will never forget so have a go and get involved. This was what athletics is all about. NSW was ready!!

REMINDER TO ALL ATHLETES WINTER TEEN ATHLETICS - JULY DATES!!

Little Athletics NSW and Athletics NSW members registered in the U12- U18 age groups for the 2014-2015 season are encouraged to take part in this great initiative hosted by the North Metropolitan Zone and Parramatta Little Athletics Centre.

Winter Teen Athletics has been taking place at Barton Park, Parramatta and there are two remaining dates left to go in July. Athletes can attend one or both Friday evenings, so put the dates in your diary now! **3 July 2015 & 24 July 2015**

Come and have fun, socialise with teenagers from other clubs and enjoy the quality competition on a dedicated grass athletics track in readiness for the school season. Parking is really easy and the kids will really enjoy it. In the spirit of athletics being a community sport run by volunteers, each car load of athletes is expected to provide at least one parent helper to ensure the night runs efficiently. The sessions are scheduled between 6:30pm- 8:30pm, and the BBQ and canteen will be open each night.

Who can participate? Any U12-U18 athlete registered with either an Athletics NSW club or a Little Athletics centre. (This means you are covered by insurance).

Cost: \$2 per athlete per night

Clothing: Club shirt showing your current season rego number and any warm tracksuit/skins.

The events that will be covered over these evening sessions are Shot-put, Discus, Javelin, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Sprints and Middle Distance. Other events may be available upon request and events will be subject to weather conditions, so please contact the centre directly prior to the evening session, if you hope to attend/propose a specific event. The series will include fun and unusual events - 300m and 60m in addition to the usual distances, jumps and throws.

Results will be published using first name and initial of last name on the plac.org.au website. You will be able to provide these results to both school and zone selectors, so it is well worth getting results over the winter.

For further information, please refer to the Parramatta Little Athletics/Seniors Website at www.plac.org.au or call Cathy Eaton, Northern Metropolitan Zone Coordinator 0415 952 141.



COACHES CORNER

Have you suffered (or thought you have suffered) from shin splints before? Have you ever wondered what shin splints are? Well here is a short article which might give you a general understanding of this condition.

SHIN SPLINTS

<http://www.runnersworld.com/tag/shin-splints>



Shin splints, the catch-all term for lower leg pain that occurs below the knee either on the front outside part of the leg (anterior shin splints) or the inside of the leg (medial shin splints), are the bane of many athletes, runners, tennis players, even dancers. They often plague beginning runners who do not build their mileage gradually enough or seasoned runners who abruptly change their workout regimen, suddenly adding too much mileage, for example, or switching from running on flat surfaces to hills.

The nature of shin splints, also known as medial tibial stress syndrome (MTSS), most often can be captured in four words: too much, too soon.

Identifying symptoms of shin splints

Shin pain doesn't always mean you have shin splints. It might be a sign of some other problem. The following are two conditions that are sometimes mistakenly diagnosed as shin splints.

Pain on the anterior (outside) part of the lower leg may be compartment syndrome—a swelling of muscles within a closed compartment—which creates pressure. To diagnose this condition, special techniques are used to measure the amount of pressure. Sometimes surgical “decompression” is required. The symptoms of compartment syndrome include leg pain, unusual nerve sensations, and eventually muscle weakness.

Pain in the lower leg could also be a stress fracture (an incomplete crack in the bone), which is a far more serious injury than shin splints. A bone scan is the definitive tool for diagnosing a stress fracture. However, there are clues you can look for that will signal whether or not you should get a bone scan.

The pain of shin splints is also more generalized than that of a stress fracture. Press your fingertips along your shin, and if you can find a definite spot of sharp pain, it's a sign of a stress fracture. Additionally, stress fractures often feel better in the morning because the bone has rested all night; shin splints often feel worse in the morning because the soft tissue tightens overnight. Shin splints are also at their most painful when you forcibly try to lift your foot up at the ankle and flex your foot.

Common causes of shin splints

There can be a number of factors at work, such as overpronation (a frequent cause of medial shin splints), inadequate stretching, worn shoes, or excessive stress placed on one leg or one hip from running on cambered roads or always running in the same direction on a track. Typically, one leg is involved and it is almost always the runner's dominant one. If you're right-handed, you're usually right-footed as well, and that's the leg that's going to hurt.

The most common site for shin splints is the medial area (the inside of the shin). Anterior shin splints (toward the outside of the leg) usually result from an imbalance between the calf muscles and the muscles in the front of your leg, and often afflict beginners who either have not yet adjusted to the stresses of running or are not stretching enough.

But what exactly is a shin splint? There's no end-all consensus among sports scientists, and theories have included small tears in the muscle that's pulled off the bone, an inflammation of the periosteum [a thin sheath of tissue that wraps around the tibia, or shin bone], an inflammation of the muscle, or some combination of these. Fortunately, experts agree on how to treat them.

Treatment of shin splints

- Experts agree that when shin splints strike you should stop running completely or decrease your training depending on the extent and duration of pain. Then, as a first step, ice your shin to reduce inflammation. Here are some other treatments you can try:
- Gently stretch your Achilles if you have medial shin splints, and your calves if you have anterior shin splints. Also, try this stretch for your shins: Kneel on a carpeted floor, legs and feet together and toes pointed directly back. Then slowly sit back onto your calves and heels, pushing your ankles into the floor until you feel tension in the muscles of your shin. Hold for 10 to 12 seconds, relax and repeat.
- In a sitting position, trace the alphabet on the floor with your toes. Do this with each leg. Or alternate walking on your heels for 30 seconds with 30 seconds of regular walking. Repeat four times. These exercises are good for both recovery and prevention. Try to do them three times a day.

- If you continue running, wrap your leg before you go out. Use either tape or an Ace bandage, starting just above the ankle and continuing to just below the knee. Keep wrapping your leg until the pain goes away, which usually takes three to six weeks. "What you're doing is binding the tendons up against the shaft of the shin to prevent stress," Laps says.
- Consider cross-training for a while to let your shin heal. Swim, run in the pool or ride a bike.
- When you return to running, increase your mileage slowly, no more than 10 percent weekly.
- Make sure you wear the correct running shoes for your foot type specifically, overpronators should wear motion-control shoes. Severe overpronators may need orthotics.
- Have two pairs of shoes and alternate wearing them to vary the stresses on your legs.
- Avoid hills and excessively hard surfaces until shin pain goes away completely, then re-introduce them gradually to prevent a recurrence.
- If you frequently run on roads with an obvious camber, run out and back on the same side of the road. Likewise, when running on a track, switch directions.
- If you are prone to developing shin splints, stretch your calves and Achilles regularly as a preventive measure.

COACHING & DEVELOPMENT DIARY



School Holiday Coaching Clinics

Limited numbers, so register online today at lansw.com.au!

CLOSING DATES:

Week 1 Clinics - 29 June 2015
Week 2 Clinics - 3 July 2015

JUNIOR CLINICS

WHERE:

Port Hacking
Springwood
Bathurst
Winston Hills

Thurs, 2 July 2015
Mon, 6 July 2015
Tues, 7 July 2015
Fri, 10 July 2015

AGE GROUP:

U8-U11 (open to all children)

TIME:

9am-12pm (registration 8.45am)

COST (per clinic):

\$35 per athlete

SENIOR CLINICS

WHERE:

Port Hacking
Bathurst
Winston Hills

Thurs, 2 July 2015
Tues, 7 July 2015
Fri, 10 July 2015

Sprints & Throws
Sprints & Jumps
Sprints & Jumps

AGE GROUP:

U12-U17 (open to all children)

TIME:

12.30pm-2.30pm (registration from 8.45am)

COST (per clinic):

\$30 per athlete

Woy Woy Little Athletics Centre

Woy Woy Little Athletics is excited to announce that we had a special guest appear at our Presentation Night on the 15th May 2015. Mr Josh Ross - a former London Olympic Games sprinter, winner of the Stawell Gift, not once but twice, and the 3rd fastest 100m Australian Sprinter ever. Josh began his career as a Little Athlete at Woy Woy Little Athletics centre when he was just 7 years old and agreed to not only come along to our presentation night but also held 2 x 45 minute sprint training sessions the following day on Saturday, 16 May.

It was an amazing opportunity for both our Junior and Senior Athletes.



Holroyd Little Athletics Centre

SOCIAL NIGHT FOR HOLROYD PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Recently the Holroyd Centre decided it was time to combine a Social Night with trying to give a little something back to our major sponsor, Club Merrylands Bowling. It was decided to experiment with a combined adults and athletes activity: Disco for the youngsters and Barefoot Bowls for the adults.

The club was generous enough to donate a suitable room for the disco, with two of our members having great disco equipment and popular music, which was also a donation. The athletes had a great time, with drinks and food also included, whilst their parents were exploring the joys of barefoot bowling.

Two of our committee minded the athletes, leaving the parents free to bowl and then enjoy the amenities of the club. Most had a nice dinner, before coming to collect their offspring and having a final dance with them. We have been bombarded with requests for another similar function, so considered the night an outstanding success.

It was a success from a committee point of view too, in that we provided an enjoyable social evening, combined with pleasing our sponsors. Other centres should explore the possibilities.

Maria McConville.



Find a Word



IN THE BATHROOM



BATHTUB
 COMB
 CONDITIONER
 HAIRBRUSH
 MAT
 MIRROR
 TOILET
 SCALES

SHAMPOO
 SHOWER
 SINK
 SOAP
 TISSUES
 TOOTHBRUSH
 TOWELS
 WATER

C	O	N	D	I	T	I	O	N	E	R
O	P	E	P	A	O	S	R	T	O	Y
M	K	R	D	E	O	V	E	S	L	T
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R	O	A	E	I	P	M	O	H	S	A
N	O	M	R	T	A	E	R	E	I	H

CONGRATULATIONS

to U12 Little Athlete **Chelsea Payne** from
 Tuggerah Lakes Mingara LAC who won last edition's Find-a-Word!!

To win a \$50 gift voucher from



send completed puzzle, along with your
 name and address to LANSW
 Locked Bag 85, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
 by 10 July 2015.

Name: _____

Centre: _____ Age Group: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

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Locked Bag 85, PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
 (90-92 Harris Street, HARRIS PARK 2150)
 Tel: (02) 9633 4511 or 1800 451 295
 Fax: (02) 9633 2821
 Email: admin@lansw.com.au
 Website: littleathletics.com.au

