

RUNNING SHOES Whether your child is a cross country, track or field athlete, a good fitting pair of running shoes that accommodates both support and cushion needs will keep them moving all season long. When does my child need to replace his/her running shoes? Generally shoes wear down after 300 to 500 miles or every 3 to 6 months.

WORKOUT CLOTHES Leave the heavy, baggy sweat pants and sweatshirt at home as they restrict movement. Ideally, it is best to avoid cotton materials and stick with moisture wicking fabrics from head to toe. Tech fabrics keep the athlete dry, help to regulate body temperature, prevent overheating during warmer months, and control moisture and provide additional layers of insulation during colder months. Whichever material you choose, make sure the athlete can bend, twist, turn and move freely and comfortably.

HAT AND GLOVES New Jersey weather can be unpredictable. Cross country athletes may need a hat and gloves during a chilly run toward the end of season. This is a definite necessity to keep the hands and head warm for winter and spring track and field athletes who are practicing outdoors in temperatures as low as 40 degrees.

DIGITAL WATCH It's all about timing whether on the field, track or during training. A digital lap-watch that records up to 50 laps helps the athlete to make note of their splits and progress.

EVENT SHOES/SPIKES PINS/SPIKE KEY Different events require specific footwear. Spike pins typically come with the spike shoes, however it's always good to have a second set on hand. A spike key is a tool used to put in and take out the spike pins.

- **Cross Country Spikes** The athlete can wear either running shoes or cross country spikes. These spikes are flexible and have a rubber bottom. They can also be used for indoor track meets in arenas that do not allow spikes with plastic bottoms.
- **Sprint Spikes** Usually good up to the 400 meter event, sprinting spikes have a plastic bottom and no heel cushion. They are somewhat stiff, encouraging the athlete to run on his/her toes.
- **Middle Distance Spikes** Good for the 800 to 1500 meter events and hurdles, middle distance spikes have a plastic bottom and a cushioned heel for padding. This comes in handy when running multiple loops around the track or landing on the heel after leaping over a hurdle.
- **Long Distance Spikes** Good for the 1600 meter event and up, long distance spikes have a plastic bottom and full length heel cushion.
- **Throwing Shoes** Good for Hammer, Discus, and Shot Put, a rotational shoe allows the athlete to spin easily in the ring.
- **High Jump, Long Jump and Javelin Shoes** All these shoes vary slightly and are event specific. They are lightweight and have spikes enabling the athlete's foot to grab the track.

WATER BOTTLE/SPORTS DRINKS/NUTRITION Dehydrated muscles are like beef jerky: stiff, tight and non-pliable. Next to shoes, a water bottle to stay hydrated is the second most important item in the gym bag. For electrolyte replenishment, a sports drink such as Nuun or Gatorade can be used. A nutrition bar such as a Clif Bar is a healthy option to stay energized before, during or after practice or a meet.

ODDS AND ENDS Other helpful tools include: 1.) **Foam Roller or The Stick** to help increase blood flow and reduce recovery time; 2.) **Gym bag** to store all items; 3.) **Running Hat** to keep the head protected from the sun; 4.) **Sports tape** to stabilize areas of the body that are prone to injury.