

Dear families of Sugarloaf Track runners:

The track season is upon us and we wanted to offer some suggestions for how to navigate the first couple of meets for families where this is their first year participating. The first night can be very confusing and overwhelming for runners and families. There can be over 100 runners in Amherst and 300 in Northampton arriving that need to be assigned to races and there is very little time for explanations or mistakes. You will want to arrive early and bring your runner to the table of the color team they have been assigned to. They should be wearing their track shirt. Each runner gets 5 stickers with their name on them to track the events they are in. The runner needs to get these stickers themselves and put them on their shirt where they can be seen. Most of the runners put them on the sleeve of their shirt. At the table there is a stack of papers with all the stickers on them in alphabetical order. When you arrive, help your child find their stickers and get in line to be assigned races. There will be one line for girls and another for boys. Please kindly help the children learn about good line manners and waiting. Students who want to race together should stay in line together. We cannot assign races to a runner who is not present.

The first night students are assigned to 2 relay races first and once all the runners have been assigned those races, we will offer a third race to those that want it. As the season progresses we find the attendance decreases and then runners can have 3 races right away. There is always a 100 or 200 yard dash at the end of the meet that all runners can do in addition. The other stickers are for the kids to use on the field events. Teams get points based on the relay races and participation in the field events so encourage your runners to try everything.

Each race has a number and the races your runner is assigned will be written on the stickers. Every race will be announced on loudspeakers. You need to listen for which race is being called to come to the team tables. Once your child's race is called to the tables, we will organize them, give them numbered cards, get them to the paddock, and their starting positions. The procedure is: they come to the table first and we organize running positions, then they are called to the paddock, a holding area by the start line, and we take them there. When the race is ready, the runners will be taken to their starting position by volunteers. Some runners do not hear their races being called and that is when parents need to help remind them to come to the tables. Sometimes they have a long wait between races and get distracted playing with friends, or wander too far off, or are busy doing a field event and don't hear the announcements. Please keep track of your runners' events and help us get them where they need to be, every year some kids miss their races and they are very disappointed.

We want this to be a fun experience for all the kids and parents!

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