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[www.rohopublishing.com](http://www.rohopublishing.com)

**About Roho Publishing**

When Kip Keino defeated Jim Ryun in the 1968 Olympic Games at 1500 meters he credited the win to “Roho.” Roho is the Swahili word for spirit demonstrated through extraordinary strength and courage. The type of courage and strength that can be summoned up from deep within that will allow you to meet your goals and overcome the challenges in life. Roho Publishing focuses on the spirit of sport and is designed to inspire, encourage, motivate and teach valuable life lessons.

**Dedication**

To all the coaches who make track and field fun. Your creative and positive attitude coupled with your passion towards track and field helps create a lifelong commitment for athletes to enjoy physical activity. The enjoyment received by your athletes has created lasting positive memories of track and field as well as offered tremendous positive benefits physically, psychologically, and socially. You make a difference in developing not only the physical components, but also the heart and minds of athletes.

A special dedication to Coach Zach Kindler, whose time on earth was short, but the powerful impact he made on young lives will last forever. Coach Kindler served as a positive role model for both coaches and athletes as a tremendous coach and an even better person.

**Acknowledgements**

To my family who have supported my passion for the greatest sport in the world--- track and field. My wife Wendy has supported my endeavors in track and field as an athlete, coach, official and fan.

To my three daughters; Bethany, Leslie, Jenna, who have enjoyed participating in track and field and have remained die-hard track and field fans.

To Jenna whose talents in developing this book have been invaluable. Her creative talents have been displayed in her artistic work involved in the lay-out, diagrams, covers and reviews.

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**Preface**

*Track and Field Games* contains over 200 track and field games (with variations over 500) that coaches can use to create an enjoyable and productive practice environment. The numerous track and field games help teach the fundamentals and focus on skills required to become a more compete track and field athlete. The games are particularly useful for beginning and intermediate athletes and can be adapted to accommodate more traditional training with experienced athletes.

The exercises are designed to challenge athletes and keep them active, motivated and thoroughly involved. The games are competitive and fun to play and they can be easily adapted to different ages and abilities. Both novice and experienced athletes alike will respond favorably to the activities in which they are excited and enthused about. The track and field games provided in this book are designed to create such an enthusiastic and positive attitude.

It is not the intent of this book to give technical advice on “how to perform” the event correctly. Nor is it the intent to supply training programs and plans for athletes. The intent is to supply fun games that have specific objectives to develop athletes. *Track and Field Games* combines fun with skill instruction and practice. The games are designed to utilize different approaches to track and field events while maximizing the development of physical skills.

This book is organized into 11 chapters. Chapters 2-6 focus on the jumping events. Chapter’s 7-11 focus on the throwing events. Chapter’s 12-15 focus on the running events, hurdles, and relays. Although categorized by their primary focus, most games emphasize essential elements to multiple events track and field. An activity that appears in one of the event-specific sections, may be able to be used or modified for use in other events as well.

**Organization**

The games have been organized in an easy to understand format as described below.

**Objective:** Coaches should consider a game’s objectives to determine if the game fits into the specific practice session.

**Description:** This section supplies the directions in how to set up and run the activity effectively. Group size and field dimensions are provided only as general guidelines and should be adjusted to the ability level of athletes. In some games a scoring system has been provided to add an element of competition to the game. It should be clearly understood that the ultimate aim of each game is for athletes to challenge themselves to achieve a higher standard of performance. Use competitive games only when students are ready for competition. Be aware that competitive games may take the focus away from learning (the process) and place it on winning (the product). Many of the games in the book are small-group games which offer high levels of activity.

**Variations:** These suggestions provide possible modification and adaptations of the games to offer more variety. The variations also may be used to adjust the difficulty and conditioning involved in the activity. Many of the variations allow the more naturally athletic or competitive athletes to enjoy play, while not exposing the less athletic and less competitive athlete’s weakness.

**Equipment:** Most activities and games in this book have been designed to use a minimal amount of equipment and are easy to set up. Cones, balls, and ropes are some of the most common equipment items the games call for. If possible use the maximum amount of equipment to give the athletes more practice time and more fun. Engage the athletes in play, instead of waiting in turn.

**Safety**

Participation in track and field carries an inherent risk of injury, but coaches can minimize the risk by setting up the playing area with safety in mind, giving clear instructions that emphasize safety, and making modifications as needed. Coaches are encouraged to visualize how they want the game to progress and if the game does not conform to expectations, stop the activity and make adjustments.

**Introduction**

Track and field events are among the oldest of all sporting [competitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Competition), as running, jumping and throwing are natural and universal forms of human activity. The first recorded examples of organized track and field events occurred in the [Ancient Olympic Games](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Olympic_Games) held in 776 BC in [Olympia, Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympia%2C_Greece). The only event contested at the first Olympic Games was the “[stadion” footrace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stadion_footrace), a 200 meter race inside the stadium. The events of the Olympic Games expanded to include further running competitions and eventually added field events to evolve into the track and field events we know today.

Track and field events are divided into three major categories: track events, field events, and combined events. Track events involve running on a track over specified distances as well as the [hurdling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurdling) and [steeplechase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steeplechase_%28athletics%29) events. There are also [relay races](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relay_race) in which teams of four athletes run and pass a [baton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baton_%28running%29) to their team members.

There are two types of field events: jumps, and throws. In jumping competitions, the horizontal jumps consist of the long jump and triple jump and are judged on the length of the jumps, while the vertical jumps consist of the high jump and pole vault and are judged on the height of the jumps. The throwing events involve throwing an implement: shot-put, discus, javelin or hammer from a set point, with athletes being judged on the distance that the implement is thrown.

Combined events involve athletes contesting a number of different track and field events. Points are given for their performance in each event and the athlete with the greatest points total at the end of all the events is the winner.

Track and field has remained the second most popular sport in the world behind soccer with millions of athletes participating. Competitions exist for all ages from youth to masters.

Why do athletes participate in sports and specifically why do athletes participate in track and field? Numerous surveys indicate that young athletes most often list their sport [goals](http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/motivation) in the following order of importance:

* To have fun
* To improve skills and learn new ones
* To be with friends or make new ones
* For thrills and excitement
* To win
* To become physically fit

The findings clearly indicate that the primary goal of many adults of winning is far less important to youth. What really matters to youth is having fun! Striving to win is important, but what’s most important is the joy of the activity. The "fun" factor emphasizes the need for positive coaching. Coaches should focus beyond winning and losing. Winning is great, but not at the expense of fun. There is a strong need for coaches and mentors to guide youth and ingrain positive values and sportsmanship, while also highlighting the importance of education and physical fitness to succeed in life. Coaches with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively work with track and field athletes can create positive experiences and make a significant difference in the lives of others.

Studies have shown that about 70 percent of kids stop playing organized sports by middle school. They give up participating in sports to pursue other endeavors, many of which are not going to provide the physical activity that youth require to be healthy. What can coaches do to ensure that players have fun in practices? Coaches often erroneously feel that learning sport skills is incompatible with fun. Focus and fun are not incompatible; in fact, focus is necessary for fun to occur. Fun is a major motivational factor for continued persistence in any activity.

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| What can coaches do to ensure that players have fun in your practices? Consider the following coaching activities that help to develop the components of fun.* Match challenges with athletic abilities. Coaches must be sure that the challenges they present to their players are commensurate with their abilities.
* Help athletes focus on the task. Practice sessions should be planned to allow for minimal time of inactivity. When athletes are standing in long lines in coach-directed drills, boredom sets in quickly, and players will seek pleasure by directing attention to things other than the task at hand. Decreasing “down time” increases the athlete’s ability to maintain focus.
* Give players a sense of control. Focus games on the athletes, not on the coaches. Set games up for athletes to succeed and athletes will feel they have control over outcomes. It works best to also give players some say in the games and rules they are playing.
* Try to minimize players’ self-consciousness. Self-consciousness in athletics is largely fear of what others think of performance. Correcting fear of failure isn’t easy, but when athletes can have fun, it’s less likely they will feel self-conscious.
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**Adapting Games**

A successful coach adapts an activity to both group and individual needs to insure a more positive activity experience. Each track and field event has its characteristic needs and skills. The following adaptation methods and techniques are outlined as suggestions to ponder when attempting to enhance the learning potential and success of an activity.

**Change the space or participation within the playing area.**

Change the boundaries or the distance.

Increase or decrease the number of players.

Use equipment that will increase or reduce the range of play.

Mini teams and games for more opportunities for activity.

**Change the time or intensity element.**

Change the walk to a jog or run transition or vice versa.

Increase or reduce time periods for a run or rest.

Partner sets where one runs, the other rests, stretches, or performs a physical activity.

Add additional repetitions for more activity.

**Modify the rules.**

Change the order in relay or team play.

Change or add rules in the middle of the activity to “equalize” competition.

Add elements of cooperation and problem solving for team bonding.

Create exercises for eliminated or waiting players.

As coaches plan track and field activities for a session, adaptation must be considered a necessary part of the planning process. Enjoyable appropriate games are a significant vehicle toward enhancing the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective growth of athletes.