

Middle School Starts & Exchanges

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Middle School Mindset

Middle School Track means managing a lot of bodies with minimal supervision. Our approach to middle school track includes:

- Divide and Conquer with stations
- Teach track skills to (almost) everyone:
 - Running form
 - Dynamic warmup
 - Jumping exercises
 - Hurdle form and flexibility
 - Sprint and Distance Starts
 - Open and Sprint Exchanges
- Use workouts to teach skills
- Undertrain and Overcoach

Practice Organization

Keep things moving with three 30 minute segments:

- Dynamic warm up stations (5 min each)
 - Jump ropes
 - Matwork (abs and flexibility)
 - Form Drills
 - Hurdle flexibility
 - Wall Drills
 - Plyometrics
- Running workout/Throwing workout
- Field Events/Hurdles

Starts

Incorporate starts into workouts the first week of the season following the progression:

- Standing starts
 - Heel toe alignment
 - Falling starts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4kDDcCjCto>

- Acceleration drills
- Block Starts (on mats in gym)
 - Block Setup (1-2-3 setup)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnLRiVYmtkg>

- 3 command w/ clipboard
- Include batons
- Require block starts for all sprint races
- Improve effectiveness
 - Blast starts into hj pit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evIkShZAdH4>

Relay Exchanges

Sprint Exchanges

Practice twice/week for 2-3 weeks before first track meet:

- Standing exchanges
 - Baton pass technique

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYgipxoSWAI>

- Coach calls for pass

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWs7LO3i5T4>

- Progress to actual meet order

- Relay workout (early season)
 - Continuous relays
 - 50 m sprints (team of 9)
 - Use 2-3 batons/group
 - Athletes call for pass
- Relay workout (late season)
 - Add markers
 - Acceleration zones
 - 4x100m races w/ alternates

Open Exchanges

Introduce during second week of meets

- Standing exchanges
 - Start with same calls
 - Reach with palm up
 - Switch hands after exchange
- Relay workout
 - Gym races around cones
 - Use a set of cones to roll in
 - 3 steps before reaching back
 - Focus on takeoff first
 - Progress toward handoff technique

Relay Order

A few words about relay order:

- Prepare for change
- Freaks go first, or last
- Keep it fun