

(1) Middle Distance Running

Running is divided into three groups which are organised in 400 mtrs track - Short distance running, middle distance running and long distance running. Previously you studied short distance running. Now we will learn middle distance running.

Middle distance running includes 800 mtr and 1500 mtr running. In 800 mtr run competitors run two rounds whereas in 1500 mtr, run he / she runs $3\frac{3}{4}$ rounds, it means 3 full rounds and one three quarter round.

There is only one finish line for all the running events organized on the track. So that it is easy for judges who decide the winners and time keepers who take timing of the events, but starting lines are different in different runnings. On the track starting line of 800 mtrs run is near the finish line, whereas in 1500 mtr run starting line is near the second curve of the track which is known as curve starting line.

There are two methods of running in 800 mtr run (1) All competitors take standing start from the curved starting line. In this method all the competitors run all together. (2) In second method all the competitors run upto first curve in their own lanes and then they can go to the first lane.

To obtain a good result in 800 mtr and 1500 mtr run we will learn following skills in middle distance running.

- (1) Start.
- (2) Running style.
- (3) Position of the body.
- (4) Finish.

(1) Start : In 800 mtr and 1500 mtr run competitors take standing start. After start competitors run in any lane. As one has to run long distance and number of competitors are more, standing start is being taken. In standing start, competitor keeps his strong leg behind the starting line, both hands are kept bent from the elbows, the body is leaned forward and keeps body weight on the strong leg. Runner starts running on sound of clapper or pistol. Starter will give first command of 'on your mark'. As soon as all competitors get ready behind the starting line starter will sound with clapper or pistol.

(2) Running Style : In middle distance running the starting strides are short, as the speed increases the strides become longer, at the similar speed strides are also similar. In the end of running, strides will be longer and speedy. From the start speedy strides are not advisable, because running distance is long so competitors may get tired. The speed should be increased according to one's efficiency. Competitors should cross the finish line with maximum speed.

(3) Position of the body : Co-ordination of different parts of the body like hands, legs and type of the track etc. are very important in completing of middle distance running.

(a) Position of hands : Both hands are bent from the elbows. According to law of pendulum, if hands are short, then motion will be more and if hands are long then motion will be slow. So keep elbows of both the hands bent. Motion of both arms will be forward - backward between the shoulder and waist.

(b) Position of legs : While running, movement of both the legs will be forward - backward and parallel to each other. When leg comes forward, lift it in such a way that thigh of leg becomes parallel to the

ground and then leg should be forwarded straight and rhythm of hands and opposite leg should be maintained. Run all the time on toes.

(c) Position of Trunk : While running, angle of trunk will be approximately at 25° . Balance may be lost if you bend your body more forward and if you keep your body straight, it will obstruct your speed.

(4) Finish : The runner should cross the finish line with top speed. The runner has to decide the distance which he will cover at top speed after taking into consideration his remaining energy and endurance.

There are three types of finish (1) Run - through (2) Torso finish and (3) Shoulder finish. In middle distance running second type of finish is more comfortable. After crossing the finish line with top speed continue running for 8 to 10 strides more. Crossing the finish line with jump, taking long strides on bending more forward is harmful.

If any competitor during running wants to over take other runner, he may go from right side of that runner without touching or disturbing him/her. If runner runs inside the track or he / she tries to push or stop other runners to run he/she will be disqualified.

(2) Relay Race

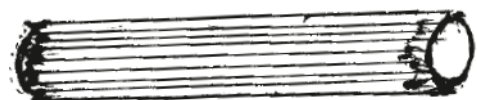
Generally competitions organized on the track are individual events. But relay races are held on track yet are team events. At the international level 4 x 100 mtrs and 4 x 400 mtrs relay races are organized on tracks for men and women. We will learn here 4 x 100 mtrs relay race.

4 x 100 mtr Relay Race : In this relay race 4 players of one team will run 100-100 mtr one by one and complete the 400 mtr distance. During running baton is handed over to their partner in sequence. This relay race is very speedy and action of change of baton provides entertainment to spectators. In this relay run baton is used so it is also called baton relay race.

Baton : Baton shall be a smooth hollow tube circular in section, made of wood, metal or any other rigid material in one piece as shown in the figure. Each baton shall be numbered and of a different colour given to each team.

The length of baton shall be 28 to 30 cm.

The outside diameter shall be 12 cm to 13 cm and it shall not weigh less than 50 gms.



Baton

Skills of Relay Race : There are three types of skills in 4 x 100 mtrs relay (1) Start (2) Baton Exchange (3) Finish.

(1) Start: In relay race first runner among the team of four will take a start from behind the starting line. Crouch start is compulsory in this race. There are three types of crouch start (A) Bunch or bullet start (B) Medium Start (C) Elongated start. First runner will use any of the above starts. Generally good runner selects any start according to his own height. i.e. bullet, medium or elongated start.

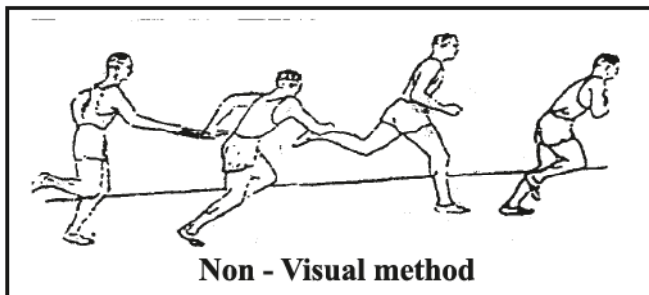
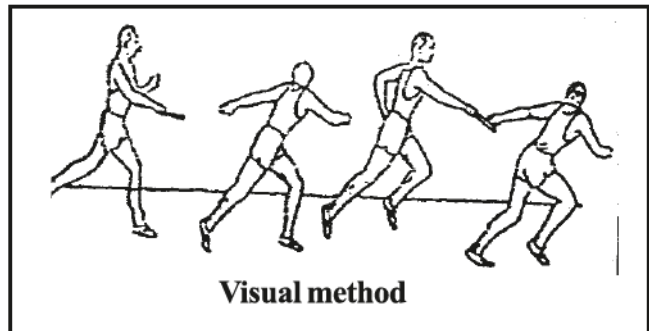
As soon as the command "on your marks" is heard, each runner places the toes of his strong leg on the starting block at a distance of 40 to 50 cm behind the starting line in his own lane, then he places toe of his free leg on the block according to bullet, Medium or elongated start in such a way that the toe touches the ground.

After that the runner shall hold the baton at the bottom with the palm of his left hand with the help of last three fingers, keeping thumb of left hand and first finger in reverse position "V". Front end of baton should not touch the ground, Where as fingers of right hand are together and thumb should be

separate making a " V" shape. Keep fingers and thumbs 2 to 4 cm away from the starting line. The fingers of the hands are placed on the ground at a distance equal to the distance between the shoulders. The runner eye sight is naturally fixed in the direction of his lane. Further action of start i.e. Set and Go are performed as you learnt earlier.

(2) Baton Exchange: In relay races the first runner passes the baton to the second runner the second runner will pass to the third and third to the fourth. This action is called baton exchange. This should be performed in baton exchange zone only. Length of baton exchange zone is 20 mtrs. There are two methods of baton exchange, (A) Visual method (B) Non - visual method.

(a) Visual method : Exchange of baton is seen by both, incoming runner and outgoing runner so this method is called visual method. In this method outgoing runner has to see back side while running, so it obstructs the speed of runner. This method of exchanging baton is more in use.



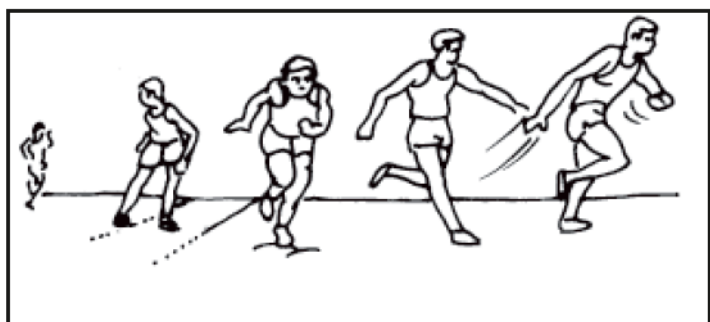
(b) Non - Visual method : In this running only the incoming runner can see the action of exchange. The outgoing runner can not see it. This method is more useful in 4 x 100 mtr relay. Exchange of baton is done while both the incoming and outgoing runner are running at full speed. There is no risk of reducing speed during exchange of baton. In this method incoming runner has to be more alert

while exchanging baton.

The exchange of baton is done in three ways, (1) Cup - shape method (2) The up swing method (3) The palm held skywards method.

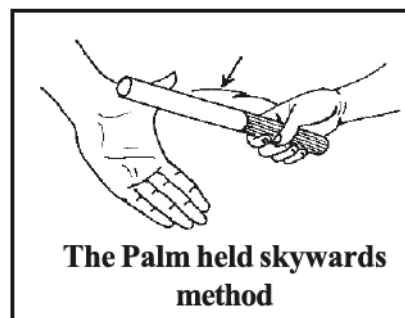
(i) Cup - Shape method : This method is more suitable to school children and beginners. In this method the outgoing runner runs keeping with his hand near his waist in such a way that the palm is kept in the skyward direction and the thumb is kept in the forward direction. The incoming runner keeps the baton in the open palm of the outgoing runner near his waist.

(ii) The up swing method : In this method the outgoing runner extends his right hand with the palm pointing towards the ground and the thumb extended towards the body. Keeping the thumb and the fingers of that hand straight, he makes a shape of inverted " V ". The baton bearer gives an upward sweep to the baton and places it between the thumb and the fingers of his partner running ahead of him.



The up swing method

(iii) The Palm held skywards method : In this method the outgoing runner extends his arm backwards in such a way that the palm faces the sky., the thumb of the hand extended backwards points towards, his body. The fingers are straight and the thumb is free and away from the fingers. The incoming runner gives a downward swing to the baton and places it on the extended palm of his partner.



First runner in relay race takes crouch start. He keeps baton in his left hand. He will pass the baton to second runner in his right hand. Second runner while running will exchange the baton from his right hand to left hand and then he will pass to the third runners in his right hand. This way all the runners will exchange the baton. The second, the third and the fourth runner may run from 10 mtr behind the first line of baton exchange zone towards the starting line. But baton exchange must be done in baton exchange zone only.

(3) Finish : The fourth runner of the relay team will cross the finish line with maximum speed like short distance running with baton in hand.

All competitors in relay race competition should keep in mind a few important rules which are as follows.

- (1) While taking a start any part of his body or baton should not touch in his own lane or ahead of starting line.
- (2) If competitor uses the starting blocks, his spikes or boots must have touched the ground.
- (3) The competitor should start running only after the sound of the pistol or the clapper is heard.
- (4) The lanes on the track of a relay race to be taken by teams are decided by lots.
- (5) In relay competition the runner has to carry baton only in his hand.
- (6) Baton must be exchanged only in the baton exchange zone.
- (7) If the baton falls down while changing, it must be picked up by the runner who has dropped it, he can not take the help of any other runner.
- (8) In 4 x 100 mtrs relay race all the four runners of a team have to run the entire distance in their own lane.
- (9) In relay race members of the team may decide the order of running according to their choice .

Exercise

1. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences :

- (1) Explain two methods of running in 800 mtrs run.
- (2) Explain the position of trunk in middle distance running.
- (3) Explain the finish in middle distance running.
- (4) Explain the visual method in relay run.
- (5) How is the baton in relay race ?

2. Write answers in one or two sentences of the following questions :

- (1) Which runnings are included in middle distance running ?
- (2) Where is the starting line for 1500 mtrs run in 400 mtrs track ?
- (3) How a runner should over take his competitor in middle distance running ?
- (4) How many players are there in one team of relay run ?
- (5) List the methods of baton exchange in relay race.

3. Answer the following questions by selecting correct option from the options given below.

- (1) Which distance of running is included in middle distance running ?
(A) 50 mtrs (B) 100 mtrs (C) 200 mtrs (D) 800 mtrs.
- (2) Which type of start is used in 1500 mtrs run ?
(A) Standing Start (B) Crouch Start (C) Elongated Start (D) Bullet Start
- (3) How are the starting strides in middle distance running ?
(A) Long (B) Short (C) Speedy (D) None of them.
- (4) What is the minimum weight of baton ?
(A) 30 grams (B) 40 grams (C) 50 grams (D) 45 grams.
- (5) Which start should be taken by the first runner in relay race ?
(A) Standing Start (B) Crouch Start (C) Any Start (D) Elongated start.

