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**Shreveport Force**  
Track & Field  
Parent & Athlete Handbook

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BUILDING STRONG ATHLETES • STRONG CHARACTER • STRONG TEAM  
IN A CHRIST-LIKE ENVIRONMENT

# CONTENTS

<b>What is Track &amp; Field</b> .....	3
<b>What to Expect</b> .....	3
<b>Coaching Philosophy</b> .....	3
<b>Team Communication - Team App</b> .....	4
<b>Meet &amp; Results Information - Athletic.net</b> .....	4
<b>Team Rules</b> .....	4
Teamwork.....	4
Effort & Attitude .....	4
Respect.....	4
Attendance.....	4
Guidelines: .....	4
Communication.....	5
Academics.....	5
Uniforms .....	5
<b>Training Overview</b> .....	6
Setting Goals.....	6
Weather Considerations.....	6
Warm-Up .....	6
Types of Training .....	7
Sprinters.....	7
Hurdlers .....	7
Middle Distance .....	7
Distance .....	7
Jumpers .....	7
Throwers.....	7
Training Cycles .....	7
Macrocycle .....	7
Mesocycle.....	7
Microcycle.....	7
Event Workouts .....	7
SPRINTERS .....	7
Middle Distance / Distance .....	7
Hurdlers .....	8
Jumpers .....	8
Throwers.....	8
Strength, Drills, Speed, and Mobility .....	8
Cool Down .....	8
Recovery.....	8
Nutrition .....	9
<b>Injury Prevention</b> .....	9
<b>Meets</b> .....	9
What to Bring .....	10
Meet Day .....	10
<b>Track &amp; Field Training Glossary</b> .....	11
<b>Handbook Acknowledgement &amp; Agreement</b> .....	13

## What is Track & Field

Track & Field is a diverse sport consisting of running, jumping, and throwing events. Athletes may specialize in one event or participate in multiple events.

Common running events include:

- Sprints: 100m, 200m, 400m
- Middle Distance: 800m, 1500m, 1600m
- Distance: 3000m, 3200m
- Hurdles: 100mH/110mH, 300mH
- Relays: 4x100, 4x200, 4x400, 4x800

Common field events include:

- Long Jump, Triple Jump, High Jump
- Shot Put, Discus, Javelin (when allowed by meet)

Track & Field is a spring sport, *but* training is year-round for development and injury prevention.

## What to Expect

Track & Field training develops both fitness and technique. A sprinter's needs differ from those of a distance runner, jumper, or thrower—yet the whole team trains together, supports each other, and competes as *one* program.

Athletes will receive coaching, time, and attention. In return, they commit to working hard, respecting teammates and coaches, and being consistent in attendance.

## Coaching Philosophy

Athletics are a valuable part of the educational and character-building experience.

Shreveport Force Track & Field coaches are **unpaid volunteers**. They donate their time, energy, and expertise to provide athletes with a safe, challenging, and encouraging environment. Coaches spend many hours planning workouts, traveling to meets, communicating with families, and investing in each athlete's development on and off the track.

Because our coaches give so much, we expect athletes and parents to honor that commitment by:

- Showing up on time to practices and meets, ready to participate.
- Clearly communicating absences and tardies as early as possible.
- Following coaching instructions with a willing, respectful attitude.
- Staying focused and engaged during practice and at meets, minimizing distractions.

Respecting the coaches' time helps the team run smoothly, allows practices to start and end on schedule, and ensures every athlete receives the coaching and attention they need to grow.

## Team Communication – Team App

Shreveport Force Track & Field uses Team App ([www.teamapp.com/](http://www.teamapp.com/)) as our primary method of communication for practices, meets, schedule updates, reminders, and important announcements. All athletes and parents are expected to use Team App regularly and keep notifications enabled. To join, download the Team App on your phone or visit the website, create a free account, then search for “Force Track and Field” and request membership. Once approved, you will have access to the team calendar, announcements, chat features, and real-time updates. Consistently checking Team App is essential for staying informed and ensuring clear communication throughout the season.

## Meet & Results Information – Athletic.net

We use Athletic.net (<https://www.athletic.net/>) as the primary platform for meet information, schedules, results, and team performance data. Parents and athletes can use Athletic.net to view upcoming meets, race times, heat sheets, results, and team statistics. Athletes are encouraged to create a free account to claim their profile, track personal records, view season progress, and follow teammates and competitors. To get started, visit the website, create an account, search for Shreveport Force Homeschool Sports, and connect to the team. Athletic.net is a valuable tool for staying informed, setting goals, and monitoring improvement throughout the season.

## Team Rules

Participation on the Shreveport Force Track & Field Team requires *commitment* from each athlete and family.

### Teamwork

Track & Field is both an individual and a team sport. Points, relays, and the training environment all depend on athletes supporting each other.

### Effort & Attitude

Track rewards honest effort and consistency. Athletes are expected to give their best each day, even when practice or conditions are challenging.

### Respect

Respect coaches, teammates, officials, opponents, and the sport. Athletes represent Christ, their family, and Shreveport Force at all times—on and off the track.

### Attendance

Attendance at practice and meets is mandatory.

Track & Field is a technical sport. Skills learned in practice—like starts, exchanges, approaches, and form—cannot be fully made up on your own.

### Guidelines:

- Arrive on time (or early) dressed and ready
- Minimize absences
- Communicate conflicts at least 24 hours in advance when possible
- Do not schedule appointments on meet days

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Excused absences include illness, emergencies, or unavoidable medical appointments. Injured athletes are still expected to attend practices and meets; alternative training or rehab work will be provided.

Practice attendance and tardiness may affect an athlete's meet participation.

### **Communication**

Clear and timely communication is required from both athletes, parents, and coaches.

Communicate promptly about:

- Absences and tardies
- Injuries or medical concerns
- Academic conflicts and schedule issues
- Travel or transportation problems
- Questions about goals or expectations

Athletes are encouraged to take ownership by communicating directly with coaches, with parents supporting as needed.

### **Academics**

Athletes are expected to work hard with their schoolwork as well as on the track. School work, tests, and assignments should be managed so that athletes remain eligible for full participation in practices and meets.

### **Uniforms**

Team uniforms are to be worn at official competitions only.

Uniform expectations:

- Wear the full team uniform at meets
- Keep uniforms clean and in good condition
- Do not wear team uniforms for practice
- Do not compete in outside meets in uniform without explicit coach permission
- Return uniforms undamaged at the end of the season

*Failure to follow uniform rules may affect meet participation.*

Team uniforms cost \$90 and are provided to athletes for the duration of the season. Because of their value, athletes are fully responsible for taking care of their uniform and keeping it in good condition.

At the end of the season, uniforms must be returned clean, washed, and fully dried. Please place the uniform neatly inside a gallon-size Ziplock bag and include an index card with the athlete's name and both the shirt and short sizes written clearly. Properly returning uniforms helps us maintain quality gear and keeps program costs manageable for all families.

## Training Overview

Training begins in the winter with conditioning and continues through the spring season. Off-season participation strengthens the athlete and significantly improves performance.

Track athletes run, lift, sprint, jump, throw, and complete mobility work regularly. We train in most weather conditions (rain, cold, heat, wind) and adjust only when conditions are unsafe, such as lightning or severe weather.

### Setting Goals

Each season, athletes are encouraged to set personal and team goals using the SMART method:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

Examples:

- “I want to improve my 200m time by 1 second this season by attending every practice and focusing on my sprint mechanics.”
- “I want to increase my long jump PR by 8 inches by perfecting my approach and takeoff.”

Goals give athletes direction and motivation throughout the season.

### Weather Considerations

Track & Field is an outdoor sport. Be prepared to train and compete in the heat, cold, wind, and light rain.

Practice and *meets* may be delayed or moved if:

- Lightning is present (30-minute rule after last strike or thunder)
- Conditions are unsafe (severe storms or extreme temperatures)

Athletes should dress appropriately for the weather and bring extra layers when needed.

### Warm-Up

Each practice and meet begins with a structured warm-up to:

- Activate muscles
- Prevent injury
- Prepare for speed and power
- Focus mentally

Warm-up may include easy jogging, dynamic mobility, sprint drills (A-skips, B-skips, high knees, RHQs), and event-specific preparation such as hurdle mobility, jump approaches, or thrower warm-ups.

## Types of Training

Different events require different training methods.

### Sprinters

- Short, fast repetitions
- Acceleration and top speed development
- Strength and plyometric work

### Hurdlers

- Hurdle drills and mobility
- Rhythm and spacing
- Speed and sprint work

### Middle Distance

- Aerobic conditioning
- Tempo runs
- Repeats and fartlek-style training

### Training Cycles

Training follows structured cycles to build the athlete over the season.

#### Macrocycle

The overall season plan, moving from base conditioning to specific preparation, to peak competition and recovery.

#### Mesocycle

3–4 week training blocks that focus on particular goals such as building strength, speed, or race sharpness.

#### Microcycle

The weekly training schedule, usually organized as a mix of hard and easy days to allow recovery and adaptation.

New or younger athletes will have training adjusted for their experience level and fitness.

## Event Workouts

Each event group trains according to its needs:

### SPRINTERS

- Acceleration work
- Max velocity training
- Block starts
- Plyometrics
- Sprint mechanics

### Distance

- Mileage and long runs
- Threshold and tempo work
- Intervals, hills, and speed development

### Jumpers

- Approach work
- Plyometrics and bounding
- Strength, flexibility, and coordination

### Throwers

- Technique and footwork
- Strength and power development
- Mobility and stability exercises

### Middle Distance / Distance

- Steady-state runs
- Tempo runs
- Intervals and repeats
- Hill work
- Speed endurance

### Hurdlers

- Hurdle mobility
- Lead/trail leg technique
- Starts and rhythm work

### Jumpers

- Approach mechanics
- Plyometrics and bounding

- Takeoff and landing drills
- Strength and coordination

### Throwers

- Form and release drills
- Footwork and positions
- Strength and power
- Mobility and stability

Workouts are planned by coaches and adjusted based on the athlete's age, training level, and meet schedule.

### Strength, Drills, Speed, and Mobility

Track athletes perform regular drills and strength work to develop good mechanics and durability. This may include:

- Core circuits
- Form drills
- Explosive exercises
- Sprint mechanics
- Mobility and flexibility work

These improve power, speed, coordination, balance, and overall performance while helping prevent injury.

### Cool Down

After each workout and race, athletes complete a cool down that may include light jogging and stretching. Cooling down:

- Aids recovery
- Reduces soreness
- Helps prevent injury
- Maintains flexibility

A consistent cool-down routine is essential for long-term success.

### Recovery

Recovery allows the body to adapt to training and prevents overuse injuries.

Key recovery strategies:

- *Post-practice stretching*
- Hydration and good nutrition
- Adequate sleep
- Ice for sore or inflamed areas when appropriate
- Light mobility or easy activity on rest days
- Foam rolling and self-massage when needed

Coaches may recommend specific recovery routines; athletes are responsible for following through consistently.

### Nutrition

Good nutrition is a key part of performance and recovery.

General guidelines:

- Eat lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats
- Stay hydrated every day, not just on practice days
- Avoid energy drinks and excessive sugary drinks
- Do not try new or heavy foods right before a meet

Before practice or meets, athletes should eat easily digested foods 2–4 hours prior, with a light snack 30–60 minutes before if needed.

After workouts and meets, athletes should eat a snack or meal with both carbohydrates and protein to help muscles recover.

## Injury Prevention

The best way to deal with injuries is to *prevent* them.

Prevention tips:

- Train consistently rather than sporadically
- Follow the warm-up and cool-down routines
- Use proper technique during drills and events
- Wear appropriate shoes and replace them when worn out
- Avoid risky activities that increase injury risk during the season
- Communicate early about any pain or discomfort

If an injury occurs, athletes should follow medical advice and any physical therapy exercises given and stay engaged with the team while recovering.

## Meets

Track & Field meets include many events happening at the same time. Athletes must stay alert to the schedule and listen for event calls.

Typical meet flow:

- Find and check in at the Team Tent(s)
- Team and event warm-up
- Report/check in to event
- Competition (heats, flights, finals)
- Cool down after event
- Cheer for teammates

Athletes may compete in several events depending on age, conditioning, and meet rules (most meets limits athlete to 4 events including relays). They are expected to *stay* with the team, *support* others, and follow coach direction throughout the meet.

### What to Bring

We recommend every athlete have a track bag at all practices and meets. The bag should include:

- Water bottle (minimum 1 liter)
- Running/training shoes
- Spikes or event shoes (if used)
- Warm layers (sweats, jacket, hat, gloves when needed)
- Post-workout or post-race snack
- Watch (for middle-distance and distance athletes)
- Towel and sunscreen
- Any personal items needed for jumping or throwing

Athletes are responsible for their own gear. Do not lose or forget your equipment.

### Meet Day

Meet day is the chance to put training into action.

Athletes should:

- Prepare their bag the night before
- Hydrate well the day before and day of the meet
- Eat balanced meals and snacks
- Arrive on time
- Warm up with their event group
- *Listen carefully* for event calls and report on time
- Follow the race or event plan discussed with coaches
- Cool down properly after events
- Cheer for and support teammates

Parents and athletes should plan to stay for the duration of the meet unless prior arrangements are made with the coaches.

## Track & Field Training Glossary

### **Acceleration**

The phase of a sprint where the athlete builds speed from a stationary or slow start. Focus is on powerful, quick strides and good body position.

### **Aerobic Training**

Training that improves the body's ability to use oxygen efficiently, typically done at easy-to-moderate effort. Supports endurance for all event groups.

### **Anaerobic Training**

Higher-intensity training done without relying primarily on oxygen. Builds speed, power, and the ability to tolerate lactic acid.

### **Base Training**

Foundational training that includes aerobic running, general strength, and technique work to prepare for more intense workouts later in the season.

### **Bounding**

A plyometric drill that exaggerates running strides to develop leg power, speed, and coordination—often used by sprinters and jumpers.

### **Cooldown**

Light jogging and stretching after a workout or race that helps the body recover and reduces soreness.

### **Dynamic Warm-Up**

A movement-based stretching routine done before workouts or races to raise body temperature and activate key muscle groups.

### **Fartlek ("Speed Play")**

A run that alternates periods of faster and slower running, improving aerobic and anaerobic capacity. Useful for middle-distance and distance athletes.

### **Intervals**

Shorter segments of fast running followed by periods of rest or light jogging. Helps develop speed, race pace control, and cardiovascular fitness.

### **Lactic Acid / Lactate**

A byproduct of high-intensity exercise. Training helps the body tolerate or clear lactate so athletes can maintain speed longer.

### **Lactate Threshold**

The intensity at which the body begins producing lactate faster than it can clear it. Improving this threshold allows athletes to run faster for longer.

### **Max Velocity**

The top speed a sprinter reaches during a sprint. Training includes flying sprints, wicket drills, and technical work.

**Plyometrics**

Explosive jumping and bounding exercises that improve power for sprinting, jumping, and throwing.

**Recovery Run**

A short, easy run used to promote blood flow and reduce fatigue after intense workouts.

**Repeats**

Multiple fast segments of the same distance or time (e.g., 4×300m). Similar to intervals, but often used at more controlled speeds.

**Steady-State Run**

A run at a consistent, moderate pace—challenging but comfortable enough to sustain. Builds aerobic endurance.

**Stride (or Strider)**

A short, relaxed run at ~85–90% effort lasting 15–25 seconds. Helps practice smooth running form without deep fatigue.

**Technique Work**

Drills and exercises that reinforce correct form for sprints, jumps, hurdles, or throws.

**Tempo Run**

A sustained run at a “comfortably hard” pace—faster than steady-state but slower than race pace. Builds strength and lactate threshold.

**Transition Phase**

The brief period between training seasons for recovery, cross-training, and mental reset.

**VO2 Max**

The maximum amount of oxygen the body can use during intense exercise. Training improves this capacity for endurance athletes.

**Wicket Drills**

Sprint mechanics drills using small hurdles (“wickets”) spaced at specific distances to improve stride frequency and efficiency

## Handbook Acknowledgement & Agreement

We, the athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s), acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand the **Shreveport Force Track & Field Parent & Athlete Handbook**.

We understand that participation on the Shreveport Force Track & Field Team is a commitment that includes, but is not limited to:

- Regular and punctual attendance at practices and meets
- Clear and timely communication regarding absences, tardies, injuries, and scheduling conflicts
- Respect for coaches, teammates, officials, and opponents
- Proper care and return of team-issued uniforms and equipment
- Upholding the values and expectations outlined in this handbook

We further understand that the coaches of Shreveport Force Track & Field are unpaid volunteers who donate their time and effort, and we agree to respect their time by communicating clearly and being punctual and prepared.

By signing below, we agree to support these expectations and understand that failure to follow team rules and guidelines may affect participation in practices or competitions.



ATHLETE NAME(PRINT)	ATHLETE SIGNATURE	DATE
PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME(PRINT)	PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE	DATE