



# Thomas Jefferson H.S. Boy & Girls Track & Field FAQs 2025

**SAVE THE DATE: PARENT/STUDENT-ATHLETE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 20, 2025, 6:00-7:00 pm – TJ CAFETERIA**

The following answers many questions about the TJ Track & Field Program. If you have a question that is not answered below, please contact Coach Fred via Remind or email:

**REMIND: text @tjtf2025 to 81010; email: fred\_van-remortel@dpsk12.net**

## **1. How do I join the Track & Field team?**

Contact Coach Fred via Remind or email. Prior to the start of the season, you will need to get a physical and register on Family ID. Physicals are good for one year, so if you got one for a fall or winter sport this year you will not need to get a new one. If you got one for Track and Field last year, or do not have one, or have not submitted one for the 24-25 school year, you need to get one. DO NOT wait to get your physical if you need one. Get it now!

If you are new to TJ Track & Field, send an email or Remind message to Coach Fred with (1) your name; (2) if you have track & field experience (it's ok if you don't); (3) events you have done or want to do (it's ok to say "I don't know"); and (4) if you participate in other sports/activities.

## **2. When is the Track & Field season?**

The season officially begins on February 24, 2025. But we are practicing NOW! Through the fall and winter semesters we practice 3 times per week, increasing to 4 times per week the end of January. Student-athletes not participating in other TJ sports are strongly encouraged to attend the pre-season practices. The season ends with the State Track meet May 15-17.

## **3. What if I don't have experience in Track & Field?**

That's fine. Many student-athletes who have not participated in track and field have contributed to our team and learned to compete in track & field. Six 9<sup>th</sup> Graders earned varsity letters in 2024, and 4 student-athletes who had not previously participated in Track & Field earned varsity letters. Some of the athletes who went to State last year had not competed in track and field until joining the TJ team

## **4. What events are offered?**

Track and field has an event for everyone regardless of size, body-type, whether you're "fast" or experience. It only requires a pair of running shoes, and a desire to work hard, improve and compete. The general event categories are (1) Sprints/hurdles (shorter, more speed), (2) Distance (longer, endurance running); (3) throws (powerful, incorporating strength and technique); and (4) jumps (incorporating speed and technique)

*Sprints:* 100, 200 and 400 meters (plus the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relays)

*Hurdles:* 100m (girls)/110m (boys) and 300m

*Distance:* 800, 1600 (mile) and 3200 (2 mile) (plus 4x800 relay)

*Throws:* shotput and discus

*Jumps:* long jump, triple jump, high jump and pole vault

Please do not overlook the fact that high school (and college) track & field is a TEAM sport. Athletes competing individual events score team points. Lettering is based on how many points an individual scores for the team throughout the year. For TJ Track & Field the TEAM COMES FIRST!

Our coaching staff takes the time to identify which events are best for each student-athlete, and the time to properly and safely teach those events. Student-athletes should be flexible and willing to try new or different events for their own development and the best interests of the team.

#### **5. When is practice and how long does it last?**

Most days practice starts right after school at 3:40. That means that student-athletes are expected to be at the track (or inside depending on weather) and ready to run at 3:40, not sauntering on the track or putting their shoes at that time. Practice typically lasts about 2 hours.

Note: We go outside when we can. So, if the temperature is above freezing and the conditions are safe, we will be outside. Therefore, student-athletes should be prepared for the conditions and bring sweats, gloves and hats. We recommend keeping a separate “track backpack” with shoes (flats), spikes/throwing shoes, sweats (tops and bottoms), gloves, a cold weather hat, and a healthy snack in it. Water should be brought to practice every day. If we are forced to be inside, we meet in the Garden Level hallway.

We do practice over spring – usually in the morning.

Attendance at practice is mandatory and a requirement for being on/staying on the TJ Track & Field Team. Plan driving tests, dentist appointments, trips, etc. for other times – these are not excused absences. The only excused absences are for injury, illness or TJ-related school events. In addition to the ones just listed, the following are NOT excused absences: “my little brother’s birthday”, “picking up grandma at the airport”, club sports, “I forgot my shoes” . . . . If a student-athlete thinks an absence should be excused he or she can discuss it with Coach Fred.

#### **6. What equipment do I need? What should I bring to practice?**

The only equipment a track athlete really needs is a good pair of running shoes and a willingness to work. Student-athletes should also bring sweats and water to every practice. We also recommend getting track spikes/throwing shoes: these may be specialized based on events. However, generally sprints/jumps hurdles are performed in the same type of shoe, while distance and throws utilize other types. Unless an athlete knows for certain which events they will be competing in, they should wait until the end of the first week of practice to get shoes. We will have a “Spike Night” at Runners Roost on Friday of the first week of practice (2/28/25) where student-athletes can get flats, spikes and throwing shoes at a discount. It is best to wait until that time since most athletes will know their events by then.

A word on shoes: Running shoes are made for different kinds of feet and running gaits. Don’t just get the coolest of prettiest shoes. Get shoes that fit and are appropriate based on individual characteristics. Shoes will go a long way towards injury prevention. Most running stores (Runner Roost, Roadrunners, Boulder Running Company) allow you try on shoes and jog in them in the store or parking lot and they will determine the best shoes for you.

#### **7. What is the meet schedule?**

The TENTATIVE meet schedule will posted to the TJ Track & Field webpage for convenience. This schedule is SUBJECT TO CHANGE. The only OFFICIAL schedule is posted on the TJ Athletic Events Calendar. Note that based on weather, it is likely that there will be changes to the schedule.

Once the season starts, we generally have one varsity meet per week, although in some weeks there are 2. A student-athlete may compete in up to 12 meets, plus league and State.

JV has 6 meets, usually on Wednesdays, plus the JV Championships.

A word on meet entries: For most meets each school gets 3 entries per individual per event, plus one entry per relay. In most cases, those entries go to the student-athletes with the best marks (time, distance, height) per event and often an athlete competes in multiple events at a meet. For a variety of reasons one of the top student-athletes in an event may not participate in that event at a particular meet. Additionally, for some meets we get additional entries. When we have open entries, we endeavor to fill them with athletes who regularly compete in other events, or bring up JV athletes for that meet.

### **8. How much does it cost?**

In addition to the athletics fee, each student-athlete pays \$60 which includes a tee-shirt (subject to completing the fundraising raising obligation) and meet shorts. As long as the shorts are in good condition, they may be worn in multiple years. If you have shorts in good condition from last year (in the sole discretion of Coach Fred) and wear them this year for JV meets, the fee is \$45. [Note: as we move to Nike uniforms, we are phasing out all other brands – varsity athletes are required to purchase Nike shorts, which they can keep and use for subsequent years.]

Each student-athlete is also expected to participate in our fundraising program with SnapRaise. Athletes can opt-out of the fundraising by making a single fundraising payment of \$300 to “TJ Athletics” with “Track & Field” on the memo line (See Coach Fred about this option. Families with multiple student-athletes on the team should contact Coach Fred about fundraising discounts.

### **9. What is expected of student-athletes on the TJ Track & Field team?**

- a. **Attendance – at every practice and meet ON TIME**
- b. **Attitude – come with a positive attitude, listen to the coaches, and perform the workouts as instructed. Note: the warm-ups, including a ½ jog is required every day (throwers have a different warm-up in place of the ½ mile jog). If you’re interested in coming out for track and field and cannot jog 2 laps (unless you are exclusively a thrower), you have until February 24 to get there (preseason practice will get you prepared).**
- c. **Be a teammate – Respect and support your teammates; help with bringing equipment to meets and taking it down; putting equipment away after practice, etc.**
- d. **Grades – Keep your grades up. You are STUDENT-athletes. Don’t limit your options in life with poor grades. Repeated weeks of ineligibility will lead to removal from the team.**
- e. **Fundraising – participate in the fundraising and reach your fundraising goals.**
- f. **Work the TJ Twilight Meet – all student-athletes not competing in the Twilight are expected to work their assigned events.**
- g. **Be a good person.**

While we do not “cut” student-athletes, they can cut themselves by not adhering to these expectations and team rules.

### **10. The TJ Twilight**

The TJ Twilight is a large meet that TJ has hosted for more than 40 years. It is one of our largest fundraising events, and a fun day. In order to operate it smoothly, we need a lot of help. Student-athletes who are not competing in it and athletes who are between events are expected to help run it. We also need parents/guardians/friends as volunteers to help run it. Announcements will go out in January regarding helping with the meet.

### **11. How do I make varsity?**

Results in track and field are based on the fastest runner, the farthest thrower and the longest or highest jumper. That makes a coach's job easy in that regard and avoids "playing time" issues and favoritism claims. Assuming student-athletes perform the team expectations, the varsity spots go to the best performers. That said, varsity spots are constantly opening as athletes take recovery, participate in other events, and, sadly injury and ineligibility. Additionally, student-athletes who "cut themselves" will not participate regardless of ability. The coaching staff is always looking to get competitive, hard-working student athletes into varsity meets.

## **12. How do I know what events I'm competing in?**

Events will be discussed at practice the week of each meet. Entries for varsity meets will be sent out a couple of days before the meet via Remind. The entry sheet will include the location of the meet, the events in which each student-athlete is participating, release and bus times (if applicable), and the event times (if not a rolling schedule).