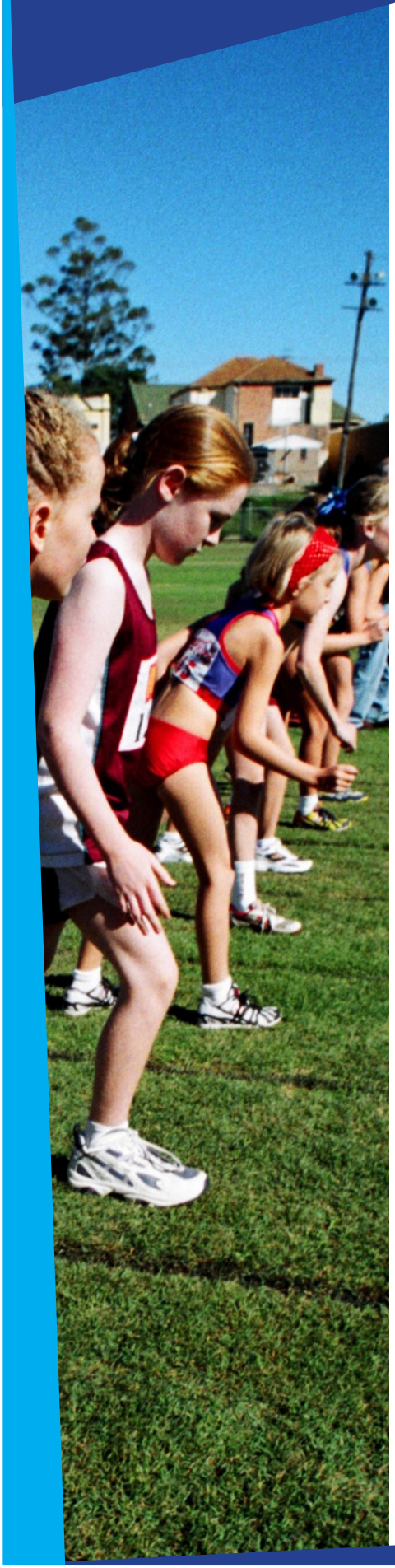
Starters



Where do I stand if I am on the straight track?

For all races on the straight track, the starter stands on the inside of the track. Stand a couple of metres back from the inside lane so you can see all competitors in the narrowest possible angle of vision.

Where do I stand if I am on the circular track?

For all races on the circular track, the starter should stand at the back of the competitors on the inside or outside of the track where you can see all competitors in the narrowest possible angle of vision.

How do I start the race?

- As the Starter, check with the Chief Timekeeper that all the timekeepers are ready (usually with a hand signal).
- In races up to and including 400m, call the athletes up to the line and give the order: - "On Your Mark - Set", and then the starting pistol is fired.
- In races over 400m, give the command - "On Your Marks" and then the starting pistol is fired.
- When the order "On Your Marks" is given, a reasonable length of time should elapse before the command "Set" is given (once all athletes are settled and no movement is detected).
- If an athlete is taking too long to settle into the "Set" position, then all athletes should be asked to stand up and the command is given again.
- Once you are happy that they are all still in the "Set" position, the gun is fired.
- Assuming that there is no false start, for this race your job is now over.

What are the basic rules?

- Athletes must start from behind the line (not touching it).
- If an athlete "breaks" before the gun is fired, the starter declares a false start. In the case of a false start the gun is fired a second time.

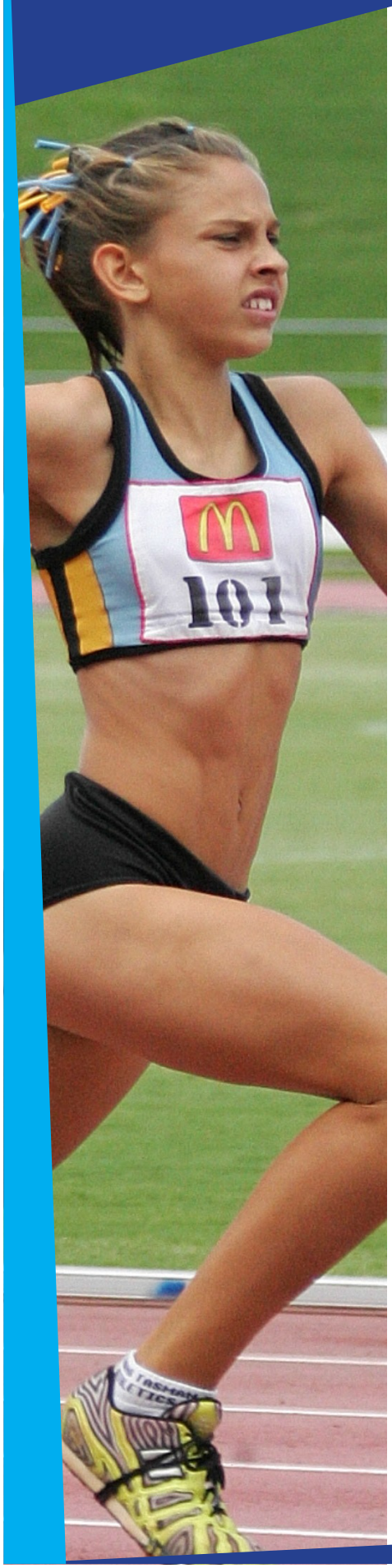
What are the safety considerations?

- Make sure the gun is only loaded when you are about to use it.
- Keep the starting caps in a cool dry place/container (not in your pocket).
- Make sure you wear protective ear muffs or ear plugs.

What are some "Handy Tips" for starters?

- Blow a whistle first to signal to athletes that the race is about to start.
- For younger age groups, do not keep them in the "Set" position for too long (sometimes it is difficult to have U8's completely still at "Set").
- Call the next race up as soon as the prior race has begun.
- Signal to the timekeepers as soon as the track is clear that you are ready to start the next race.

Starting



How do the athletes start a race?

For all running events up to and including the 400m, the athletes will need to wait one metre back from the starting line. The starter, who controls the race, will call them up to the line when all the timekeepers are ready. Athletes can do a standing or crouch start.

How do middle and long distance races start?

- For the 800m, athletes line up side by side along a curved start line marked on the track. The athletes must use a standing start. Athletes can cross over to the inside lane once they have passed the designated mark on the track; this is around about the start of the back straight.

How do I teach a child to start?

- 'On your marks' position – stand with feet shoulder width apart, place one foot forward pointing down the track.
- 'Set' position – bend at hips and knees, opposite leg and arm forward.
- Action on 'Go' – drive arms and legs – step through with back foot first.
- Crouch or block starts can be used but should be taught by someone with experience in the area (Centre coach or official).

What are the safety considerations?

- Athletes are not allowed to put their spikes on until told to do so by the officials.
- Athletes must remove their spikes prior to leaving their lane at the end of the race.

What are some "Handy Tips" for track races?

- Organise the athletes who are waiting for their race into their heats and lanes. Have them sit in lines behind their allocated lane, ready to be called to the start line.