

BELLA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL

TRACK AND FIELD

PREPARING FOR COMPETITION

(From Preparing For Competition, Al Baeta, American River College)

Pre-competition:

Eat your pre-competition meal 4 to 5 hours before you begin your warm-up. For field events, however, 3-4 hours prior to their event time might be O.K. Each athlete through trial and error should determine what is best for him or her. Don't compete with undigested food in your stomach, as vital oxygen carrying blood will be diverted to aid the digestive process.

The pre-meet meal should be primarily complex carbohydrates, as these foods will break down quickly to provide you with a usable source of energy (Carbohydrates = vegetables, brown rice, whole grain breads, cereals, beans, dry nuts, baked or boiled potatoes and some fruits). Protein is necessary for building and maintaining muscles. It takes a long time to break down and is not a short term energy source, so eating lots of protein before a meet will not do you much good and may have an adverse affect.

Avoid sweets and sodas before competition. When you do have these non-nutritious items, exercise moderation.

Rest is extremely important. Get a good night's sleep. The key here is actually two nights before competition. Nevertheless, 8-9 hours is a must if your body is to accomplish all the quality work you are going to ask of it.

Prepare your equipment for competition the day before so you are not hung up on this as you begin your physical warm-up.

Mentally prepare yourself in an intelligent and calm manner. Review techniques and race strategy so that your mind and body are "sensing the things you are going to do."

Be positive in your thinking process. You are going to be naturally excited. Don't let this excitement grow into excessive nervousness which will dissipate valuable energy stores. Do not allow negative things to upset you, i.e. the weather, a cold, poor lane assignment, poor throwing order, the ring, the runway, the pit, delays in schedule, "Adjust to any adverse situation as best you can". Control the situation, don't let it control you.

Plan to begin your physical warm-up 45 minutes to 1 hour before competition. Give yourself plenty of time. Again trial and error will be valuable here. Be consistent in your warm-up as much as possible, including jogging, stretching and buildups. Determine the number of puts, jumps, and throws which you believe will best prepare you for the big effort. Establish a routine pattern of shadow glides, standing puts and throws and full throws which will set the tone for competition. Don't let nervousness carry you into doing too much too hard. Always go over 3-5 hurdles before you compete. The relay team should run through 2-3 fast exchanges. Remember the physical warm-up has as its purpose that of giving your body the "sense" of what you are going to experience in competition. Furthermore, the cardiovascular system must begin to work in pumping additional blood through the system to prepare it for the stress of activity. The stretching and specific technique moves enable the muscular action to be more easily and effectively executed in competition.

Competition:

During the actual competition concentration on various techniques should be at a minimum. You want to be totally involved in the competitive experience. Be intelligently alert to what is happening and be able to react to your advantage, but don't freeze yourself by a self-analysis of your form faults while you are in the ring or in a race.

Post Competition:

Seek your competition out and thank him/her for the competition with congratulations on a fine effort or an indication of respect for their competition with you.

Take a warm down jog, so that your body will physiologically be aided in recovering from the severe stress of activity. Re-stretch the major muscle groups involved in your activity.

Be cool in reacting to adverse results and proud of excellent performances. After your emotions have subsided, begin reflecting on your performance toward the end of future improvement.