

IDEAS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY COMPETITIONS

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The dangers of early specialization and serious competitions are problems in the many-sided development of young athletes all over the world. In the following text the authors, discussing these problems, recommend supplementary team competitions for the 10 to 15 yrs. age — range to overcome the dangers of the serious competition concept. The article is based on a translated extract from Die Lehre der Leichiathetik, Germany, Vol. 31, No's 12 and ng 13, published by Deutscher Sportverlag Kurt Stoof GmbH & Co. and edited by Helmar Hommel.

The following introduces a supplementary track and field competition program for 10 to 15 yrs. boys and 9 to 14 yrs. girls. It provides a parallel offer to the present competition system for youth in “informal” competitions between talent promotion groups, school teams or training groups. Participation in the competitions of ‘many-sided competition’, “basic multiple event competition” and “block team competition” prepares the boys and girls step by step for participation in the “block competitions”, the official competition system of the German Athletics Federation. The following considerations were regarded as significant in the preparation of the supplementary competitions program:

- The competition offer was based on sport specific many-sidedness with the development of coordinating capacities and speed in the foreground. Emphasis was above all placed on the improvement of coordination by “obstacle” runs that lead to hurdling competition programs. The development of arms and legs was in addition promoted through the choice of corresponding events (for example, medicine ball throws, scissor jumps, relays, multiple jumps etc).
- The demands of these supplementary competitions cover already partly the requirements of the block competitions. The “block team competition”, for example, covers the throwing block's three events (shot, discus, javelin), while the running block places emphasis on aerobic loads.
- The supplementary competitions include invariably team events, in which boys and girls can in the beginning take part in mixed teams. Only in the third stage, the “block team competition”, is it necessary to perform in separated teams. Different physical development, as well as differences in the throwing implements and hurdle distances, makes this necessary because the aim is to stress team competition in which participants are motivated by their contribution to the total result.

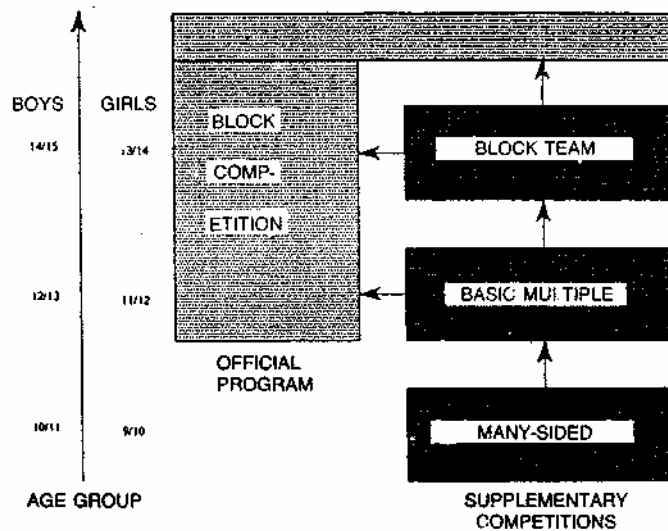


FIG. 1. Block and supplementary competitions in the development of juniors.

- The supplementary competitions offer only multiple events in order to support the many-sided development in individual, as well as in group training.
- The demands of the competitions are arranged progressively. The “many-sided competition”, for example, begins by simply running over obstacles. This is then gradually stepped up to the real hurdles event. The multiple jumps in the “basic multiple event” are performed from a standing takeoff, in the “block team competition” from a 10m run-up.
- The children are step by step introduced to the specific multiple events scoring. The scoring in the “many-sided competition” is based simply on placing, then in the following steps on the German Athletics Federation’s scoring tables for multiple events.

The proposed supplementary competitions covers the following sequence of team multiple events competitions:

1. Many-sided competition
2. Basic multiple event competition
3. Block team competition.

MANY-SIDED COMPETITION

This competition is planned for 10/11 yrs. boys and 9/10 yrs. girls. The teams can as a rule include up to 10 boys and girls. Each event scores according to placing (1st place = 1 point, 2nd place = 2 points etc.). The team with the lowest point score from all events is the winner. The following events are included in the many-sided competition:

30m Shuttle Relay

Each team has a flat and an obstacle track (Fig. 2). The obstacles are made up from cartons, rubber blocks or children's hurdles that can be easily cleared (up to 70cm). Each team member must run once on the flat and once over the obstacles.

Zone Long Jump Relay

A 10m long run-up is marked. Landing occurs in a pit or rubber mats marked in three zones. (The first zone starts about 1 m from the takeoff with about 3m left behind the last zone for the turn - Fig. 3). The team lines up behind the run-up marker. The first jumper runs, takes off, lands in one of the marked zones, runs around the turn marker back to the starting point and touches the next jumper. Each jump scores according to the zone reached in the landing (zone 1 = 1 point, zone 2 = 2 points etc.). The winner is the team that has collected the largest number of points in five minutes.

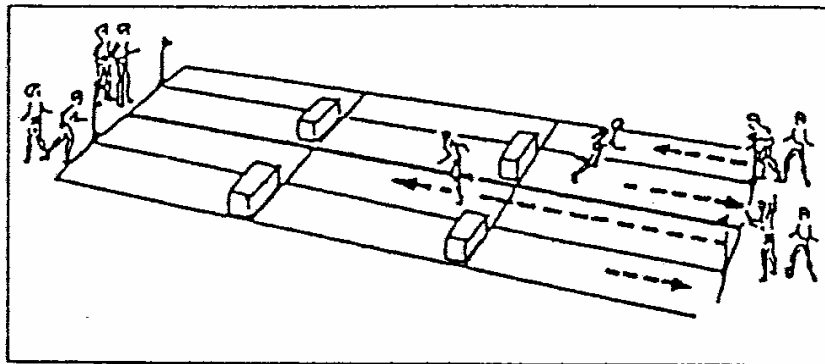


FIG. 2. Many-sided competition — 30m Shuttle Relay.

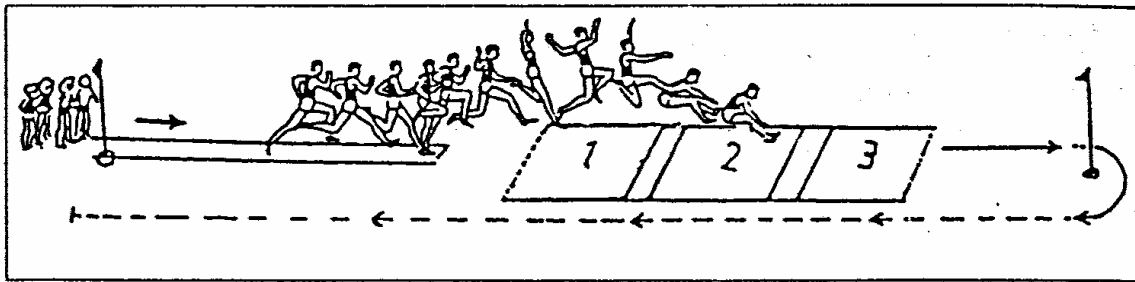


FIG. 3. Many-sided competition — Zone Long jump Relay.

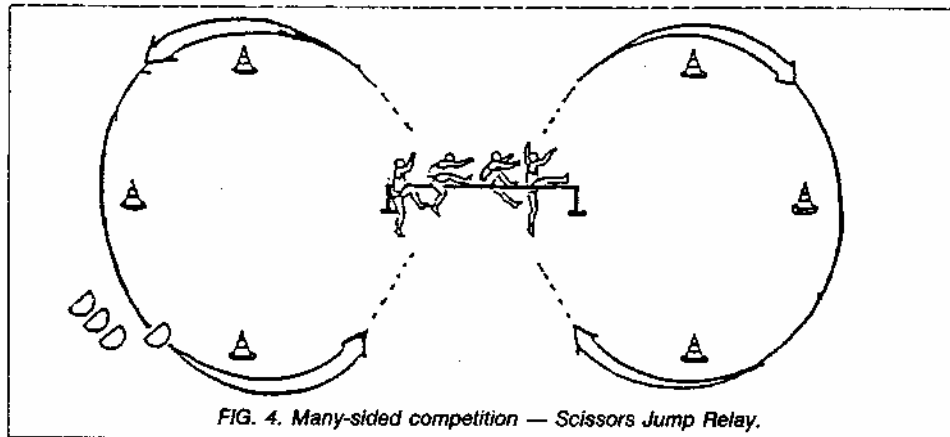


FIG. 4. Many-sided competition — Scissors Jump Relay.

Scissors Jump Relay

A large shape of a figure 8 is marked on the ground with the help of cones (Fig. 4). A low obstacle that can be easily cleared in a scissors style high jump technique, is placed at the intersection of the figure 8. Each team member covers the figure 8 circuit before touching the next runner. The team with the fastest time is the winner.

Team Medicine Ball Put

The team stands on a baseline of a playing field (soccer, handball, basketball). The first student puts the medicine ball with the right arm from a standing position. The second team member performs the put from where the first student's put landed and so on until all members have completed the exercises. The same procedure is repeated with the left arm. The team with the best total distance is the winner.

Biathlon

The biathlon is a team endurance run on a short circular track which includes a ball target throw (soccer or handball goal with hanging tires or small boxes) (Fig. 5). The team starts together. At the first corner flag the first runner moves directly to the target throw line, picks up a ball and completes the throw. The team continues to run while the thrower is in action. The thrower, provided he has hit the target, catches up with the team. If the target is missed, the whole team performs a penalty run around the 30m extension area. The team with the fastest time for 10 laps of the course is the winner. As each team member has to execute a target throw each team should have 10 members. When teams have less than 10 members, it should be decided at the start of the race which members throw more than once.

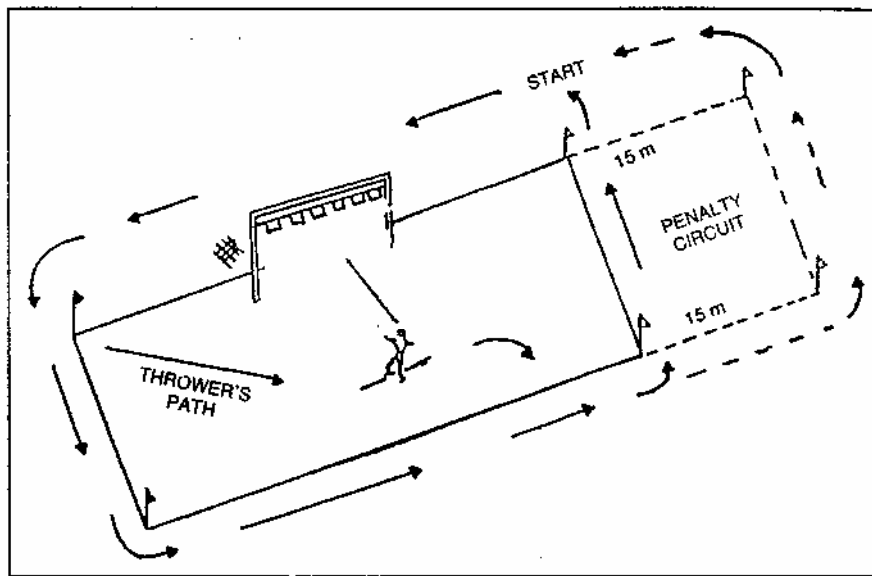


FIG. 5. Many-sided competition — Biathlon.

BASIC MULTIPLE EVENT

The basic multiple event is a team competition for 12 to 13 yrs. boys and 11 to 12 yrs. girls. All team members, usually up to eight, perform the following seven events: 50m sprint, 60m hurdles, multiple jump, high jump, medicine ball throw, medicine ball put, 1000m run. Scoring is based on the German Athletics Federation's tables (medicine ball throw and medicine ball put use shot put tables and multiple jump a specially prepared scoring table). The team with the highest total score is the winner. The following rules should apply:

- Hurdles: 11 .50m from start to the first hurdle, hurdle height 0.762m, distances between the hurdles 7.50m, from the last hurdle to the finish 11.50m.
- Multiple jump: Takeoff from a standing stride position. Execution: right-left-right-left-landing or left-right-left-right-landing. The best of three attempts is counted.
- High jump: Each participant has only a total of five jumps available.
- Medicine ball throw: Weight 1kg. The throw is performed from a standing stride position forward over the head. The best of three attempts is counted.
- Medicine ball put: weight - 1kg. Two puts are performed with the right arm, two with the left arm. The best distances with each arm are added up for the score.

BLOCK TEAM COMPETITION

The block team competition is designed for 14 to 15 yrs. boys and 13 to 14 yrs. girls. Each team can have an unlimited number of competitions. At least two competitors must line up for each event block. The results of the best two competitors in each block are included in the score of a team. Scoring is based on the German Athletics Federation's tables.

The participants compete at any one time in one of the following multiple event blocks:

1. Sprinting/Jumping: 80m hurdles, 75m sprint, multiple jump, high jump, javelin, throw.
2. Running: 80m hurdles, 75m sprint, multiple jump, ball throw, 3000m (boys), 2000m (girls).
3. Throwing: 80m hurdles, shot put, multiple jump, discus throw, javelin throw.

The following rules apply:

- Hurdles:
 - Boys: 7 hurdles - 13.50m to the first hurdle / height 0.84m / 8.60m apart / 14.90m to the finish.
 - Girls: 8 hurdles - 12.00m to the first hurdle / height 0.62m / 8.00m apart / 12.00m to the finish.

- Multiple Jumps:
 - From a 10m run-up - Execution: right-left-right-left-landing or left-right-left-right-landing. The best of three attempts is counted.
- Ball throw:
 - Boys: 1 kg / Girls: 800g.
- Javelin throw:
 - Boys: 600g / Girls: 400g.
- Shot put:
 - Boys: 4kg / Girls: 3kg.
- Discus throw:
 - Boys 1kg / Girls 750g.

FINAL REMARKS

The here introduced supplementary track and field competitions represent an attempt to convert the important aspects of basic training into practical and attractive multiple event programs. The concept is by no means concluded and requires further discussion, examination, testing, evaluation and modification. We are, however, confident that the suggestions will lead to further discussions about the formation of a better competition system for young athletes and make a contribution to an attractive and successful development plan.