

How to Run an Age-Handicapping Track & Field Meet

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Time Standards. Familiarize yourself with the pink chart. It contains the time standards -- copied directly from the book by Dr. Track, Runner's Time Standards -- of the usual track events.

"OC" means "open class," and is generally close to the world record. For example, the OC for the 100 is 9.91 seconds. By analyzing thousands of performances over the past 20 years, Dr. Track (Charles Phillips) determined what a "world class" performance would be at any age for both men and women. Thus, for age 45 men, it's 10.76. Theoretically, that's what Carl Lewis will run at age 45 if he stays in shape. The same logic applies to all events. (Note that you can include 5-year-olds, as well as 80-year-olds, in the meet, if you choose, although, frankly, NMN hasn't checked the accuracy of the younger standards.)

These are the standards on which the running events in the meet will be based.

Field Event Handicaps. Familiarize yourself with the green charts which list the field event handicaps, prepared by Pete Mundle, WAVA and TAC Masters T&F Records Chairman.

These are different than the time standards, in that:

- a. Age 30, rather than open class, is used as the base
- b. There are no handicaps for ages under 30
- c. The handicaps extend to age 88, rather than 80

The handicaps are expressed in meters, but, if you choose, can be converted to feet/inches by using a conversion table, or by multiplying by 3.2808. Metric is simpler and easier to work with.

Note that only five field events are included: high jump, pole vault, long jump, triple jump and shot put. Mundle is still working on the hammer, javelin and discus. He is also working on sub-age-30 handicaps. We'll send the additions to you as soon as they're ready.

The principle is the same as the time standards. For example, a 30-year-old who high-jumps 2.20 meters (7-2½) could, theoretically, leap 1.88 meters (6-2) at age 45 if he stayed in shape. His 1.88, plus handicap of .32, would give him a net jump of 2.20, the same as when he was 30.

For a copy of Dr. Track's 24-page book, Runner's Time Standards, send \$4.00 to Charles Phillips, 5130 Nebraska Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

HOW TO FIGURE DISTANCE HANDICAPS FOR 100, 200, 400, 400H

All the handicaps for each age/sex have already been figured and printed on the green charts. Generally, you can calculate them, as follows:

1. Using Dr. Track's Time Standards (pink chart), divide the OC (open class) time standard (for the 100, it's 9.91), by the time standard for the athlete's age/sex (for M45, it's $10.76 = .921$).
2. Multiply the answer (in this case, .921) by the distance of the race (in this case, 100m). You get 92.1 meters. That's the distance the 45-year-old man will run. Thus, he gets a head start, or "handicap" of 7.9 meters from the 100-meter starting line. ($100-92.1=7.9$).

A variable has been factored into the upper age groups of the 200, 400 and 400H. Reason: older runners will run less distance than younger runners, and will thus be able to run at a faster pace than they would if they ran the full distance.

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OPTIONS

1. You may wish to run the entire meet like the field events and short hurdles, namely: run the event as normal, and figure the handicaps later to determine the winner. It's not as exciting or dramatic this way, but it's easier on the meet director.

Just use the "short hurdle" heat sheet. The "time standard" and the "handicap" are the same, so just subtract the handicap from the total time to get the net time. The lowest net time wins.
2. Or you may wish to use that method for the 400H, but use the distance handicaps for the 100, 200 and 400. You can do whatever you please. We used the distance handicaps in the NMN meet because it was far more exciting and "made" the meet. But if you have a meet where nearly everyone, for some reason, wants to "get a time" for their event, this method might prove advantageous.
3. Because of the huge handicaps in the 5000, that event can become tricky, and losing count of each person's laps is a real possibility, unless you have one spotter to every, say, two or three runners. So you might wish to have everyone start with the gun, and figure the winner later, as noted above. Also, because of the big head starts, the dramatic effect you get in the 100 thru 1500 tends to get lost, unless you have an announcer who is really on top of it.
4. Even when you run the meet as we've outlined, one or two runners may want to run the entire distance, to "get a time," and don't mind waiving their handicap. No problem. They start at the normal starting line, get a time and are figured into the standings according to the way they finish.
5. In the 800, 1500 and 5000, if your "0" handicap runner scratches, you have two choices:
 - a. Run it as planned, with a "phantom" runner starting at the gun.
 - b. Make the next person in line the "0" starter, and move up the other handicaps, accordingly. (That happened in the NMN meet in the 1500. See the example. To save time, we moved the second person to the "0" spot.

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HOW TO MEASURE THE DISTANCE HANDICAPS

Loose Approach: One giant step equals one meter. Just walk off the required distance from the starting, or other, line.

Tight Approach: Get a 50-meter tape and a one-meter ruler. It takes two people to do it right.

Use the lines on the track to make it easier.

It's a little difficult to accurately measure 30- or 40-meters from the 200 or 400 starting line. 40 meters is a long way, and, worse, it's around a turn.

So...use the markings already on most tracks to cut down the distance you have to measure.

Here's a guide. All quality tracks should have these markings, although they may use different colors.

<u>Line on track</u>	<u>Meters from 100m start</u>	<u>Line on track</u>	<u>Meters from 200m start</u>
110H start	10	200m start	0
100m start	0	White (300H #3)	15
Blue (110H #1)	3.72	Yellow(400H #6)	20
Blue (110H #2)	12.86	White (300H #4)	50
Green(100H #1)	13.0	Yellow(400H #7)	55
White(300H #6)	20	White (300H #5)	85
Green(100H #2)	21.5	Yellow(400H #8)	90
Blue (110H #3)	22.00	100m start	100
Yellow(400H#9)	25		
Green(100H #3)	30.0		
Blue (110H #4)	31.14	<u>Line on track</u>	<u>Meters from 400m start</u>
Green(100H #4)	38.5	400m start	0
Blue (110H #5)	40.28	Yellow(400H #1)	45
Green(100H #5)	47.0	Yellow(400H #2)	80
Blue (110H #6)	49.42	1500m start	100
		Yellow(400H #3)	115
		White (300H #1)	145
		Yellow(400H #4)	150
		White (300H #2)	180
		Yellow(400H #5)	185
		200m start	200

Example: to measure the distance handicap in the 100 for a 55-year-old man (12.7m), find the line closest to 12.7, which is the green line at 13.0. Measure 0.3 meters back to get 12.7.

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HOW TO SEED HEATS

(using the NMN meet's 100m as an example)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Time</u> <u>Standard</u>	<u>Best</u> <u>Time</u>	<u>% of Std</u> <u>to Best</u>	<u>Rank</u> <u>(seed)</u>	<u>Heat</u>
M32	Streeter	10.21	11.17	91.4	4	1
M41	Pierce	10.57	12.5	84.6	12	1
M45	Butler	10.76	11.4	94.4	1	1
M46	Niedermeyer	10.81	12.2	88.7	8	1
M53	Newton	11.22	12.1	92.7	2	2
M54	Pedevilla	11.28	14.0	80.6	13	1
M55	Robinson	11.35	12.6	90.1	7	2
M60	Watanabe	11.72	12.7	92.3	3	2
M61	Harte	11.81	13.1	90.2	6	2
M64	Patsalis	12.08	13.3	90.8	5	1
M68	Guidet	12.49	14.23	87.8	10	2
W55	Kuehne	12.88	16.1	80.0	14	
M76	Caruso	13.55	15.5	87.4	11	2
W76	James	17.67	20.09	88.0	9	1

(not all entrants included in this example)

Thus, Butler goes in heat 1, Newton and Watanabe in heat 2, Streeter and Patsalis in heat 1, Harte and Robinson in 2, etc.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Should these meets be called "age-handicapping" or "age-graded." "Handicap" is the proper word, and has been used in horse racing circles for years. Yet, it sometimes connotes disabled, and so could be confusing to the average person. Use whatever term you think is best, but let us know. We'd like to try to settle on one word, whichever proves best.

WEIGHT OF THE SHOT PUT

Currently, the following shot put specifications are used in world, national and regional masters championships. (column 1)

In column 2 are the old TAC measurements which are still used today in many meets.

Because of the abundant data, the age-handicaps are based on the old "pound" weights.

The two columns give a comparison between the two.

WAVA/ TAC	kilograms	pounds	Old TAC
M40	7.26	16	M40-49
M50	6	13.2	
	5.44	12	M50-59
M60	5	11	
	3.63	8	M60+
M70+	4	8.8	
W35-49	4	8.8	
	3.63	8	W35-59
W50+	3	6.6	
	2.72	6	W60+

The current WAVA/TAC standards are greater (or equal for M40's) than the old TAC weights in every case, except W50-59, where old TAC is 8 lbs. and WAVA/TAC is 3K (6.6 lbs.)