

Waltham Track Club

Philosophy, Policies, and Procedures Guide

This guide is intended for members, parents and coaches of the Waltham Track Club. For members, this guide will help you understand what you can expect and what is expected of you. For youth parents, we hope this guide will help you understand the Club's philosophy and mission statement, policies, and conflict resolution policies so that you may be assured that our Club and our coaching staff are doing everything possible to teach our member/athletes fundamental values that transcend sports. For coaches, this guide will help you to arrive at a coaching style that most reflects our Club's policies, philosophy and values.

We hope that this knowledge will assist all involved to achieve a successful, enjoyable and rewarding experience. Many of the decisions made by our coaching staff and Board of Directors require judgment and errors may be made. We do not and should not expect perfection from our coaches, Board members or athletes. We should expect that all decisions will be made with the best interest of all involved.

Please refer to our web site at www.walthamtrackclub.com for up to date information concerning our programs and valuable links to related it.

History – the club was started in the summer of 1976 with seven girls who trained for the then annual Waltham AAU Track and Field meet. It was accepted as an official program and member of the N.E.A.A.U on April 15, 1977 - the Club's official birthday. Membership had grown from seven to forty females in less than nine months. A men's team was added in the spring of 1979 and a youth team later in the summer of that same year. A master's team for men and women, ages 30 and over, was started in 1981. Within five years, the Club had become one of the most diversified programs in New England. It became recognized as one of the leading programs in Massachusetts and rapidly developed a local, regional and national reputation for competitive excellence. The Club experienced many changes during the following twenty years and now focuses most of its attention on its women's open and master's team, high school/college division and youth programs.

The Club is currently registered as an official program with the U.S.A. Track and Field Association, the current governing body for all running related activities in the U.S., and competes in and supports events sanctioned by the USATF.

Mission Statement - Our Club's main mission is to provide a safe environment for all members to share common goals and interest, to build self-esteem and to foster an active, healthy life-style, while also providing opportunities to develop their sport related talents to their fullest.

Philosophy – our Club is committed to the total physical, emotional, social and mental development of its members. Building self esteem and self-confidence is an ongoing process, used in both practices and competitions. Our intent is to challenge and develop members technically and emotionally, in a positive manner, using praise and constructive criticism. Praise is to be personal, based upon individual and team achievement relative to goals and ability. Criticism should be impersonal.

Waltham Track Club members, parents and coaches are expected to demonstrate proper respect for each other, other teams and coaches, teammates, officials, spectators, facilities and equipment. Members and coaches are expected to exhibit the highest level of conduct, both on and off the playing field, as they are, at all times, representatives of their team, Club and community.

The Club's sole goal, in terms of athletic performance, is for each member to strive to be "the best that one can be".

Purpose

- to encourage and support the sport of running and track and field
- to promote running as a way to health and fitness
- to provide individualized instruction in the skills of track and field, race walking, cross-country running, road racing and marathon running, along with offering actual competitive experience
- to emphasize individual achievement in an attempt to get each member to reach his fullest potential
- to offer various forms of community service, especially through our sponsorship of youth oriented events

Core Values

- treat all members with respect and dignity and encourage participation in a wide variety of offerings
- strive for athletic and personal excellence
- require members to meet reasonable standards during participation in practices and competitions
- instill confidence through learning and achievement by positive reinforcement and constructive criticism
- encourage initiative and support individuality
- expect individuals to take responsibility for their actions and conduct themselves with integrity
- emphasize that respect for athletic and human differences must be at the center of the athletic and Club experience
- evaluate our athletic and personal progress regularly
- foster moral awareness and civic participation by the example of our daily behavior

Requirements For Membership

Membership is open to females of college age on up and to boys and girls, ages 18 or less, who wish to pursue instruction, training and competition in the sport of track and field, road racing or race walking and who have the desire to achieve and the willingness to participate in Club activities. The Club's intent is to have members feel that they not only belong to the program, but are a part of it. Members who reside outside Waltham are welcome. All members and parents are encouraged to become actively involved in organizing, attending and supporting Club related activities. Membership forms must be filed and accepted by the Club, along with the appropriate dues for the program applied for. Parents of youth members must choose at least on volunteer commitment in support of our youth program.

Tryouts

There are NO tryouts for membership to our Club. Members of all abilities are welcome. All that is required is that each member work diligently to improve and strive to be the best that one can be, while adhering to the core values of our program.

Special Event/Competition/Team Selection

The Club and its coaches realize and understand that any necessary selection process can be difficult and That sensitivity and communication are essential.

The Club and its coaching staff will do their best to communicate and explain team information, expectations, standards and requirements for selection of members for special events or for selection to special teams. Such communication may be done via email, newsletter, special member or parent meetings. It is the responsibility of members and parents, however, to demonstrate to the Club and coaches that they understand both the information and expectation for the special event and to make appropriate inquiries if they do not.

Selection to Special Events/Teams is a privilege, not a right. It must be earned through a member's consistent participation, performance and meeting of standards when required. Selection may be done on a first come/first serve basis, on head to head to competition or by achieving a certain standard.

The Club does not advocate, encourage, or support National level competitions for members under the age of 12, especially in track and field. Special consideration may be given to team participation at the National level in cross country, but not until all members and parents have discussed the purpose, intent and actual benefit of such participation. Parents may decide to attend National competitions on their own, but will do so without the support of the Club.

CLUB PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES –

The Club provides individualized coaching and organized workouts at all levels. Sessions are held at the J.Lee Gould Track and Field Facility at Leary Field on Bacon Street in Waltham during the spring, summer and fall seasons and at the indoor facility at the Kennedy Middle School, 655 Lexington Street, Waltham during the winter.

Open/Master's Women's Team

This program is open to all females, college age on up, regardless of ability or experience. Members provide certified coaches with their specific goals and then receive training programs designed to achieve those goals. Training groups are structure based on ability and individual needs. Sessions are usually held Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings, from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

High School Program

Open to high school males and females looking to prepare for upcoming seasons or to excel to the next level of their development. This program offers instruction and training by certified coaches in all track and events, with specialization in the sprints, hurdles and jumps. Practice sessions are held year round, but do vary with the season. The high school program is a part our Youth Program, but offers more specialized training than with members of younger age.

Youth Track and Field Program

Open to boys and girls, ages 8-18. There are no tryouts or cuts. The program is held Monday and Wednesday evenings, from 6:00pm-8:00pm, from the end of April through June. A travel team component is offered from June through August for those who wish to extend their season. The first two weeks of the program offers instruction and training in the basic skills of track and field, followed by 8 weeks of developmental competitions. Events include: 100, 200, 400, 800, mile, hurdles, long jump, shot put, turbo jav and high jump. Members choose the events and the meets they wish to compete in. Ribbons are awarded to all participants in all events. Gold, silver and bronze certificates will be awarded based on the number of personal improvements achieved during the program.

Parents of youth members are required to select one volunteer support activity

- youth coach volunteer
- meet helper volunteer
- award's night volunteer
- first aid volunteer
- concessions volunteer
- be a member of the board of directors

(Age Groups)

Youth members are divided into age groups – 8-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Age groups are determined by a member's age on December 31 of that year.

(Practice and Meets)

Members should come to practices and meets properly dressed and equipped with t-shirt, shorts, warm ups, proper running shoes (no basketball high tops, tennis shoe or dress shoes, etc...). It's also a good idea to bring plastic water bottles, sun screen, hats, and light snacks. Rain outs will be decided by the coaching staff at the time of the session. Sessions will be conducted whenever possible, even in light rain. **THERE WILL NOT BE ANY PHONE CALLS OR EMAILS TO ANNOUNCE CANCELLATIONS. SHOW UP AND FIND OUT WHAT THE SITUATION IS.**

(Competition Number)

During the spring/summer program each youth member will be assigned a competition number which must be worn at all weekly competitions (not practices). If members lose their assigned numbers, they will need to make a new one own their own – the Club will issue only one number per member per season and will not replace or be responsible for making a new number.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF ALL YOUTH, OPEN AND MASTER'S TEAM MEMBERS

- members are expected to be respectful of coaches, teammates and opponents at all times, before, during and after each practice or competition.
- members are to be quiet and attentive whenever a coach is providing verbal instruction
- members are to be gracious in victory and in defeat. Play within the rules and accept the outcomes
- members are to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, poise and composure at all times
- members are to demonstrate sportsmanship at all times and act as a positive role model

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

- respect the efforts and performances of all team members and opponents
- respect coaches, parents, officials and competitors at all times
- demonstrate sportsmanship at all times and act as a positive, adult role model
- acknowledge the efforts of your own child and of others
- conduct yourselves in an appropriate and civil manner
- maintain composure at all times

Governing Body

The Club is governed by a Board of Directors and its officers and is comprised of parents, open team members and citizens interested in supporting Club programs. The Board meets monthly throughout the year to conduct Club business. Members and parents are encouraged to take an active role in the administration and organization of the Club and are welcome to become participating members of the Board. Any ideas, proposals or suggestions should be directed to the Board and will be discussed at their monthly meetings. Special committees may be formed by the Board whenever it initiates or approves a special event. Such committees are responsible for organizing and carry out all phases of their respective activity until its completion and for reporting all aspects of the event to the Board.

Conflict Resolution

Athletic participation is highly emotional and very time consuming. Sometimes conflicts arise between members, coaches and parents. Everyone's best interest, especially of a team member, is best served when each participant understands the position of the other. This understanding can only be accomplished by open and honest communication.

When conflicts or issues arise, it is important that they be addressed **immediately** and as directly as possible, to the "appropriate party", so that they can be promptly resolved. Parents are not "appropriate parties". Coaching staff and board members are considered Club leaders and issues should be communicated to one of those constituencies. There should be no delay in airing any and all concerns, since this process could take time and athletic seasons and club programs are relatively short. Any comment, concern, issue or suggestion **MUST** be directed in a respectful, appropriate and impersonal manner in order for it to be addressed. **Voicing concerns, issues or conflicts in an inappropriate manner may result in immediate dismissal from our Club if such behavior is seen as being a detriment to our programs or to the well being of our members and coaching staff.**

It is important for all members and parents to know that any comments, concerns, issues or suggestions given to a coach, Board member or Conflict Resolution Committee will be addressed and seriously considered. While there can be no guarantee that all parties will agree with all resolutions or findings, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understandings in the future. We have developed the following three step process to deal with potential conflicts.

First Step

Present the conflict/issue to a coach as soon as possible. This may be done in person, via a note, an email or a phone call. (Current contact information can be found on the Club website). Members are encouraged to do this personally, but if they are not comfortable doing so or if doing so is not practical, then they may have a parent or other representative do so on their behalf.

In order for such contact to be as productive as possible, it should be done privately and **not**

- prior to, during or immediately following a competition,
- during a practice session, when other members are present
- when it is readily visible to others that the discussion is taking place
- when it is apparent that there is not sufficient time to allow for a complete discussion.

Second Step

If a satisfactory solution is not reached through direct contact with a coach, the member and/or parent/representative should then contact the Club's President. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made.

Third Step

If a discussion with the Club President still does not bring a resolution, then the member and or parent/representative may request that the issue be presented by the Club President to the Club's Conflict Resolution Committee (a personal meeting with the Conflict Resolution Committee may be arranged if desired). All discussions and decisions made by the Conflict Resolution Committee are final and all parties agree to abide by such decisions.

Retribution

Retribution will not be tolerated. Members and parents must be confident that the voicing of an opinion or concern, using proper forum and method, is not only free from penalty or retribution, but also is strongly encouraged. If at any time a member or parent suspects that some form of retribution is surfacing as a result of having voiced an opinion, concern or issue, he or she should immediately contact a member of the Board of Directors, using proper forum and method.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If it comes to the attention of the Board of Directors that a parent or team members' behavior has been inappropriate or has become a detriment to the function of our Club, the Board reserves the right to request a meeting to discuss their concern and to dismiss a member if a resolution to the Board's concern cannot be achieved.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT A COMPETITION

1. One week prior to each meet the Waltham Track Club coaching staff will meet with its youth athletes (one on one, when feasible and appropriate) to discuss and explain the upcoming competition, assign events and answer any questions. Our goal is to ensure that each athlete participates in the events that are best suited for their particular stage of training and level of development. If winning and earning awards happens as a result of this, that's great. But it is not to be our main focus.

Once a Club member is confirmed to participate in a meet, the appropriate entry fee will be collected in advance and the member will be registered for the meet. There may be some competitions in which it is easier and more efficient for members to enter on their own. This will be discussed far enough in advance for such to happen.

When possible, the Club will make every effort to email parents with info about upcoming events. Parents MUST adhere to all deadlines for returning entry forms and entry fees or the Club may choose not to enter their athlete with our team entry and the parent will then be responsible for their athlete's entry.

2. Many youth meets are heavily attended with youth of all ages. The largest groups of athletes are Bantams (10 & under) and Midgets (11-12).

3. You can't compete if you do not bring and wear your proper attire

-Full Club uniform (top & bottom)

-Running flats to warm up and cool down

-Racing shoes, spikes or throwing shoes to compete in

-Warm up suit in case it gets cold; Club warm up if you own one

-Travel bag packed with anything and everything that you may need to compete successfully (refer to "Things To Bring To A Meet List")

4. Weather is changeable, so always pack accordingly

5. Be an encourager

-Have Fun!

-Taking first in a heat or overall event feels great, but what we really want each athlete to focus on is continuous improvement of form and technique and of their own personal records - effort, not outcome is the main goal

-Make sure every member feels important and knows that his/her best is what we ask them to give in every competition

6. Team parents sit together - in most cases, our Club will have a team tent set up for all to gather under

-Parents may bring lawn chairs to set up along the outside of the team area or tent and kids can spread blankets on the ground to lie on and stretch

-Parents and members should bring things to keep themselves occupied during competitions - coloring books, games, headsets, books to read, etc..

-Athletes should not wear headphones or bring any electronic device, as they need to be alert and aware of when their event is called. They need to learn to be responsible in being prepared for any announcements or changes.

7. Most meets have snack bars, but most parents pack their own coolers.

-Pack coolers with ice, water, lots of fresh fruit and other healthy type food that can be consumed throughout the day

-Athletes are not to consume any soda or coffee during competition

-Competitions (especially track & field) can take up most of the day, so plan accordingly

-Sharing is not required, but fresh fruit and such is often an item that the kids like to pass around

8. Keep an eye on your athlete - it is impossible for our Club coaching staff to keep track of all of our team members during a competition. You need to ensure that your athlete is checked in at the proper time and meet him/her at the end of the event to ensure that they get back to the team area and then cool down properly. This is especially so for our younger members and especially at track and field meets.

9. Pack it in...you pack it out - we do not want to become known as the slob team. Make sure that all items you bring with you, leave with you or find their way to a trash can.

10. Bring a pen so that you can write down the results of your athlete's events - there may be times when you will be asked to email those results to our Club's coach so that he/she can properly record them (results are not always readily available to our coaches, so we may need parents to help us with such)

11. Keep a positive attitude

-The days can get long and hot or cold and they can be quite unbearable when you have to listen to someone complaining throughout the day. Be respectful of others who have come to enjoy the meet and to watch their athlete perform - do not burden them or abuse them with inappropriate negative talk.

-Encourage and cheer for all team members. If you don't know someone's name, ask another parent or team member.

-No gossiping about Club members or associates. If you have issues, address them with the appropriate person in a constructive manner.

-Encourage and cheer for athletes who are not members of our Club

12. Be ready to volunteer

-You may be asked to take a group of kids to the bathroom, to the starting area or to the warm up area. Be open to helping out.

-You may be asked to collect stats or results, video tape or help with times. In some instances, our Club may even be asked to supply volunteers to help with a meet.

13. If you see a safety concern, bring it to the attention of one of our coaches so that it can be addressed.

14. The Club's coaching staff has the right to remove any parent or family member from the team area who continues to show negative attitude, lack of concern for safety or uses foul language.