



Hershey Blaze Track Club
2018 Membership Handbook

The Hershey Blaze Track Club is dedicated to training youth (ages 6 to 18) in track & field and cross country. The Club is a member of USA Track & Field and AAU providing a high quality program that inspires our athletes to participate successfully at the local, regional and national levels. Founded in 2013, the Hershey Blaze Track Club has grown to be one of the largest clubs in Pennsylvania operating with local developmental teams, a national competition team and a growing Masters program. We are centrally operating in Hershey, Pennsylvania dedicated to youth in communities from around the midstate. Currently, we have 4 local team practice sites in Hershey, King of Prussia, Berks County and Mechanicsburg. No prior skills or experience is required and we do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender or disability.

Our Goals:

1. To provide high quality training by registered USATF coaches.
2. To provide youth with the resources, learning experiences, training and inspiration to achieve their goals in track & field.
3. To provide youth with an opportunity to build and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
4. To provide opportunities to develop leadership abilities.
5. To provide experiences that foster a lifelong love of the sport and to achieve their personal potential.
6. To provide a healthy, caring team environment while promoting a positive attitude and good sportsmanship.
7. To have fun!

Membership & Registration

The Hershey Blaze Track Club runs several team opportunities throughout the year: Indoor Track & Winter Training Season, Outdoor Season, Blaze National Team and Cross Country Season. We also have partnerships with local recreation departments and local communities for our developmental programs.

Before competing in a meet as a member of HBTC, the athlete must first pay the full membership fee. No athlete will be denied membership for financial reasons. Please contact the head coach regarding payment options. Membership fees can be reduced by fundraising programs. See coaches for details.

Membership benefits include:

1. Coaching (All coaches are registered with USATF)
2. USATF Membership Cards which includes insurance
3. Hershey Blaze Track Club Uniform top and optional warm up
4. Use of club athletic equipment and supplies
5. Eligibility for travel assistance to national junior olympics*
6. Annual Awards & Recognition Pool Party
7. Administrative Support (website, meet registration, etc.)

*= Subject to funds availability, national and club qualifying standards, practice and performance requirements and parent participation requirements.

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOT REFUNDABLE OR TRANSFERABLE FOR ANY REASON AFTER THE START OF THE SEASON

Team Policies Quick List

All athletes are encouraged to attend 1-2 practices each week. (Referring to outdoor track.)

Athletes are expected to come on time and prepared for practice.

Athletes should always attend practices dressed appropriately. It is preferred that they wear sweat/ wind pants to ensure warm muscles and prevent injuries.

Meet entry payments are due by the meet entry deadline or athletes will not be entered.

Athletes may be asked to participate in fundraisers as they support the entire team. Each family has the option of paying the applicable fundraiser exemption fee.

All athletes are encouraged to participate in meets.
** some meets have qualifying requirements.*

Athletes/ Parents are responsible to inform the coaches in writing if they CANNOT attend a meet in a timely manner before the deadlines.

Runners are expected to wear the team uniform. Please review the team uniform policy.

Due to meet/ rules and sometimes limited heats, coaches will have the final say regarding event registration and lineup. Relays will be made up at the discretion of the coaching staff and availability of registered athletes.

At meets, only coaches may address meet officials in the event of a violation or concern regarding HBTC athletes. Coaches are also responsible for collecting any awards earned by HBTC athletes.

Parents MUST remain outside of the competition areas unless designated a coach or meet volunteer. Exceptions may be made for athletes under age 8.

Meet Entry & Process

The club will provide an entry form to be completed by each club member prior to meets. These entry forms will indicate the date by which it must be returned to the club. Completed forms (and entry fees for the meets the club does not pay) must be returned by the deadline and will be submitted to the meet by the coaching staff. Those not returning the entry form to the club by the deadline will not be entered in the meet.

The club will not process entries or pay entry fees for an athlete until the club membership fee is paid in full. In the event of a hardship, you must contact the club in writing before the deadline. If the club paid the entry fee, the club will charge a member the amount of the entry fee if the member does not show for the meet or does not compete in all of the events he or she entered.

Parents are responsible for entry fees for meets not covered by the club. Parents are responsible for all meet transportation and travel expenses. Travel expenses to national meets can be subsidized with a National Team travel stipend if a member meets all of the club's requirements for national funding.

Entries for most meets are made online and payments are made by mail or at practice. Most if not all meets have strict no-day-of-meet-entry restrictions. Consequently, it is imperative that families attend after practice meetings and closely follow instructions for entering each meet. HBTC coaches and administrators will complete on-line entries for HBTC members who timely submit the required paperwork to the club.

Where necessary, coaches will recommend meet events. Coaches will assign all relays which could pull a child from an individual event.

Any questions or concerns about any meet must be directed to the HBTC coaching staff and administrators. We ask that you not contact meet organizers out of courtesy to them as well as the club you represent.

Seed Times/ Marks

HBTC maintains records of performances from each meet and will only enter seeds that athletes have achieved in verifiable meets. We maintain a strict policy that these marks must be performed in USATF/ AAU sanctioned meets. Exceptions can be made on meets where results are being recorded using HY-Tek or other official timing systems. Athletes will be entered using their best marks within the past year

Code of Conduct

The Hershey Blaze Track Club is a youth program designed to teach age group athletes and promote wholesome competitiveness and ethics on an individual and team basis. We emphasize:

- good sportsmanship
- the respect of teammates, coaches, competitors, officials and the rules

It is our desire NOT to enforce a full-fledged disciplinary policy but are trusting that members will treat each other with dignity and respect and observe the rules of the club. In an effort to maintain this high standard, our coaching staff and/or board may restrict an athlete from practicing and/or competing if an athlete acts in a manner, which adversely affects the team.

Parents are expected to be involved in the support of Hershey Blaze Track Club. The club will hosts several track meets each year and the parents' help at these meets is vital to our club running these meets successfully. Parents will be asked to work each HBTC meet. Meet revenue makes up a significant part of HBTC annual revenue.

The club also encourages parents to attend practices. This gives you the opportunity to meet other parents and, by being at practice, you will get the same information we give the athletes during our after-practice team meetings. Parents of any 8 & under athletes especially will be expected to help coach.

Parents may walk and jog in the *outside lane* of the track during outdoor practice sessions. Otherwise, parents are not permitted on the track or in practice areas. Parents shall refrain from walking or running with their children, coaching or instructing club members during practice sessions. Parents should not engage the coaching staff in conversation during practice sessions. Coaches are available to answer questions at the mandatory post-practice meetings.

Team Attire Policy

The image of our team is very important at track meets.

All team members will be expected to wear a HBTC team running uniform at track meets which consists of a running singlet and appropriate running shorts. Though athletes may wear various styles of running shorts members must maintain the same team uniform when competing in relays (singlets & shorts). Failure to do so could result in a disqualification.

Athletes may wear clothing over the team uniform when they are not competing. This clothing should not have vulgar or inappropriate language on it.

If the athlete has purchased team t-shirts or warm ups, then these clothing items should be worn.

NO JEWELRY – Earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings, watches, nose rings, or tongue rings.

Medical Policy

It is the responsibility of the athlete and parent/guardian to notify the coaching staff of any and all injuries in writing so that the staff is aware of the athlete's limitations in practice.

The coaches will monitor the athlete's injury, and practice in conjunction with any guidelines received in writing from the athlete's doctor or sports medicine professional.

If a runner complains or notifies a coach of an injury occurring during practice, the coach will address the nature of the injury and decide whether the athlete can continue or should be removed from practice until the athlete is ready to get back to the normal routine.

If the coach requests an athlete to seek medical treatment or diagnosis, the athlete may return to the practice area only after a note has been given to the coaching staff from the medical professional granting permission to resume activity.

When an athlete returns, the coaches will assess the level which the athlete can re-enter at, taking into consideration the returning athlete's conditioning level and the current practice level of the other athletes.

Club Fundraising

Fundraising is voluntary but highly encouraged by all families. The club will distribute a comprehensive list of fundraising options that will clearly outline fundraising expectations. Parents will have the option to “opt-out” of fundraising by paying the designated amount. If the minimum fundraising goal is not met during the season, families must submit the club minimum agreed upon in the fundraising agreement.

Blaze National Team

National team has no set guideline for registering but rather holds a higher standard of dedication of athletes who register. The National Team designation is for a group of top performing HBTC athletes who intend to represent the club at the USATF Youth Outdoor Championships, AAU National Club Championships and/or National Junior Olympics. One of our goals is to have athletes represent HBTC at the National Level whenever possible in every age category. This group consists of athletes of all age divisions with the ambition, work ethic and commitment to succeed at the national and international levels.

National Team is announced each year prior to the start of the championship outdoor season in mid-June. National team only refers to our outdoor track & field season.

National Team Selection

National Team athletes are required to pay dues once selected. Athletes selected for national team will receive the a national team packet, meet entry fees and additional practice options. Travel to each meet is not included. When possible travel assistance may be available for athletes depending on available funds. Funding depends on the success of club fundraising efforts encouraged by all.

Terminology You May Need to Know

- Track: a surface made of rubber and is usually 400 meters long.
- Track lanes: boundaries marked with white lines that range from 36" wide, to 48" wide, depending on the facility.
- The following races are run in lanes for all track meets and the athlete must stay in their lane at all times. If they take three steps in a row outside of their lane, they can be disqualified:
 - 100M (meters): a sprint down a straightaway of the track
 - 200M: ½ of a lap
 - 400M: one lap
- The following races do not have a lane assignment. The athletes line up on the starting line, and are then allowed to cut over to the inside lanes designated by the official, and when they have achieved a onestride lead.
 - 800M: two laps
 - 1600M: 4 laps or 1 mile
 - 3200M: 8 laps or 2 miles
- The following are field events:
 - Shot put: a round steel ball that weighs 6 lbs for 9-12 yr olds & 13-14 yr old girls
 - The 13-14 yr old boys use a 4kg (8.8lbs)
 - Discus: like a weighted frisbee
 - Turbo javelin: a developmental level spear training tool plastic modified (for safety) that is made especially for young competitors.
 - High jump: a parallel crossbar that is jumped over from one foot, landing on three foam mats placed behind the stance.
 - Long Jump: a sprint down a straightaway jumping off a white board into a sand pit
- Relays: four athletes run a percentage of the race and hand a 1-foot long aluminum tube (baton) to each other.
- Starting blocks: metal foot pedals used by sprinters at the start of a race to assist in the push off.
- Who wins a race: torso first! Arms or feet do not count.
- Starting commands in races of 400M or less: On your marks, set, slight pause, then gun sound
- Starting commands in races of 800M or longer: On your marks, slight pause, then gun sound

USATF AGE GROUPS

The age group your athlete competes in is based on his/her year of birth. Age is determined by how old they are by December 31st of the current year:

Division 1 Age 8 and under; Division 2 Age 9 -10; Division 3 Age 11-12; Division 4 Age 13-14;
Division 5 Age 15-16; Division 6 Age 17-18

Athletes MUST compete in their designated age group. Only in certain meets will they be permitted to compete with an older age group. This will be determined by a coach.