



### **Who is D.C. Express Track Club, Inc?**

The Dekalb County Express Track Club, Inc. (D.C. Express) was founded in 1984 in Decatur, GA. D.C. Express is a 37-year-old nonprofit community-based youth track & field development/competitive program. D.C. Express is a member of USA Track & Field and USA Track & Field's Georgia Association, which includes all of Georgia.

### **What about practices?**

D.C. Express track practice season begins in early October and ends in late July. Practices are held at Stockbridge High School Track, 1151 Old Conyers Road, Stockbridge, GA 30281. Practice generally will be on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday (check information booklet for current schedule).

The starting time is the actual time our workouts begin. Arrive at the track 5 minutes early so that you're ready to begin your warm up at start time. Most practices will last about 75 to 90 minutes and are followed by a *mandatory* team meeting, where the coaches will share important club news, such as information on upcoming meets and practices and to recognize athlete accomplishments. If an athlete needs to leave practice early for any reason, it is their responsibility to inform the head coach at the beginning of practice. In the event of inclement weather, each athlete's parents should make their own decision on whether to come to practice. Practices will normally be held, but may be cancelled at least one (1) hour before practice start time (6:30 pm) if weather is a problem. If practice is cancelled, you will receive a text at the designated number you provided.

**D.C. Express basic philosophy is that our coaches cannot help an athlete unless they are at practice. Our practices are very demanding, so if an athlete is not coming to practice to work hard, then D.C. Express may not be for them. We'd like the athlete to attend practice as often as possible. Ultimately, the harder the athlete works in practice, the better they will perform in meets.**

### **What is Age Group track?**

Age group track is just as the name implies: Track & field competition based on an athlete's age in the current calendar year. The age group divisions for competition in 2021 are as follows:

- 17 – 18 Division - born in 2003-2004 (Athletes who are still 18 (2002) through the final day of the USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships are eligible to compete in the 17-18 age division through that meet.)
- 15 – 16 Division - born in 2005-2006
- 13 – 14 Division - born in 2007-2008

**Example:** A child turns 13 on February 15, 2006 and their friend turns 13 on November 15, 2006. Since they were each born in 2006, USATF considers them both to be 13 years old – and in the 13-14 Division – for the 2021 season, even though the one born in November would actually be 12 during the season and not turn 13 until after the season is over.

## **What is USA Track & Field?**

USA Track & Field (USATF) is the national governing body of track & field. Before any athlete can compete in a USATF-sanctioned meet, whether as a member of D.C. Express or not, he/she must first become a member of USATF. Included in the D.C. Express membership fee is the cost of the athlete's USATF membership. Any athlete wishing to join D.C. Express, must after paying the club membership fee, provide USATF proof-of-age verification, such as a copy of a birth or baptismal certificate, state or military I.D. card, or driver's license. The athlete is encouraged to apply for their USATF membership as soon as possible to ensure that they have their USATF membership card (usually called a "USATF card") before their first practice.

## **What are Youth Outdoor Nationals and Junior Olympic meets?**

Both Youth Outdoor Nationals and Junior Olympic meets are sanctioned by USA Track & Field, and the same events are offered in both. Athletes in the 17 – 18 Division, 15 – 16 Division, and 13 – 14 Division age groups may compete in up to four (4) events, while 11 – 12 Division and 9 – 10 Division may compete in up to three (3) events. Combined event competitions (e.g. triathlon, pentathlon) do not count against an athlete's event limit.

Youth Outdoor Nationals (also called "Youth" or "Age Group") meets are open to all USATF-member athletes. The entry procedure for each Youth meet will be explained at club practices, usually within a week or two of the meets. Any USATF-member athlete may register for and compete at any Youth meet. All meets on the competition schedule are Youth meets except those that include the phrase "Junior Olympic".

Junior Olympic (or "JO") meets are based on a stair-stepping program of qualifying meets, leading to the National Junior Olympic Meet. The advancement procedure looks like this:

- Area Preliminary JO meet - All Athletes WHO PARTICIPATE (in Area contested events) will advance to the GA JO Association Championships in the events contested at the Area Level.
- Association JO meet - The top eight (8) in each individual and relays event from this meet qualify for the Region 4 JO meet.
- Region 4 JO meet - The top five (5) in each individual and relays event from the Regional JO meet qualify for the National JO meet.

## **Will D.C. Express help me get to these meets?**

Yes, in some cases. The athlete and their parents are, responsible for securing their own transportation to any in-state meets. However, D.C. Express may support out-of-state national meets for athletes who have met pre-determined performance criteria. All athletes will be required to adhere to the club's travel policy. (Page 8 information booklet)

## **What are the parents' roles with D.C. Express?**

Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved in the support of D.C. Express by assisting with fund-raising activities. The club also encourages parents to attend our practices. This gives you the opportunity to meet the parents of other athletes, and, by being at practice, you will get the same information we give the athletes during our post practice team meetings. We would ask, however, that parents watch the practices from outside track area.

## **How can I stay up-to-date on Express happenings?**

The best way to stay "in the know" is to attend the team/zoom meetings. Any upcoming meet, practice, or other club activity information will be distributed and/or discussed there. ***Plus, make sure the club knows your e-mail address, contact number (cell) as our main line of communication of occasional announcements, reminders, or other news items are e-mailed and/or text to parents.*** Another way is to periodically check D.C. Express web site for updates.