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A review of athletic games

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Abstract

Athletics is a collection of sports events which involve running, jumping, throwing etc. In this paper a brief review of ancient and modern history of athletics is described. List of various athletic events is also mentioned. Various organizations which support athletic games are also highlighted. There is focus on Olympics and Paralympic games as well as common wealth games. Diet plans for athletes is the key point of this paper. Some common injuries of athletes are also mentioned in brief. Various athletic awards are also discussed in this paper.

Keywords: athletic games, Olympics and Paralympic games

Introduction

Athletics is a collection of sports events which involve running, jumping, throwing and walking etc. in a competitive manner. It requires physical skills and system of training to prepare athletes for these events. These events demand a number of qualities like physical fitness, skill and stamina. Athletics is an individual sport in most of the cases but there are certain exceptions such as relay race which combine athlete's performance for a team score of the country. Athletic sports also include bulk of popular activities, which includes animal sports, motor sports, extreme sports etc. Athletics play a significant role in providing routine physical exercise. A coach is also associated with the technical development of the athlete. Results of events are decided by finishing position and time in racing but in jumps and throws, the athlete who achieves highest or furthest measurement from a series of attempts won the prize.

Ancient and Modern History

Ancient History: The athletic events were running and walking, jumping and throwing. The roots of these events are pre-historic. Athletic events were depicted in Ancient Egyptian Tombs in 2250 B.C. and the Tailteann games were an ancient festival in Ireland founded in 1800 B.C. The original and the first Olympic events were held in 776 B.C. Athletes took part in Panhellenic games held in 500 B.C.

Modern History

The Cotswold Olympic Games emerged in England in 17th century in the form of sledge hammer throwing events. From 1796 to 1798 Olympic Games were held in revolutionary France. This Olympic marked the introduction of metric system into the sports. Later athletic events were held in 1812, 1840, 1849 and 1850. The first modern style indoor athletic meet was held in 1860 in London, which included four "running and triple jump events". The AAA (Amateur Athletic Association) was established in 1880 in England, U.S. also started annual national competition in 1876. Athletics became standardized in the late 19th century.

Athletic competitions were introduced in first modern Olympic Games. Initially these were for men only but in 1928 women also participated in athletics. Athletics also become a part of Paralympic games in 1960. The IAAF (International Amateur Athletics Federation) was founded in 1912 but its current name is International Association of Athletics Federation. The first athletic event for physically disabled began in 1952; it included athletics in a wheel chair. Competitions would be expanded with time to include athletes with amputations, cerebral palsy, visual impairments etc.

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List of athletic events: The IAAF defines six athletic disciplines i.e. track and field, road running, race walking, cross country running, mountain running and trail running.

Track and Field: These events contested between athletes who were rivals. Athlete may compete in more than one event also. There is a separate competition for male and female participants. It comes in both indoor as well as outdoor format. Indoor games mostly occur in winter. On the other hand, outdoor events mostly occur in summer. These events fall in three categories: sprints, middle distance and long-distance track events.

Relay race consists of four runners; the first one must pass a baton to his/her teammates after particular distance with the aim of being the first team to finish.

Hurdle events are a variation upon flat running themes where an athlete must clear his/her obstacles on the track during the race.

The field events are jumping and throwing competitions. Throwing events include short-put, discus throw, javelin throw and hammer throw. The jumping events are long jump and triple jumps in which participant has to over the horizontal distance while jumping and high jump & pole vault in which athlete has to achieve the maximum height. Other events are decathlon (competed by men) and heptathlon (competed by women).

Road running

These are long distance running events which are conducted on courses of paved or tarmac roads. Road racing events can be of any distance, but the most common and well known events of road running are the marathon, half marathon, 10 km and 5 km. The marathon is the event featured at the IAAF World Championships in Athletics and the Summer Olympics and World Para Athletics Championships and Summer Paralympics as well. There annual IAAF World Half Marathon Championships is also a part of Road running events.

Cross country running

It is the most natural sports in athletics as competitions take place on open-air courses over the surfaces of grass, woodland trails, and earth. It is both an individual as well as team sport. The runners are judged on an individual basis and a point scoring method is used for teams. Competitions are long distance races of 4 km or more which are generally held in autumn and winter season. Cross country's most successful athletes also participate in long-distance track and road events as well. E.g. The Crick Run in England. The annual IAAF World Cross Country Championships was held in 1973 and it is still the highest level of competition for the sport. The cross country events are held in Asia, Europe, North America and South America. The sport has retained its status in U.S. and U.K. at the scholastic level. But these competitions are no longer held at the Olympics. The variation on traditional cross country is mountain running, which incorporates significant uphill and/or downhill sections as a challenge to the course. Fell running and Orienteering are other competitive events which are similar to cross country.

Race walking

It is a form of competitive walking that takes place on open-air roads; however running tracks are also used sometimes. Race walking is the only sport in athletics in which judges monitor athletes on the basis of their technique. Race walkers

should have a foot in contact with the ground and their leg must be straightened. The leg must not bend at the knee. If the participant fails in following these rules, then he/she disqualifies from the race. The most common events in modern race running competition are over 10 km, 20 km and 50 km on roads while women's 3 km and men's 5 km are held on indoor tracks.

The race walking competitions of highest level occur at the IAAF World Championships in Athletics and at the Summer Olympics as well. The sport also has its own separate major competition – the IAAF World Race Walking Cup started from 1961. The IAAF World Race Walking Challenge forms the seasonal competition at primary level. The athletes earn points for their performances at ten selected race walking competitions and the walkers who score highest points enter into that year's IAAF Race Walking Challenge Final.

Mountain Running

It is the event or activity which takes place at the off-road in the mountainous terrain. It is different from fell running because the courses are marked clearly and these avoid dangerous sections. It involves running, jumping, jogging and walking. It is governed by the World Mountain Running Association since 1985. The average inclinations lie between 5% to 20%.

Trail Running

It is the combination of running and hiking on an unpaved surface. It is also known as hill running. It takes place on good paths in general. The tracks are easy to follow in trail running. Runners feel less stress as compared to road running.

Organizations

The organizations which support athletic events are IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federation). There are 215 nations and territories which are members of IAAF. The six association areas are:

1. **AAA:** Asian Athletics Association
2. **CAA:** Confederation of African Athletics
3. **CONSUDATLE:** South American Athletics Confederation
4. **NACACAA:** North America, Central America and Caribbean Athletic Association
5. **EAA:** European Athletics Association
6. **OAA:** Oceania Athletics Association

Some other organizations are

1. International Olympic Committee
2. National Collegiate Athletic Association
3. Amateur Athletic Union
4. Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques
5. International Association of Athletics Federations
6. Chin Woo Athletic Association
7. National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
8. Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women

Olympic and Paralympic Games

Olympic Games

The Olympics is the first event at which global athletes took part in competition. All the four major sports of athletics are also introduced in the Olympic athletics programme in 1896, but the cross country is dropped. The Olympic competition is one of the most prestigious athletics events, and many athletics events are among the most watched events at the Summer Olympics. There are 47 athletic events held in

Olympics, out of which 24 for men and 23 for women. Most of the men's and women's events in the Olympic programmes are either identical or have a similar equivalent with some exceptions.

Paralympic Games

The Summer Paralympic Games include athletes with a physical disability except deaf. Track and field events; and road events have become the part of the Paralympic athletics programme in 1960. The Paralympic events are also the most prestigious athletics contest where athletes with a physical disability compete.

Paralympic Athletic Games also include wheelchair racing where athletes compete in lightweight racing chairs. Athletes with a visual impairment participate with a sighted guide. In 2012, Summer Paralympics held in London. In the international athletics event, the guides also received medals first time, such as the pilots in cycling, and the guides at the Paralympic Winter Games have done for a while.

Commonwealth Games

Athletics is involved as one of the sports in the Commonwealth Games competition. Commonwealth Games were inaugurated in the 1930. It is a core sport and must be included in the sporting programme of every edition of the Games. There are 35 events for men and 34 events for women in Commonwealth Games. From 2002, Commonwealth Games included a number of events for athletes with disabilities. The inclusions of events in this category are inconsistent over the four Games where they are involved.

Diet Plan for Athletes

The food stuffs which are best for an athlete are: Berries, beans and legumes, salmon, bananas, cruciferous vegetables, nuts, milk, hydrating food, sweet potatoes, oatmeal, proteins, flaxseed, olive and coconut oil, cherries etc.

The diet should be rich in carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins and minerals in adequate amount. Early morning fluids must be a part of the athlete daily diet. An excess of any of the food stuffs may also harm the athlete.

The food stuffs that an athlete should avoid are

Diet soda, canned soup, rice cakes, sugary cereals, white bread, microwave popcorn, pasta, trail mix, alcohol, flavoured yogurt, orange juice, deli meat, pretzels, froyo, bacon, chinese takeout, extra protein powder, sports drinks etc.

Athletics Common Injuries: Some of the most common injuries of athletes are:

- 1. Patellofemoral Syndrome:** It is the knee injury. It is caused by slipping, falling onto the knees, and swelling of the knee joint or unbalancing of muscles. Rest and ice massage help in this injury.
- 2. Shoulder Injury:** It includes dislocations, misalignment, strains on muscles and sprains of ligaments. These are caused due to the lack of flexibility, strength or stabilization. Rest and icing helps in it.
- 3. Tennis or Golf Elbow:** It is seen with the athletes performing gripping activities. Doctors prescribe anti-inflammatory medicine or braces for elbow injuries. Icing also helps initially in such injuries.
- 4. Hamstring Strain:** It is occurred on the back of the

thigh. Poor or lack of stretching are the causes of Hamstring strain. Rest and icing are the early treatments for this strain. Physiotherapy is also recommended.

- 5. Sciatica:** It is the back pain which also travels down the back of the leg and up to feet even. It is observed in those athletes who are cyclists, golf and tennis players. Physical therapy is helpful for such injuries.
- 6. Shin Splints:** They complaint for the pain in lower leg bone. It is generally found in runners. It can be treated with rest, icing and gradually increase in running activities.
- 7. Groin Pull:** The groin muscles run from the upper-inner part of the thigh to the inner thigh right above the knee. Groin muscles pull the legs together and are injured with quick side-to-side movements and lack of flexibility. The athlete finds difficulty with lateral movements, getting in and out of cars, tenderness or bruising in the groin or inner thigh. The basic treatment is rest and icing.
- 8. Concussion:** It is the injury of the brain. These are the serious injuries. The symptoms are: headache, confusion, dizziness, nausea, sensitivity of light and slurred speech etc.
- 9. ACL Tear or Strain:** The ACL is the major stabilizing ligaments of the knee. Its cause is slowing down and trying to cut, pivot or change directions. Ligaments on the inside of the knee are torn in this injury. Its symptoms are instability in walking or turning corners. Rest and ice helps in it but the complete treatment requires surgery and a few months of recovery time along with physical therapy.
- 10. Hip Flexor Strain:** These are muscles found on the upper-front side of thigh. Its main functions are to lift the knee towards the trunk and assist moving a leg towards and away from the other leg. It occurs when one sit for a long time in poor posture at work. It can be caused by sprinting, running inclines and activities with quick turns and sudden starts. Its symptoms are: pain with raising the leg, such as stair climbing and transfers in and out of a car, cutting and running activities. It is best treated by rest and icing. Therapy is also recommended.

Athletic Awards

Some of the awards are: Egebergs award, James E. Sullivan award, NACDA Director's Cup, Olympic Cup, Athletics-men and women, cycling- men and women, Alpine skiing, wheelchair curling, David Dixon award etc.

Conclusion

Athletics is a collection of sports events which involve running, jumping, throwing etc. The brief review of ancient and modern history of athletics is described in this paper. List of various athletic events is also mentioned thoroughly. Various organizations which support athletic games are also listed here. Olympics and Paralympic games as well as common wealth games are discussed in brief. Diet plans for athletes is the key point of this paper. Some common injuries of athletes are also enlisted in this paper. Various athletic awards are also discussed in this paper.

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