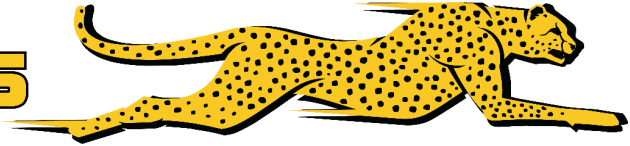


CALABASAS
CHEETAHS



Frequently Asked Questions: Track and Field

Updated 3/24/26

1. How often and what days do we practice?

We aim to practice three times a week. Practice days this season are Tuesday, and Thursday, and Friday (for our sprinters, relay, and field event athletes).

2. Where and when do we practice?

Track access has been challenging this year. We have been practicing at AE Wright Middle School and El Camino High School. After spring break, our Tuesday and Thursday practices might change their location from AEW to Hale Middle School. Updates to come for Week 8.

3. What if I cannot make every practice?

That's fine. We encourage athletes to show up for the practices they can attend. We do not take attendance. Every practice will offer opportunities to practice sprinting events, field events, and distance events. Workouts are developed by our head coaches for each age division and developmentally build in intensity across the season.

4. Is it fine if I can only attend one practice a week?

Yes, however, Cheetahs coaches really want athletes to attend a minimum of two practices per week. Our coaches want our athletes to feel confident and prepared when they compete in the meets. Attending at least two practices per week will set them up for success.

5. Who is my child's coach?

Every athlete will have age group coaches based on their age division (8U, 9-10, 11-12, and 13-14/15-18). Our events also have event specific coaches.

6. What time does practice start? What if I get there early?

This season, our Tuesday/Thursday practices have been starting at 5:45pm. Our Friday practices have reliably been starting between 6pm and 7pm. We hope to be on the track as early as we can. The exact time for Friday practices will be communicated in our weekly Sunday Email and pushed out through Remind. If you get there early, there is no

coach supervision. Do not go on the field or run laps while the HS team is still practicing. Athletes may not be dropped off and left unattended, ever.

7. Where does my child go at the first practice?

Every practice begins the same way. At 5:45pm, athletes may enter the track and will jog two easy warm-up laps. Once their warm-up laps are complete, they stop at their designated corner of the field based on age divisions, where they will meet with their age group coaches and teammates to go through warm-ups. Athletes should leave their water bottles at their age group location (unless directed by a coach otherwise.)

8. What should I do during my child's practice? Can I drop off?

During practice, we ask that parents wait in the stadium bleachers or along the sidelines at AEW, for the entire practice. For our 8U athletes, parents must remain at the practice area for the entire duration of practice. Older athletes can be dropped off, but athletes cannot be left unattended prior to 5:45pm or after 7:00pm. All parents must be reachable during practice. Our age division WhatsApp groups are the most effective way for coaches to contact parents during practice.

9. Can I run laps on the track during practice?

No. Every lane and region of the field will be used during practice.

10. What should I know about track safety?

1. Never step onto the track without looking both ways
2. Stay in the lane(s) your coach tells you to be in
3. If you must cross the track, look and cross quickly
4. Listen to the coach you are with and stay in control of your body. If you're goofing around, you become a safety hazard.
5. We run counter clockwise around the track. When you step off the field onto the track, LOOK TO YOUR RIGHT.

11. How many meets are there?

For the majority of our athletes, our track and field season consists of 7 track meets. There are 6 regular season meets and 1 end of season final meet for athletes who compete in at least 3 season meets (half of the regular season meets).

For any athletes who compete in 3 regular season meets, there are two final meets. Athletes only compete in ONE of them. Open Finals is for all athletes and League Finals is open to athletes who meet the conference event qualifying standards. The top

performing athletes in League Finals can qualify to compete in one additional meet, Individual Event Championships (IECs), against the top VYC athletes from both leagues.

12. Does my child have to compete in every meet?

No. Athletes are welcome to compete in any or all of the meets. However, in order to participate in one of the season's championship meets (either Open Finals or League Finals) athletes must compete in at least 3 regular season meets.

13. How do the coaches know what events my child wants to compete in?

Before any Saturday meet, our age group coaches require families to submit a google form where they choose the 3 or 4 events their child intends to compete in for that week's meet. The deadline to fill out the form is Wednesday at 11:59pm. Once the forms are turned in, the coaches need to organize the meet list. Please DO NOT make late submissions. Do not over event.

14. Does my child have to compete in the same events at every meet?

No. Athletes are free to select different events for each meet if they'd like to. If athletes want to try out a new event, please let their age group coaches know so that they can help get your child where they need to go at practice. For safety, athletes must first practice an event during track practice so that they receive necessary instruction prior to any competition.

15. Do relays count in my child's event total at a meet?

Yes.

16. How do I learn about practice changes and updates?

The Calabasas Cheetahs have multiple ways of communicating information with parents. It's a challenge to communicate with 200 households! We're test driving a few things this season, with the WhatsApp Community and our New Cheetahs chat.

- a. Remind: Please join the Cheetahs Track 2025 Remind group and allow push notifications. You will get a reminder alert prior to every practice.
- b. WhatsApp: Each age division will have a WhatsApp group run by the age group coaches. Please add yourself to the team WhatsApp chat. Coaches send reminders and give meet updates via WhatsApp.
- c. Sunday night email: Every Sunday night the Cheetahs will send an email blast with important announcements and the practice days/times for the upcoming week. Please make sure that you check your inboxes and junk folders. We try to send them out by 10pm if we can, but sometimes life happens, in which case, it will be in your inbox Monday morning.

- d. Website: The Cheetahs website has a practice and meet calendar. The calendar is regularly updated, but the Sunday email, WhatsApp, and Remind groups will always have the most up to date information.

16. How will Cheetahs let me know if there is a last minute change, such as practice being cancelled due to weather?

All urgent announcements will be shared via Remind and our WhatsApp age group chats.

17. My children's other sports teams have a very consistent schedule, why doesn't track? [\(The million dollar question!\)](#)

We are glad you asked, because it's a complicated answer, and helpful to understand! Soccer, flag football, basketball teams, etc. are able to secure permits in order to have a consistent practice schedule. Track and Field is complicated because there just aren't that many 8-lane tracks hanging around parks, unused, with hurdles and high jump pits, etc. (Have you ever seen one?)

Youth track clubs are guests who rent high school facilities for practices and meets. Being guests, the high school athletics programs have priority over us in the use of their facilities. CIF soccer playoffs followed by the lacrosse season have made track access significantly harder due to the liability and risk of serious injury to those running around the track. (Would you want your child hit with a lacrosse ball? Yikes.)

Additionally, parent behavior has caused reputations to form, and many local high schools won't rent facilities to outside organizations anymore. The conference has shared that parents and guests are smoking pot in the parking lots and drinking on campus during track meets. The conference talks about this as a conference wide issue, and many of us can vouch for seeing it and smelling it. On a school campus, that's not allowed.

Also on the list, dogs. Service animals are permitted on public school campuses under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Amendments Act of 2008) which is a federal anti-discrimination law. Unless an animal is being used to provide a service to someone with a disability, animals are not permitted to be on school campuses.

Lastly, high school administrators sometimes take on different roles during the school year. The Athletic Director or head coach might approve of us renting the track in December, but then a change is made and they change their minds. We don't have control over those situations and we don't get a say. Cheetahs are trying to secure track

access in the fall, during cross country season. This season, we had our facilities locked down, and unfortunately for us, things changed.

In a nutshell, obtaining track access is a challenge for the majority youth track clubs in the area. It's unfortunate, but we pivot, get creative, and make it work!

18. Do I need to purchase a new uniform every season?

No! If your athlete has the updated uniform (beginning Spring 2024 with our new logo), then as long as the uniform fits, they are welcome to wear it!

19. Do I have to wear the Cheetahs uniform shorts?

No. Athletes can wear whatever shorts they prefer to run in during the meets, so long as they are solid black. Solid black leggings are ok, too.

20. Does my athlete need to wear spikes for meets?

No. Spikes are optional. Sub-gremlins are not allowed to wear spikes, and coaches request that our 8U athletes check in with their coaches before purchasing spikes.

21. Is there a start time for every event? What time does my child's event start?

No. We can't tell you an exact time. It's just not possible.

22. Ok. What should I do since I don't have a time?

- You need to arrive early anyway to allow your child to get their sticker from the stands and warm up, so give yourself plenty of time. Track meets are long, but they're fun.
- There is a schedule of events—every regular season meet (except the 2-day invitational is different) has the same order of events. After a meet or two, you can get an idea of the flow. Use your best judgement but err on being early. Your child's event will start whether they are ready or not.
- Same goes for field events. There are scheduled windows for each age group. There is an order. Depending on how many kids at the meet are competing in any age division, things might progress more slowly or quickly. When the window closes, it's closed. Having an open pit is rare.
- WhatsApp usually has some clues as to how things are progressing.
- Don't forget to anticipate traffic en route and walk time (parking isn't always easy)

23. What is the order of events?

It is on our website!

24. What are the conference qualifying standards?

Also on our website!

25. What is the meet schedule for the season? Which teams are we competing against?

They're all on our website and on our website calendar!

26. What is the website?

www.calabasascheetahs.com

27. I don't understand the age groups. Can you explain?

USATF sets the standard and they are very strict about age verification. Although we start as a rec team, our conference has a USATF sanctioned postseason Track & Field and Cross Country team: Valley United Striders. Athletes who choose to compete in postseason track or cross country potentially can qualify for USATF Junior Olympics. We have a number of athletes on our team who do this every year. Our conference makes this decision.

The age divisions are set by birth year and are based on what age a child is as of **December 31 of the current season's year**. Yes, that means that kids born at the end of the year are sometimes competing in an age division with kids that are significantly older than them. The current season is Spring 2026.

Ex: A child born on December 31, 2015 would currently be competing in the 11-12 age division as a 10 year old because they **turn 11 on December 31, 2026**. Since the age division is 11-12, the 10 year old athlete might be competing against a child who was born on January 1, 2014.

In high school, this happens to kids too. A high school senior who doesn't turn 18 until August 31 of the following year is competing for the same spots on the team as a high school senior that turned 18 on Sept. 1. It's a different set of age standards, but the same concept.

It's a benefit that track and field isn't a contact sport. An alternate perspective could be that your child is competing as the underdog from an age perspective. Their mindset development from training and competing with that added adversity can be beneficial to them as an athlete and also applied in many different situations as they grow up.

28. Why are the emails so long?

Brevity of written expression is not my strength my friends, and for better or worse, I refuse to use Chat GPT to help me in this department. In my opinion, the fluff is the good, warm fuzzy stuff that celebrates the athletes, the volunteers, and the collective accomplishments of the team. I like putting it in there. I am aware that in general, people don't love long emails and I do make an effort, but would argue that it's one email a week (maybe two) and that it's not the worst thing to be proud of the athletes on the team. Feel free to skip the fluff, I won't take it personally. The announcements and practice schedule are always at the end, in their own sections. Let's go Cheetahs!