



## Creating a Useful Venue Layout

It is important to create a good map of your event. We refer to this map as a venue layout. Don't worry; it does not have to be to scale, but it should show all where all major activity is taking place and the major equipment needed in each of those areas.

Having a venue layout serves many purposes:

- It will ensure that all activities have been planned out.
- You will be able to give copies to set-up volunteers so they don't have to ask you a million times where things go.
- Providing copies to day-of volunteers will make them more helpful to participants.
- And it will of course help your spectators/participants to navigate the event.

## Equipment Notes

- For each tent needed, make note of the size (and source if tents are coming from more than one place) so volunteers can appropriately place these based on the venue layout.
- Make note of the number of tables and chairs in the various locations to allow setup volunteers to place these without confusion.
- If you are flagging off any areas for traffic flow, make note of that on the layout as well.

## Volunteers

- Where possible have your volunteers park and enter in a separate area from your athletes and coaches. This will decrease the crowds in those high traffic areas of the venue and allow for volunteers to more quickly get through the check-in process and get to their assigned areas.
- Designate an area where volunteers will gather and receive training after they check-in. A portion of the bleachers is a nice option because they can all be seated and you can have their attention while training or giving out assignments.

## Participant Check-in

- Even if you have already distributed materials (nametags, programs, etc.) to schools/delegations before the event, it is still good to know when each group arrives and also to capture any scratches (no-show's).
- Do not put your check-in where it will create a bottleneck at the main entrance; set it off to the side and direct a representative from each group to go to check-in.

## Opening Ceremony

- Make note of where the stage will be located for the Ceremony. A stage is recommended to help capture the attention of the audience and to give people a focal point during the program.
- The stage should be in an area where everyone – participants and spectators – can enjoy the program.
- You may want to consider a small tent by the stage with chairs as a waiting area for honored guests/speakers.

## Restrooms

- Make sure the location of restrooms is evident for everyone.
- If there are no restrooms near the competition area, rent port-a-johns.
- Make sure there are handicap accessible bathroom stalls and/or port-a-johns available for those who need that accommodation.

## Water Source

- Nine times out of ten a spring event tends to be very hot and you want to make sure everyone is adequately hydrated. That means filling water coolers!
- Clearly mark where water can be found for water coolers so your volunteers can handle this responsibility.

### Meal Distribution

- If you are distributing meals, pick a location that it is away from the majority of activity so you can allow enough space for an orderly line and distribution operation.
- Don't short yourself on space to organize the meals and set up a distribution line; yes, that may mean a larger tent!
- If you are only feeding volunteers, ideally set this up in an area away from the main flow of traffic out of view of everyone else so there is no confusion about who is getting food and who is not.

### First Aid

- Place First Aid station(s) in a location that is both easily seen by those who may need first aid, as well as in a space where they can see as much of what is happening as possible so they can quickly respond to any situation that may arise.
- With a large event, it is not unusual to have more than one First Aid area.
- This area should always be staffed; other medical personnel can roam but at least one person should be at the First Aid area at all times.

### Competition Events Layout

- If possible, use both sides of the track for your running events.
- To keep things simple, keep like events together (i.e. traditional events on the home side, and developmental/lead-up events on the visitor side)
- Make sure that all your running events go in the same direction, in case any athletes continue to run beyond the finish line they won't crash into athletes competing on the other side of the track.
- Mark the location of the key competition areas including start lines for track events, location of jump pits, and the area where your throws will be completed.
- If you have the use of a softball field (and it is near the track), consider moving softball and tennis ball throw to that field to reduce the congestion in the middle of the track.

### Competition Staging Areas

- Have a separate staging area for each event where your volunteers can gather the athletes to prepare for their participation in events. This is essential to managing the competition, organizing athletes prior to their event and having competition flow smoothly.
- There should be a check-in table for each staging area and chairs for athletes to sit in while they await their event. A water station is also highly suggested here.

### Awards

- Place your awards area in a space that is centrally located to your events to minimize the time and distance athletes have to go to get their awards following their events.
- Have a separate staging tent for each awards stand you are utilizing to keep the area organized.
- As with competition, there should be a check-in table for each staging area and chairs for athletes to sit in while they await their event. A water station is also highly suggested here.
- Mark on the venue layout where awards stands will be placed and where spectators will be allowed to stand and take photos. This means that awards stands should not be set up where spectators will be between the stands and the staging area as this will create a lot of congestion and disrupt the awards presentations.

### Young Athletes

- If you have Young Athletes activities, consider an adjacent multi-purpose or softball field in order to keep the Young Athletes safe and in their own area.
- This area should have its own water stations, shade, awards area, and music.
- Allow lots of room for this area.