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Categories of relays

Relays

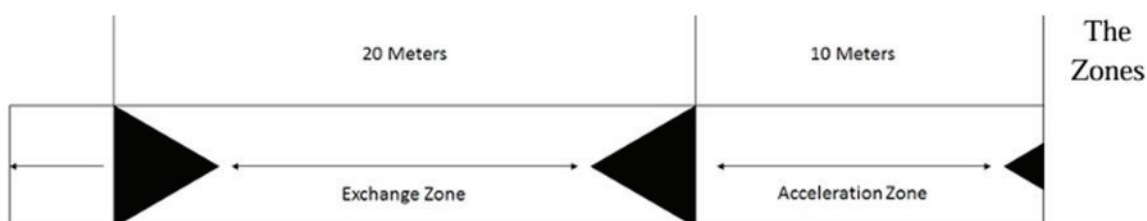
Relay running is a type of running race in which athletes compete as a team, rather than as individuals. A relay team consists of four sprinters, each athlete will run a pre-set distance carrying a baton before passing it onto the next runner. The ultimate goal of the relay is to move the baton around the track and across the finish line in the fastest way possible without getting disqualified. The two most common relay races in track and field are:

1. 4 x 100m
2. 4 x 400m

How does the Relay Work?

The relay consists of four people. A team with four decent sprinters can out-race a team with four better sprinters by beating the faster team in the exchange zones. The initial runner (first runner) in the 4 x 100 relay begins the race in the starting blocks. The next three runners receive the baton via exchanges.

The exchange zones are 20 meters long and are preceded by a 10-meter acceleration zone. The receiver begins running in the acceleration zone, but the baton can only be passed within the exchange zone. In the relay, runners do not switch hands when carrying the baton. Therefore, if the first runner holds the baton in the right hand, the second runner will receive the baton in the left hand, the third will receive and carry the baton in the right hand and the final runner will handle it in the left hand.



Zones

The Acceleration Zone – is a 10 meter segment on the track where an outgoing runner may accelerate before receiving the baton from the incoming runner. The acceleration zone leads up to the changeover zone which allows the athlete who is going to receive the baton to start and pick up speed.

NOTE: The baton cannot be exchanged in the acceleration zone. The acceleration zone is identified by a small triangle on the track

The Exchange Zone – is a 20 meter segment where the exchange will occur, and the baton must switch hands from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner. If the

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baton is not exchanged from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner within this 20 meter space, that team will be disqualified. The exchange zone is identified with two large painted triangles.

For a matter of consistency, handoffs and baton-in-hand placement athletes should follow this definitive pattern

1. 1st leg- Right Hand
2. 2nd leg- Left Hand
3. 3rd leg- Right Hand
4. 4th leg- Left Hand

Under no circumstance should a baton be switched to a different hand or moved during a race. During the race, the baton should be firmly gripped towards the bottom to avoid accidental drops and to give the outgoing runner room to take the baton.