



Rules and Guidance Notes  
**Highland Games Festivals**

[www.sportshall.org](http://www.sportshall.org)

### Sportshall Highland Games Festival

This exciting format provides many children with a unique opportunity to get involved in adapted Highland Games activities amongst fun and exciting relays. Large numbers from across a cluster may compete within a typical secondary school facility and an eventful and memorable day is ensured for all.

### Principles

Whilst providing a competitive platform for young athletes to develop it is important that the focus of the competition remains on having fun and enjoying new and varied activities that support young people's development.

Whilst there are individual scores awarded the focus of our Highland Games Festivals emphasise team participation rather than individual success.

Athletics rules and techniques should be learned with support from officials - rather than just enforced at this level. Guidance should be offered to all children particularly as the nature of Highland Games may be unfamiliar to young people taking part.

### Recommendations

#### Field

- Athletes should be permitted practice trials prior to each event commencing.
- Athletes should take their trials in succession and not in rounds. This helps the child to master the technique.
- All athletes should record at least one performance. Guidance should be offered to ensure this happens. *For example, if a child is struggling, take them to one side and help coach them through the event and provide suitable guidance.*
- As ever in Sportshall, time will be limited and all efforts should be made to start events promptly and progress swiftly. Should athletes be missing, please make a start and advise the field referee accordingly.
- Please remember you are dealing with young children and use appropriate language when explaining the events.

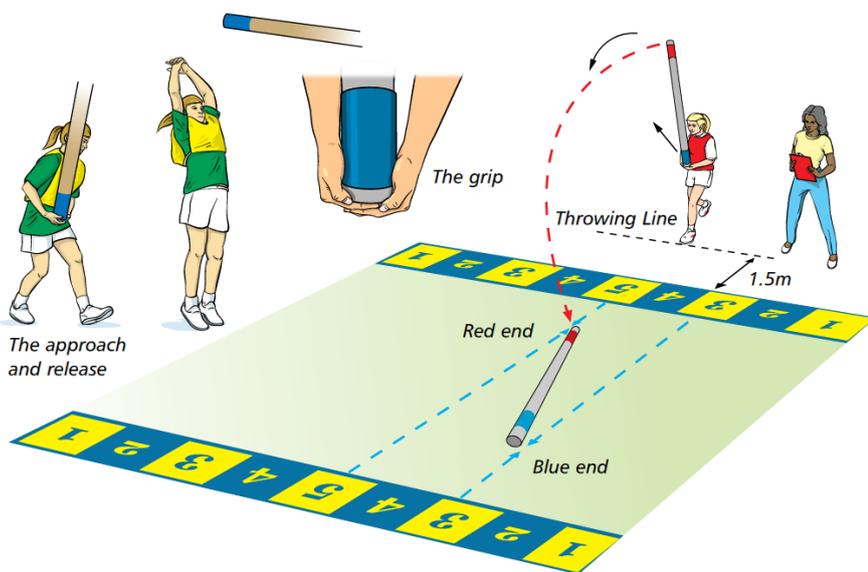
#### Track Judging

- Track judges should be positioned on the extension of the finish line.
- Whilst it is traditional practice for all track officials to record the order of all the athletes, it is advised that one official judges the last three athletes.
- Bib colours should be recorded as each athlete's torso crosses the finish line.
- The finishing order should be recorded in a vertical column to avoid confusion.
- At the end of each race the track judges must compare their results. Once the finish order has been decided, record the information directly onto the track sheets.
- If there is a difference of opinion the chief judge should make the final decision, usually going with the majority.
- Do ensure that where colours are used, the same name is used throughout, following that detailed in the event programme.

#### Time Keeping

- Time keepers must be positioned on the extension of the finish line, have a clear vision of the starting area and be able to observe the athletes from the moment they're called to their marks.
- Ideally, you should have one time keeper per athlete, for example if there are 6 athletes in a race, official A will take the finishing time of the 1<sup>st</sup> athlete across the line, B the 2<sup>nd</sup>, C the 3<sup>rd</sup>, D the 4<sup>th</sup>, E the 5<sup>th</sup>, and F the 6<sup>th</sup>. Should it be the case that there are 4 timekeepers to officiate (A, B, C, D), then the duties would be such that A and B will take 2 finishing times, using the split time facility on the stopwatch, ie, A will time the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> athlete, B will time the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, C the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and D the 4<sup>th</sup>.
- The watch should be started on the sound of the whistle.
- As the athletes approach the finish line, concentration should be fixed on the line, as opposed to following individual athletes.
- The watch must be stopped as each athlete's torso crosses the finish line.
- The watch is set back to zero once the chief timekeeper has a record of all the times.

This is a children's adaptation of the traditional Scottish event. It is a test of accuracy, balance and coordination. The caber contest calls for accuracy and not distance achieved. The aim is to flip the caber end over end so that it lands at right angles to the throwing line and in the centre of the target area.

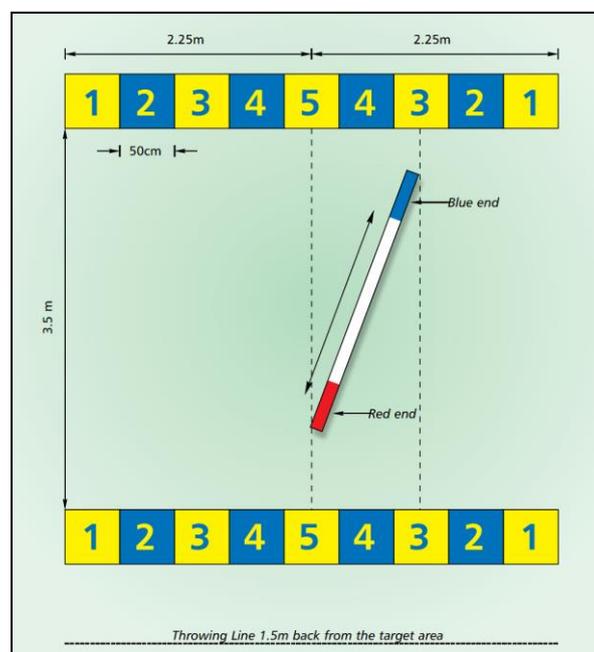


### Guidance Notes

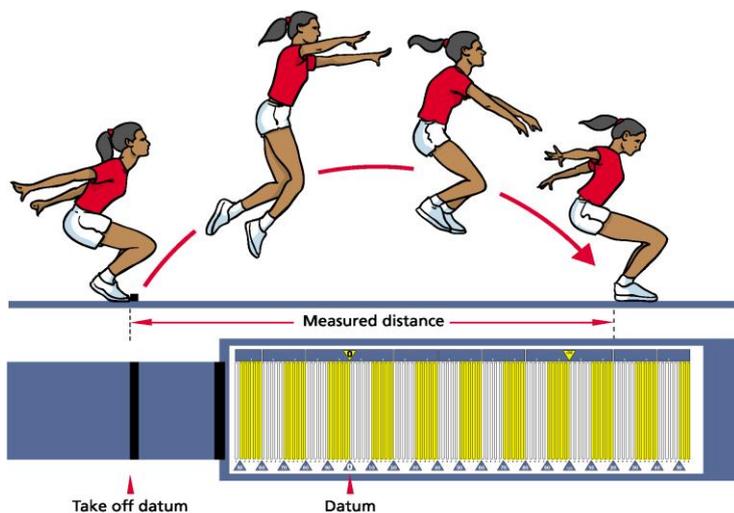
- A practice should be permitted particularly to help those who may be unsure with the event
- A minimum of 2 judges are required. One Judge to score and Return the Caber & the other to record the score and observe the take-off.
- Hold the blue end of the caber in cupped hands, arms should be straight down, the caber rested on the shoulder.
- The caber should be tossed over the red end so that it lands with the blue end furthest from the throwing line.

### Rules

- Judges must ensure the participant is holding the blue end before the throw.
- Participants are encouraged to take three to four steps towards the throwing line, push the caber forward with shoulder and upwards with arms and hands.
- Direction scores and not distance - there is no penalty for over stepping the throwing line.
- Mark the points where both ends of the caber first land. Line these points up with the numbers on the scoring mat, add these together to get the score for that throw.
- The score in the diagram to the right would be - 5 + 3 = 8 points
- Each participant has three throws. The combined total of the three throws is calculated to get the total score.
- A score of 30 is therefore the maximum that can be achieved.



This two-footed jump from a standing position is a test of co-ordination and leg strength. A special calibrated landing mat is used which enable jumps to be recorded easily.



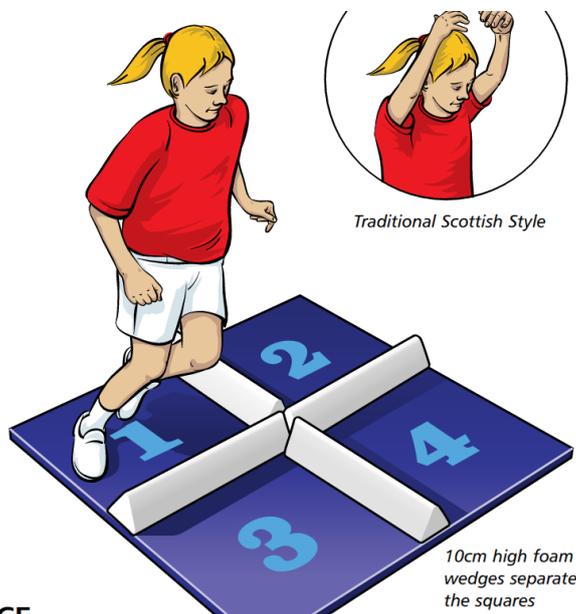
### Guidance Notes

- It is recommended that three judges are used, one to watch the take off and two to observe the landing.
- Following each jump, the judges place a finger level with the spot they consider to be the shortest mark. In the event of a difference of opinion, the shorter of the two distances is recorded.
- Where a mat has two take off datum lines, an athlete may start from either mark. For those less familiar with the event, it is recommended that a Primary athlete starts from the 1m datum line with a secondary athlete starting from the 2m datum line. A practice jump aid this decision

### Rules

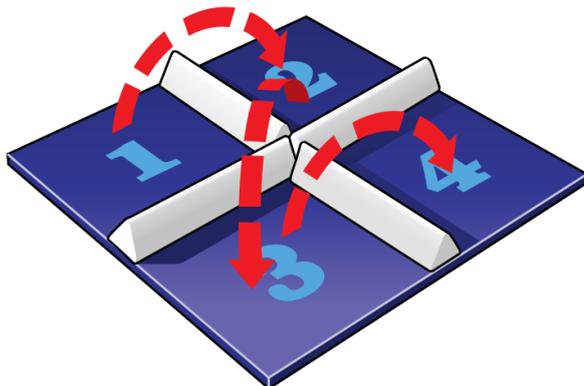
- The athlete must stand on the mat with both feet behind the take off datum line.
- Techniques involving a crouch or rocking motion prior to the jump are permitted provided that both feet are alongside each other and retain contact with the mat until the start of the jump.
- No part of the athlete must touch the mat in front of the start line prior to take off.
- The athlete should jump as far as possible from a standing position, with a two footed take off. One footed take offs are not permitted.
- The athlete must land on both feet, with both feet being placed on the mat. The measurement lines printed on the mat are for guidance only. If an athlete's foot lands outside the graduated area and the judges are able to measure the jump, it should be recorded as a good trial.
- The athlete is not required to hold the landing position and may step forward after the jump. Should the athlete step back, fall back or touch the mat or floor behind their heel, a no jump should be recorded.
- Measurement is taken from the take off line to the back of the closest heel on landing.

The Highland Steps is developed from a traditional Scottish dance. The Sportshall Highland Steps provide a fun and challenging adaptation of this traditional Scottish activity. This requires rhythm, agility, speed, endurance and clear thinking.



## SEQUENCE

Both feet to land in each segment before moving on.



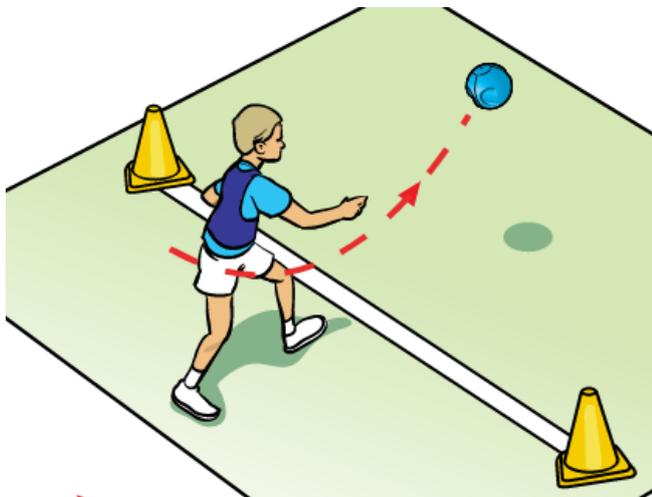
## Guidance Notes

- The aim is to complete as many full cycles as possible in 20 seconds.
- A practice trial of between 2 to 3 full sequences provides ideal opportunity to spot potential problems with technique.
- At least two officials should count the “good” cycles. They should then liaise and agree on the number completed.
- A third official should monitor the stopwatch/clock and provide a verbal time check with 10 seconds remaining. They are also ideally placed to check technique.
- Judges and or other athletes may place a foot on the corner of the mat to prevent it slipping. The same support should be afforded to all athletes.

## Rules

- Both feet must land in each section of the Highland Steps Mat. The feet do not have to land simultaneously. Athletes can land with one foot followed by the other in each section before moving onto the next section.
- The sequence must be 1, 2, 3, 4.
- If the participant stands on the wedge then they can either return to space number one or the space before the error occurred and continue. If they do not and continue the cycle will not count.
- Points are only scored by completing a full cycle (through 1, 2, 3 and 4).
- After 30 seconds the full cycles are counted as the participants score.

The aim is to throw the ball as far forward as possible keeping the direction of the throw as straight as possible.



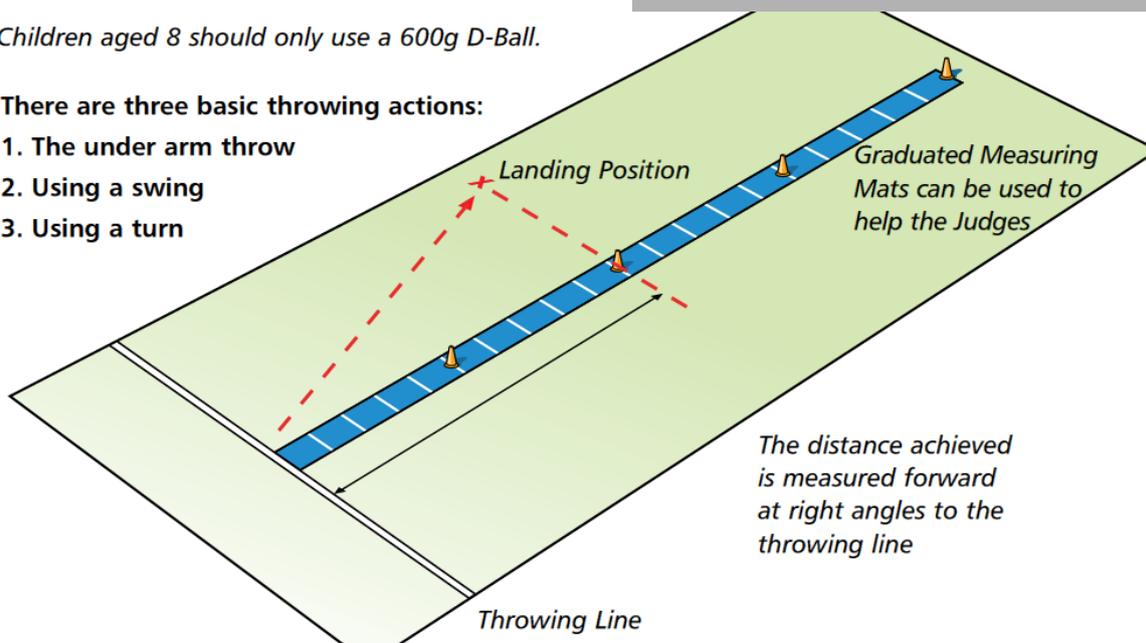
### Guidance Notes

- It is recommended that two judges are used, one to watch the throw and one to watch and record the landing.
- It is appropriate to use a waiting athlete to roll the ball back.
- A linear throw is when the recorded distance is measured at a right angle forward from the throwing line.
- This helps to develop the skill to control the direction of the delivery. A long throw at a sharp angle will only be recorded as a lesser distance for the participant. It is not the actual distance thrown as measured when using a segment.

*Children aged 8 should only use a 600g D-Ball.*

There are three basic throwing actions:

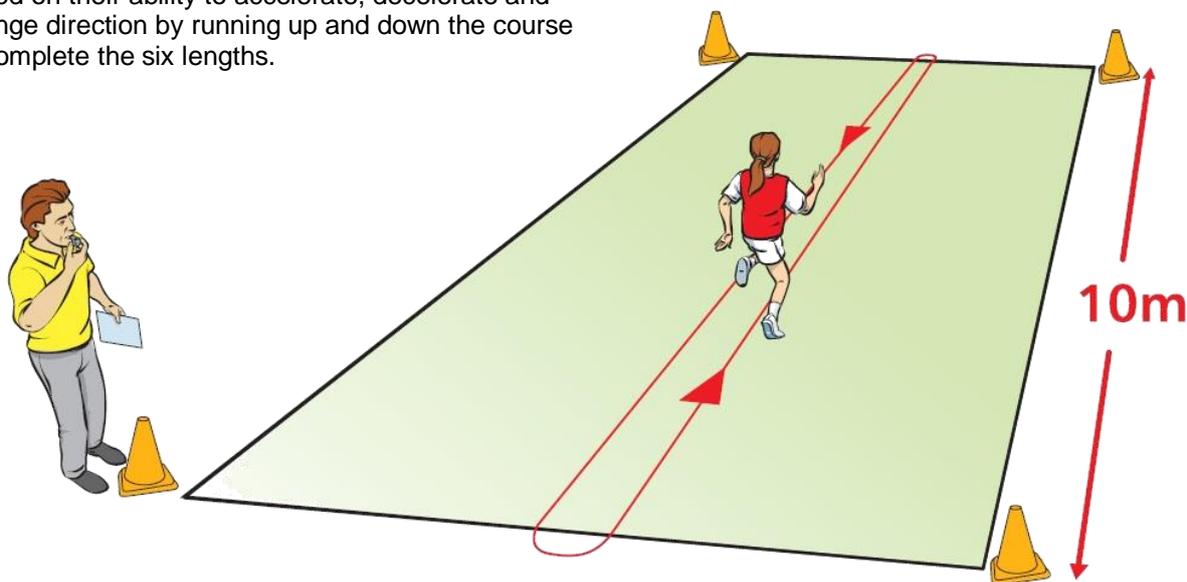
1. The under arm throw
2. Using a swing
3. Using a turn



### Rules

- The athlete holds the ball with one hand and throws using an underarm technique.
- One step into the throw is permitted
- The athlete must not pass the throwing line during their throw.
- Once thrown, the ball doesn't have to land on the mat but will be measured in line with the mat.
- The distance thrown is measured from the throwing line to the point where the ball first lands. Always mark down to the nearest 25cm.

A timed sprint over a 10m course, the participant is tested on their ability to accelerate, decelerate and change direction by running up and down the course to complete the six lengths.



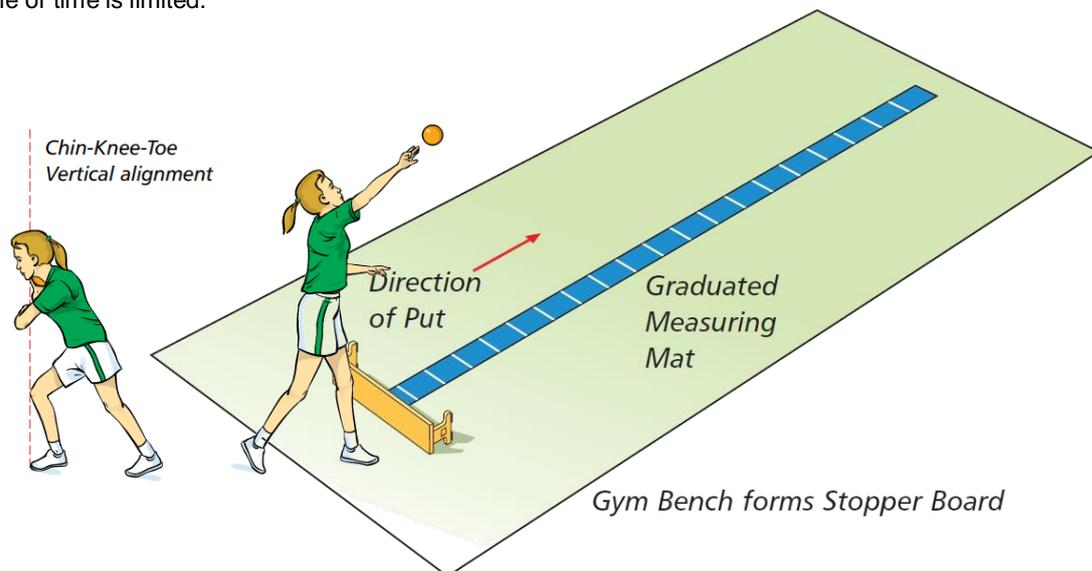
#### Guidance Notes

- One judge may be used to time this event. The same judge must watch the turning lines for any faults. A second judge would assist in watching the turning line.
- Athletes should be encouraged not to slow down when they run the finish line in the final section.
- An adequate run off area must be provided at each end of the course for safety purposes.

#### Rules

- The 10m course is laid out as shown in the diagram.
- The athlete begins from a standing position behind the start line.
- On the whistle the athlete sprints from one end of the 10m course to the other end as fast as possible.
- The athlete must place one foot over the return line before turning and repeating in the opposite direction.
- After completing the course six times to run the total 60m distance the clock is stopped when they re-cross the start line for the final time.
- The time is taken to the tenth of a second.
- 0.2 second must be added if the athlete faults by turning short of the line.

Within a Highland Games competition the Shot Put event uses indoor shots that are designed not to damage surfaces. Linear shot enables the event to be accommodated quickly & easily within a typical sports hall when a circle may not be available or time is limited.



#### Guidance Notes

- Three judges are recommended, one to watch the technique and record the performance, one to observe the landing and the third to assist with measuring.
- The throwing area should be clearly marked to prevent people walking through. Cones and hurdles are often used for this.
- Athletes should not be allowed to throw or practice unless the area is supervised by a judge.
- To promote good practice it is appropriate to ask the athlete to step back over the two metre line once they have completed their put. This will imitate the action of walking out of the back of a shot circle.

#### Rules

- Two parallel lines are to be marked out. The first of these represents the throwing line, with the second being placed two metres behind this. It is within this area that the athlete may take steps into their throw.
- The shot should be placed at the base of the first three fingers of the hand, ensuring it does not rest of the palm. The thumb and little finger should provide support for the shot.
- The glide technique is permitted, whilst rotational techniques are strictly forbidden within a Sportshall competition.
- The shot must be put from the shoulder with one hand only. The shot should touch or be in close contact with the neck or chin. The hand should not drop below this position during the act of putting.
- The athlete must ensure that no part of their body touches the ground beyond the throwing line. If so, it is deemed a no throw.
- For Highland Games the throw should be measured to the nearest 25cm, being rounded down as necessary. The measuring tape should be taken from the landing point, back at a right angle to the throwing line. The tape should not be pulled back to a central point as with the standard event.

#### Shot Put Weights are recommended as follows:

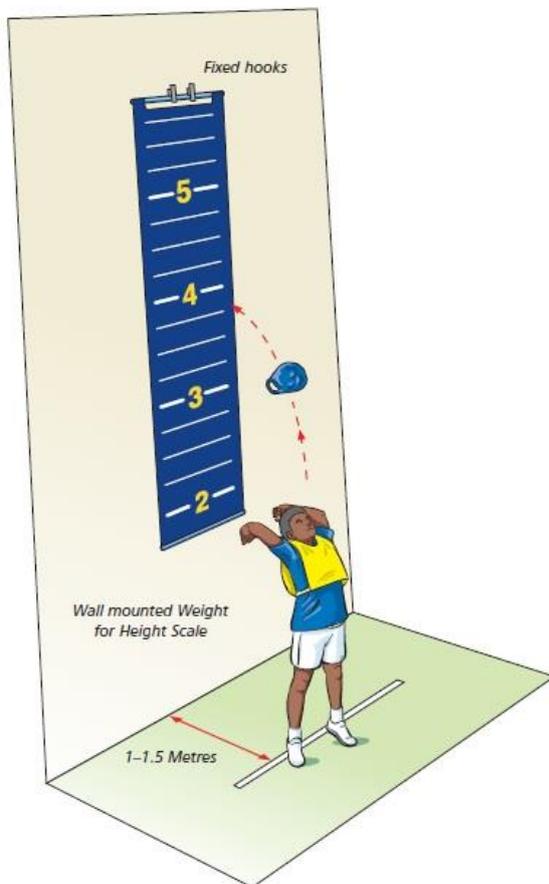
Under 11's (years 3 & 4) - 1kg – used for both boys & girls

Under 11's (Year 5 & 6) 1kg – used for both boys & girls

Under 13 girls (years 7 & 8) – 2.72kg

Under 13 boys (years 7 & 8) – 3.25kg

The aim is to throw a weighted D-Ball as high as possible towards the scale on the wall.



### Guidance Notes

- It is recommended that two judges are used, one to watch the throw and one to watch and record the landing.
- The ball must be thrown above the head towards the scale on the wall.
- An official must be present at all times when this equipment is being used, whether practice or competition.

### Rules

- The participant stands about 1–1.5 metres away from the target with their back to the wall and has three trials to see how high they can hit the wall with the D-Ball.
- The athlete holds the ball with one hand and throws using an underarm technique.
- They are instructed to move forward away from the wall immediately after throwing the D-Ball.
- The competitors score is the highest point achieved to where the D-Ball hits the wall.

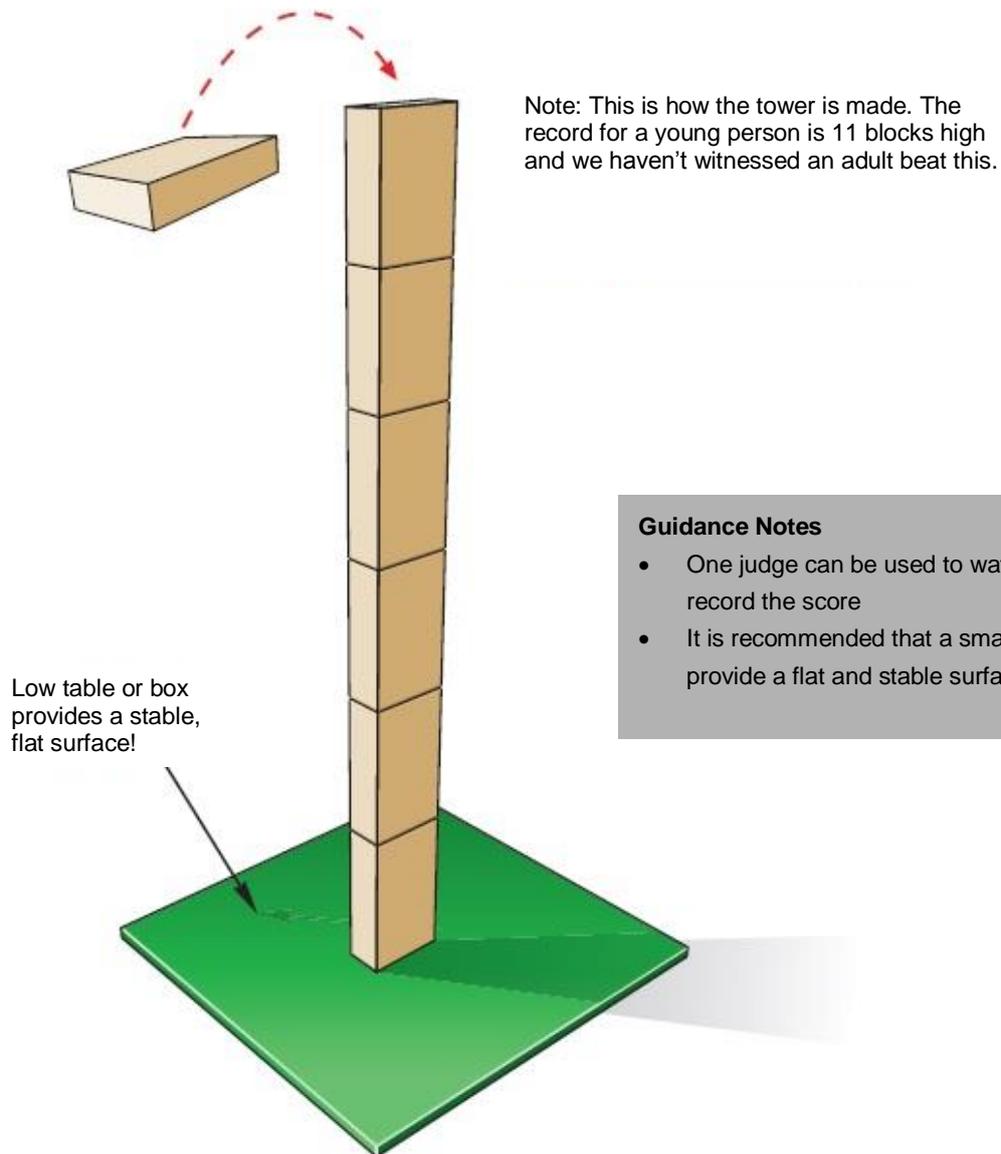
### D-Ball Weights are recommended as follows:

Under 11's (years 3 & 4) – 600g – used for both boys & girls  
Under 11's (Year 5 & 6) – 1.5g – used for both boys & girls  
Under 13 girls (years 7 & 8) – 2kg

Under 13 boys (years 7 & 8) – 3kg

**The event for young participants is considered to be more a test of technique than strength. For this reason the suppliers have made a special “soft” 600 gramme D-Ball available which weighs little more than a football. This is recommended for use with young novices until they have mastered the technique.**

The Precision test is lots of fun and tests precision and accuracy.



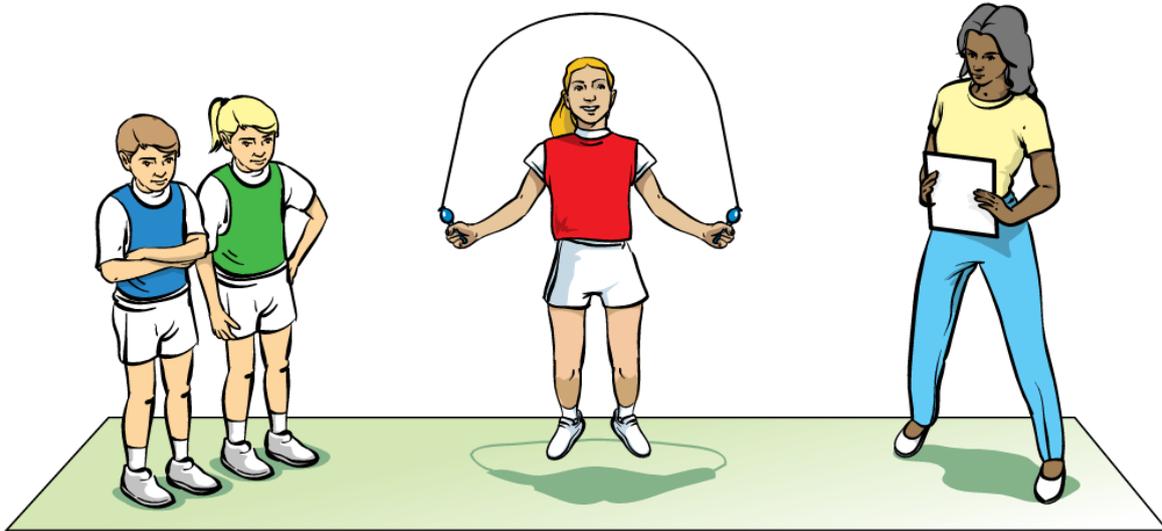
**Rules**

- Each competitor is allowed 30 seconds during which time they must attempt to build the blocks as high as possible in a vertical tower which does not collapse when left untouched.
- An individual's score is the highest number of blocks built into a self-supporting tower during a 30 second period.

**EXAMPLE**

If a height of nine blocks is achieved before the tower collapses and is then re-built to only seven or eight high, then the score of nine counts.

The Skipping Test measures speed, agility, coordination & general fitness.



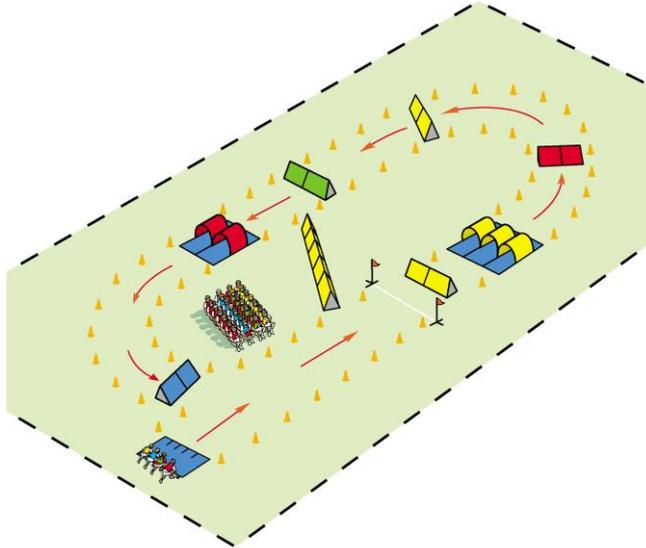
### Guidance Notes

- One judge can be used to watch the skipping test, count and record the score.
- Judges should allow each participant a warm up trial of a few skips before starting.
- Ensure that ropes used are of the appropriate length for the participant.
- For Safety purposes only allow one participant to skip at a time and remain well away from the wall.
- Participants are encouraged to try and gain rhythm and then speed up the action.

### Rules

- The participant must start with the rope behind their heels.
- When the judge signals the start the participant must begin to attempt as many complete forward rotations as they can in 30 seconds.
- The participant may only allowed be a second trial after a reasonable rest period

The Grand Prix is often used during a Highland Games Competition. This is an exciting relay where each athlete completes one lap of the circuit running over Hurdles & through Tunnels before passing their bean bag to the next athlete in their team.



### Guidance Notes

- Judges must be in place to pick up the hurdles but should be careful to not obstruct the athletes when doing so. It is better that a hurdle is left lying out of place than risk injury to either athlete or judge.
- Judges must also assist the children in the holding areas.

### Rules

- The first athlete starts at the team base mat. The other team members sit the holding area.
- On the whistle the athlete starts with a forward roll. They run around the circuit clearing the hurdles and going through the tunnels. Whilst the first athlete is racing the second athlete is placed at the takeover point ready to receive the bean bag.
- Only the first runner completes a forward roll.
- At the takeover point, the first athlete must pass the bean bag onto the next runner who then repeats the course. The first runner must proceed to the finish area and sit down; they do not rejoin the waiting athletes. Each athlete completes the circuit with the last runner continuing across the finish line.
- Lanes are not allocated to teams.

### Faults

A half second time penalty is given for each fault noted. One fault will be given for each occasion an athlete:

- Omits a hurdle. Faults should NOT be given if an athlete knocks over a hurdle or if it has not been replaced.
- Fails to go through the tunnel.