

Chapter Ten

Arranging for Uniforms and Equipment

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What to wear, oh, what to wear? This lament can apply even to the task of securing the “right”

uniforms for your team. Finding just the right solution that fits your budget, pleases your runners, and meets your company’s guidelines for corporate correctness can become a bit difficult. Here are some practical suggestions.

Design Considerations

Start with the corporate identity that you want to achieve with your uniforms. Does your company have a corporate logo that you can use? Are there restrictions covering how it can be used? In many larger companies there is a corporate communications/marketing function that is able to answer these questions and provide design assistance. We at Boeing have such an organization that oversees the use of our corporate logo. They answered our questions and even designed our team logo. They also provided the camera-ready copy that the silk screener needs.

Once you have a logo, you will have an idea of appropriate colors for the uniform. You will need to decide how far you want to go with the uniform. A singlet alone will provide the minimum needed to look like a team. Matching running shorts complete the basic gear. From there, the options include jackets, tights, warm-ups, hats, etc. These optional purchases can be at the individual team member’s expense, but any customizing typically requires a minimum volume and thus requires some advance planning.

Finding a Supplier

You can work with your local running shoe store to identify supplier options and secure price quotations. The store will normally pass on volume discounts and perhaps offer to reduce its own margin in exchange for your team’s business. You can also find supplier ads in running magazines. Another way to find a reliable supplier is through an experienced race director. You can also work through the silk screener you plan to use. High school coaches can also direct you to reliable uniform suppliers. In all cases, be sure to look at an actual sample, not just a picture, before you choose.

There can be significant price discounts for larger volume orders. The price of the silk screening per singlet also drops with volume because of the setup costs. Therefore, it pays to anticipate your future uniform needs and consolidate them into as large an order as you can reasonably justify.

Funding

You will obviously want to have funding for uniforms pinned down before you get to the point of ordering. However, some competitive price quotes— together with pictures and a logo to help your potential corporate patron visualize how impressive your team will look in the **corporate** uniform—are very helpful in making your case for financial assistance.

If you need to pay for your own uniforms, you will want to give team members an opportunity to state their preference with regard to quality, price, and design. Your team members are more likely to want to purchase uniforms if they are pleased with what they are buying. Because opinions can vary widely on this topic, avoid an open discussion at a large

meeting; instead, use a representative committee to develop limited range of choices. Then poll all interested members for preferences.

Equipment

As with uniforms, you will want to identify several viable suppliers. You can either work through a local running/sporting goods store or shop directly from supplier catalogs. *Track and Field News* is a good source for identifying suppliers and ordering their catalogs.

Some equipment you will probably want to purchase is listed below:

- Batons—at least three or four to cover both practice and meets. (Inexpensive and lighter than homemade, PVC-pipe batons. Engrave these batons as soon as purchased to avoid losing them at meets.)
- A set of starting blocks (Sprinters will need to practice their block starts if they intend to use blocks in the meet.)
- At least one shot and discus for throwers in each gender/age category
- A supply of replacement spikes 1/4-inch or less in length (You can correct any problems with well-worn spikes, i.e., too long to be acceptable on an all-weather track, too worn to be serviceable)

Other sundry items that you may want to add to your collection include:

- A tarp, complete with poles and rope, to provide sunshade during those all-day meets
- A first-aid kit
- An extra-long measuring tape for your long jumpers
- A stopwatch with sufficient memory to log all the splits on those long relay races

Finally, you will have to figure out how to store and transport all this stuff—clearly an opportunity for some creative delegating!

