

Safety Checklist

Discus

Inspection routine

1. Inspect the surface of the ring for any protrusions or indentations. These can cause the athlete to lose their balance and potentially fall, causing injury
2. Make sure that the ring is swept and free of any grass, dirt or other material that may affect the traction of the competitors' shoes
3. Make sure that the yellow area is flagged off or otherwise partitioned so that non-competitors cannot wander into it
4. Make sure that the landing area will not create unusual bounces or ricochets.
 - o don't allow anything foreign in the sector that may cause a bounce (i.e. markers)
 - o large stones can be a problem as well
 - o make officials, workers and others aware of wet grass that will cause the discus to skid
5. Inspect the cage and netting at least once per week, and as needed if the implement comes in contact with the cage or its supports
 - o The cage should be sufficiently slack so that the implement will not bounce back toward the athlete in the circle
 - o The red zone should be expanded to reflect this slackness. Use this procedure to determine the red zone around the cage:
 1. Pull on the netting (with a good amount of force) to see how far it is displaced toward the outside of the cage.
 2. Add an additional 3 feet to that point and mark the ground with a red line or stripe. This is a clear indicator to everyone that this is a potential danger area

Practice Considerations

- Consider having a meeting with parents of athletes (and the athletes) to explain your safety procedures and why throwing safety is important
- Use pennants or other visual devices to indicate where the light red zone is
 - o As much as possible, keep ALL athletes out of the light red zone
- Practice/warm-up with implements does not begin until the coach is present
- Remember: the cage is there to dissipate the energy of the implement, not necessarily stop it. Athletes should stay back from the cage, outside the red zone (see the information in #5 above.)
- Inspect any implement that has come in contact with any hard surface (ring, cage support, etc.) for damage
- Depending on the number of throwers and the number of implements, consider using "salvo throwing"
 - o Assume that you have 5 implements and 10 throwers. Have the 1st 5 throwers each take a throw, then have the second five throwers retrieve them and take their throws.
 - o No one enters the red zone until all of the implements have been thrown.
 - o Never allow athletes to throw anywhere other than into the landing sector.
- When practice is over, all implements should be put away.
- Have a set time for practice.
- Never allow unsupervised practice. You may be liable for negligence if you allow the athlete to practice outside of direct supervision.
 - o check with your school solicitor for more information
 - o consider private liability insurance
 - o organize a "throwing club" with USATF membership to provide an additional level of indemnity
 - o understand how your state views the terms "negligence" and "reasonable care"

Competition Considerations

Coaches:

- Identify the head official so that if problems arise, you know who to address

- If you see a potentially hazardous situation, bring it to the attention of the head official IMMEDIATELY.
 - This is also true if a situation becomes hazardous during the course of competition.
- Don't assume that the head official sees the potential hazard and has corrected it.
- If the situation is not corrected, and you feel that there is potential for injury to your athlete or another athlete, seek out the head field judge and point out the hazard, and the fact that you have asked the chief judge to address it.
- If not satisfied, make the tough call - do you want your athlete to continue with the potential for harm?
- Document the hazard through a formal protest.
 - Documentation is key should there be any situation that would arise

Officials:

- When the circle is closed from further warm-ups, place a cone in the center of the circle.
This provides a strong visual reminder for the athlete that the circle is closed.
- When the competition is completed, if possible, close the cage doors and secure them, if this is the conclusion of throwing from that facility for the day.
- Be conscious of, and observe, wind conditions.
Remember: winds aloft can be different from winds at ground level.
- Carry all implements back to the designated return area - never throw them back.
- If at all possible, ask meet management to do any mowing around the circle at least 2 days in advance of the competition, and to clear any grass clippings from the circle.
- Do not allow athletes or coaches into the impact area during warm-ups or competition.
- Refer to the inspection routine guidelines above.

Supplies

- broom and or squeegee
 - circles can get wet and slippery
- towels
 - not only for the shoes, but also for the implements
- leaf blower
 - effective, fast and efficient way to keep a circle or runway clear of water, leaves, grass clippings, etc.