

Coach Jones: ...Arizona needed a state-level Track and Field Relay event...the Bobcat Relays.



7th Annual Bobcat Relays

When Coach Jones thinks about the time he attended the Penn Relays at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, he remembers his excitement of being with thousands of competing track and field athletes from all over the United States.

Jones knew this was a Track and Field event Arizona athletes needed: state-level track and field relays. He envisioned bringing this style outdoor meet to Phoenix, so he started planning and in time, what we know as the Bobcat Relays came to life.

He was familiar with several other states that hosted track and field relays; sometimes they are called invitationals instead of relays. A short list of the great relay events that rank along side the Penn Relays are the Drake Relays in Des Moines, IA; the Kansas Relays in Lawrence, KS; the Texas Relays in Austin, TX and the Arkansas Invitational in Fayetteville, AR.

You can google the name of a relay and read more about it on the Internet. Penn and Drake Relays have dedicated web sites well worth your visit.

Following many months filled with meetings, phone calls and juggling schedules, the first Bobcat Relays was held on Saturday, April 21, 2001 at Shadow Mountain High School, which is now the home practice field for the Phoenix Bobcats Track and Field Club. At this first Bobcat Relays, approximately 380 athletes attended, representing all of Arizona's active Track and Field Relay clubs! Now the annual event has moved to Horizon High School in Scottsdale.

During the first couple of years, the USATF-sanctioned Bobcat Relays were only open to Arizona's youth athletes and limited to relay events. But soon after, as the word got out to other Arizona athletes about the newly formed Relays, Coach Jones was contacted by many local and state masters athletes who wanted more local track and field events to participate in. Consequently, in 2003 the Bobcat Relays was reworked to become what it is today: a USATF-sanctioned event, with relays and all regular track and field events and is for open (youth) and masters (adult) athletes.

Coach Jones continues with his dreams; on his clipboard are under-construction plans for adding a couple unusual relay events to the basic relay schedule. Jones wants to hold a Media Relay event as well as a Celebrity Relay event. With all the celebrities living in the Phoenix metropolitan area, this should mean several exciting heats for athletes and spectators alike!

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