Track and Field Competition Shoes (AKA ‘Spikes’)

* Spikes: shoes that are specially designed to improve performance in specific track and field discipline(s)

--distance/middle-distance spikes are extra-light

--sprinting and jumping spikes maximize power output and keep your foot in an optimal position for running fast (i.e. up on the ball of the foot)

--throwing spikes improve your traction against the throwing surface, allowing you to generate more force off of the ground

--in addition, metal/plastic inserts (known as ‘pins’) screwed into the bottom of the spike (except for throwing spikes) give significantly improved traction

* Pin Usage Rules at Various Facilities

--Houghton: pins allowed in all events, maximum length ¼’’

--Buffalo State and Fredonia: no pins allowed in any event

* Spike Usage Recommendations

--You are always allowed to wear spikes, even when you are not allowed to use pins

--Without pins, you will lose all of the traction benefits of the spike

--Most track and field spikes have a plastic sole (cross country spikes, throwing spikes, high jump spikes, and some pole vault spikes have rubber soles)

--Plastic does not give particularly good traction on its own

--In addition, Fredonia has very tight turns and a somewhat slippery track surface

--Coach’s Recommendation: don’t wear spikes in sprinting events (up to 400m) at Fredonia; wear spikes in longer events at Fredonia and in all events at other locations

--Make sure to change out your pins once per season

* Factors to consider when deciding whether or not to buy spikes

--a good pair of spikes will last for 5-10 years

--if your feet have stopped growing, a single pair of spikes will probably last the entirety of your high school (and possible post-high school) running career

--if your feet have not stopped growing, then you will outgrow a pair of spikes long before you wear them out

--an entry-level pair of spikes usually costs $60-$70 (check out eastbay.com for a good selection); high-level spikes can cost well over $100 (and won’t offer that much improvement compared to basic spikes)

--if you’re just starting out and aren’t sure what event(s) you want to compete in, an entry-level mid-distance spike (e.g. the Nike Zoom Rival, Adidas Sprintstar, New Balance MD500) will do reasonably well in any event (except a throwing event)

--Runner’s Roost (Orchard Park) is the best brick-and-mortar store to go to if you want to try on a pair of spikes before you buy them (and you will get a discount if you tell them that you run for Kenmore East)