

**Ohio High School Athletic Association**

**Track & Field and  
Cross County**



**2024 Officials Manual**

**Updated July 29, 2024**

## **A Message From BJ Duckworth**

### **OHSAA Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development**

This manual has been compiled to serve as a reference for the sports of Track & Field and Cross Country, it was updated on January 16, 2024 to add additional information. This manual should be used **in conjunction** with other resources, including the 2024 NFHS Rule & Case Books and 2023-24 NFHS Officials Manual. **All changes for 2024 that were added in the spring are reflected in RED text in this document.** Any changes added for the 2024 fall release of this manual are denoted in BLUE.

It is imperative that the student-athletes we serve have the same experience as their peers around the state. The expectation is that we all put our personal opinions on the rules aside and work together to ensure all rules are enforced the same, with the same interpretation no matter where they compete. **One Rule – One Interpretation** is our goal. **Not enforcing a rule or looking the other way may appear to help the athlete, but in the long run, it not only hurts the athlete but also your fellow officials when they properly enforce the rule and the athlete has not corrected their actions.**

There have been a lot of changes with our sports over the past several years including; new assignment processes and policies, new assignment software, the addition of virtual local meetings, the creation of the state meet clinic, increase in pay for regional track, complimentary hotel rooms for track state meet officials and a new process for education and testing of new official to name a few. While some of these changes are OHSAA wide, our sport has seen more changes than most sports. **I appreciate your flexibility!** We will continue to build on the solid foundation built by those before us as we work to make our sport better for the student athletes we serve and all of you.

The work we do as officials comes at a great sacrifice to our loved ones, partners and spouses. **Please extend my gratitude to them, without their support none of us would be able to participate in these sports we love.**

**THANK YOU** for all you do for our sports and the student athletes of Ohio.

Sincerely,

***BJ Duckworth***

Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development  
Track & Field and Cross Country  
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# **2024 Important Dates For Officials**

## **Track & Field**

Local Meeting Window: January 29 – April 22

State Rules Interpretation Window: February 5 – March 22

State Rules Interpretation Window (W/Late Fee): March 23 – April 13

First Day of Coaching: February 19

Season Begins: March 23

Non-Interscholastic Date: April 29

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade State Championship: May 11

District Tournaments: May 13 – May 18

Regional Tournaments: May 22 – May 25

State Tournament: May 30 & June 1

Season Ends: June 1

## **Cross Country**

Local Meeting Window: July 15 – October 20

State Rules Interpretation: July 25 – August 18

State Rules Interpretation W/Late Fee: August 19 – September 23

First Day of Coaching: August 1

OHSAA Pre-Season Invitational: August 17

Season Begins: August 19

Non-Interscholastic Date: September 30

District Tournaments: October 19

OHSAA Jr. High Invitational: October 20

Regional Tournaments: October 26

State Tournament: November 2

Season Ends: November 2

## 2024 Contact Information



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## Track & Field and Cross-Country Support Personnel



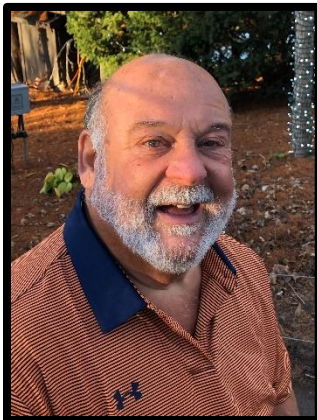
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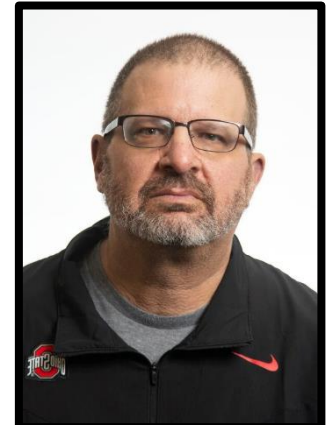
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# Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches

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The Ohio Association of Track & Cross Coaches (then named the Ohio Association of Track Coaches) was formed in 1941 as the brainchild of Ed Barker. During the late 70's, the name was changed to the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches. The goals and purpose of the OATCCC are as follows:

- Promote track, field and cross country in all of the junior and senior high schools of Ohio. We also extend support to those programs in the state's colleges and universities.
- Cooperate with and assist the OHSAA and Ohio's colleges and universities in all the matters pertaining to maintenance, promotion and improvement of track and field and cross country.
- Recognize and award outstanding achievement and/or contribution by athletes, coaches, officials or supporters.

OATCCC District Contact Information Can be Found at:  
<https://www.oatccc.com/Contact-Us/>



# Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association

## President

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The Ohio Track & Field & Cross Country Officials Association (OT&F&CCOA) was formed in 1985 with the purpose of promoting the sports of track and field and cross country in Ohio, and recruiting and retaining officials for those two sports.

The OT&F&CCOA is open to any current track/cross country official in good standing with the Ohio High School Athletic Association. Dues are \$25 per year, with half of the money earmarked for scholarships and the rest to fund annual Clinic expenses. The annual OT&F&CCOA Clinic is held the third weekend of January in the Columbus area.

The OT&F&CCOA annually awards Contributor Awards, Scholarships to children/grandchildren of officials, Joe Lenge Service Awards, and the association's highest honor, the Fredrick Cope Award to an outstanding track & field/cross country official.

The Official OT&F&CCOA website can be found at:  
<https://otfcco.wixsite.com/ohiotrackofficials>





## Officials Code of Ethics



Our member schools have entrusted officials to assist them in the education and development of their youth through athletics. This requires officials to be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people they serve. In recognition of these expectations, there is an established **Code of Ethics** and **Code of Conduct** for all officials. The purpose of the code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all officials.

**An Official** must devote time, thought and study to the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to carry out these rules so that one may render effective and credible service in a fair and unbiased manner.

**An Official** must work with fellow officials and the state association in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate of points or rules at issue.

**An Official** must resist every temptation and outside pressure to use one's position as an official to benefit oneself. Under all circumstances, officials must avoid promoting the special interest of any person or group of persons other than the athletes we serve.

**An Official** must constantly uphold the honor and dignity of the avocation in all personal conduct and relations with the student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public, to be a worthy example to the athletes under one's jurisdiction.

**An Official** will be prepared both physically and mentally, dress accordingly to expectations and maintain a proper appearance that is befitting the importance of the game.

**An Official** shall avoid the use of **tobacco and related products** at the contest site.

**An Official** must remember and recognize that it is important to honor contracts regardless of possible inconvenience or financial loss.

Every member of the officiating profession carries a responsibility to act in a manner becoming a professional person. The conduct of any official influences the attitude of the public toward the profession in general as well as toward the official in particular.

Sports officials bear great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports. They are critical to the health of athletic competitions. Officials ensure games are played fairly, by the rules, within the spirit of the rules and in a safe manner. Officiating takes a great deal of preparation, continuing education and commitment of time.



## The Official's Role in Sportsmanship



Your job is not an easy one, but the official must be aware that they are an important component in the educational development of students. To carry out this responsibility, you must:

- Know the rules and mechanics of our sport and the philosophy behind them.
- Get fit and stay fit. An official with all of the rules and mechanics knowledge and people skills in the world does no good if he or she cannot physically keep up with play.
- Maintain professional and ethical relationships with athletic administrators, especially in the area of fulfilling game contracts.
- Work cooperatively with fellow officials during games and within the referees' association to improve members' performances.
- Maintain at all times and when interacting with all participants, an attitude of civility and professionalism.
- Practice effective preventive officiating as much as possible before, during, and after a game. The quiet word, proper signals, timely verbal instructions, a simple thank-you to a player for avoiding an unsporting act, and well-thought-out pre-game conferences with the teams and other game officials will result in an improvement of sportsmanship by eliminating the chance for things to go wrong.

The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) conducted a survey of 550 sports officials and asked "*what is the number-one problem in our games today?*" Not too surprising, the number one response was "Poor Sportsmanship." As a result, the NASO brought together some of the best and brightest in youth, high school, collegiate and pro sports to examine the issue and explore the official's role in promoting positive on-field behavior. The results identified three critical ideas:

1. What exactly is at Stake
2. What is Expected of Officials, and,
3. What steps need to be taken

As a result, the following are important results of this study and publication:

1. 65% of respondents indicated their respective associations do not do *enough* to help improve sportsmanship.
2. 89% of officials responding consider themselves PARTNERS with players, coaches and administrators in improving sportsmanship.
3. 54% of officials responding indicated they felt they DO have the training, authority and knowledge to make an impact.



# 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Regulations

## Order of Events (Track & Field)

The following listed Order of Events shall be used for grade 7-8 girls and boys involving Ohio schools. This bulletin supersedes the Order of Events in the NFHS Track and Field Rules Book. The javelin is **NOT** an approved event and is not permitted in high school competitions. Rule 2 - Scoring and Ties; exceptions to this rule are not permissible.

## Running Events

### Girls

- 1 - Relay - 4 x 800 meter or 4 x 880 yards
- 3 - Hurdles - 100 meters (10 Hurdles) (30")
- 5 - Dash - 100 meters or 100 yards
- 7 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 9 - Run - 1600 meters or One Mile
- 11- Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 13 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 15 - Hurdles - 200 meters (30")\*
- 17 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 19 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards \*\*
- 21 - Relay- 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

### Boys

- 2 - Relay - 4 x 800 meter or 4 x 880 yards
- 4 - Hurdles - 110 meters (10 Hurdles) (33")
- 6 - Dash -100 meters or 100 yards
- 8 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 10 - Run - 1600 meters or One Mile
- 12 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 14 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 16 - Hurdles - 200 meters (30")\*
- 18 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 20 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards Relay \*\*
- 22 - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

**Note:** When running simultaneous girls and boys meets, events shall be competed in the order indicated by the numerical sequence above.

\* Start - 200 M. mark, 5 hurdles, spacing of hurdles 50 m to the first hurdle, 35 m between hurdles, 10 m from 5th hurdle to the finish line.

\*\*A rest period of at least 20 minutes from the beginning of the girl's 200 M to the start of the first heat of the girls 4x400M is recommended to be given if athletes competing in the 200M are also in the 4x400 relay.

## Field Events (order is optional)

### Girls

- Discus (1K) (2 lbs., 3.27 oz.)
- High Jump
- Long Jump
- Shot Put (2.722K) (6 lbs.)
- Pole Vault

### Boys

- Discus (1K) (2 lbs., 3.27 oz.)
- High Jump
- Long Jump
- Shot Put (4K) (8 lbs. 13 oz.)
- Pole Vault

**Throwing Sectors:** The degree Sector required is 34.92 degrees for Shot Put and Discus (per 2007).

### **Changing the Order of Events or the Actual Events Competed (Track & Field)**

In dual, triangular and quadrangular meets, the listed events must be competed unless the changes are listed on the contest contract signed by the school administrators/certified OHSAA assignor or communicated well in advance of the meet. If there is no exception, schools shall expect to compete in each of the events as listed. If some events are not offered or cannot be competed, the offending school, will forfeit the points.

Invitationals must list their order of events in advance of schools entering their meet; the entering of the meet is the acceptance of the modified order of events.

### **Participation Limitation (Track & Field)**

In any one track and field contest, a participant may compete in a maximum of three events. The three events may be any combination of track and field events including relays, or may be three track events or three field events. **PARTICIPATION LIMITATION PENALTY:** An athlete who exceeds the participation limitation shall be disqualified. The forfeiture bylaws apply as written in Bylaw 11.

### **Students Below Ninth Grade (Track & Field and Cross Country)**

Students below the ninth grade are not eligible to compete in athletics with high school students unless they meet an exception as outlined in Bylaw 4-2, Age Limitation. Students below the seventh grade are not eligible to compete in athletics with students in grades 7 or 8 (or higher).

### **Events Must Take Place Outdoors (Track)**

All events must take place outdoors.

### **Cross Country Course (Cross Country)**

The maximum course length may be 3,200M

# Track & Field Order of Events

The order of events in high school meets shall be as listed below: This bulletin supersedes the Order of Events in the NFHS Track and Field Rules Book. The javelin is **NOT** an approved event and is not permitted in high school competitions. Rule 2 - Scoring and Ties; exceptions to this rule are not permissible.

## Running Events

### Girls

- 1 - Relay - 4x800 meters or 4x880 yards
- 3 - Hurdles - 100 meters (33" high)
- 5 - Dash - 100 meters
- 7 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 9 - Run - 1600 meters or One Mile
- 11 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 13 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 15 - Low Hurdles - 300 meters (30" high)
- 17 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 19 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards
- 21 - Run - 3200 meters or Two Miles \*\*
- 23 - Relay - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

### Boys

- 2 - Relay - 4x800 meters or 4x880 yards
- 4 - High Hurdles - 110 meters or 120 yards (39" high)
- 6 - Dash - 100 meters
- 8 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 10 - Run 1600 meters or One Mile
- 12 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 14 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 16 - Hurdles - 300 meters (36" high)
- 18 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 20 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards
- 22 - Run - 3200 meters or Two Miles \*\*
- 24 - Relay - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

**Note:** When running simultaneous girls and boys meets, events shall be competed in the order indicated by the numerical sequence above.

\*\*Anytime the 3200M is not being competed or is being competed at a different point in the meet, a rest period of 20 minutes from the beginning of the girls 200 M to the start of the first heat of the girls 4x400M MUST be given if athletes competing in the 200M are also in the 4x400 relay.

## Field Events (order is optional)

### Girls

- Discus (1K) (2 lbs. 3.27 oz.)
- High Jump
- Long Jump
- Shot Put (4K) (8 lbs. 13 oz.)
- Pole Vault

### Boys

- Discus (1.6K) (3 lbs. 8.5 oz)
- High Jump
- Long Jump
- Shot Put (5.4K) (12 lbs.)
- Pole Vault

**Throwing Sectors:** The degree Sector required is 34.92 degrees for Shot Put and Discus (per 2007).

## **\*Allowable Additional Events (Track & Field)\* Added in 2024**

In addition to events outlined in the approved OHSAA Order of Events, schools in Ohio may compete in additional events as outlined in NFHS Rules 1 & 9. All changes to the standard OHSAA order of events from the previous slide must be communicated per the below section.

- Triple Jump must be competed following NFHS Rule 6, 7&9
- Javelin and Hammer Throw are PROHIBITED in Ohio.
- "Special Events" must be competed under USATF Youth Rules as outlined in NFHS Rule 9 unless the OHSAA has stated otherwise (mixed gender relays).
  - Mixed Gender Relays must follow the rules as outlined in this manual.
- **\*NEW in 2024\*** In addition to the above, the 5,000M can be competed per the below regulations.
  - All schools have been notified in advance of the change of order of events.
  - USATF Youth Rules are followed.

- The 5,000M and 3,200M cannot be competed at the same meet regardless of the number of days the meet spans.
- Any event not found in NFHS Rule 1 & 7, with the exception of the 5,000M, CANNOT be competed in Ohio.
- Certified Officials may not officiate non-approved events and should not allow events to take place in any manner not outlined in the rules (including safety cages).
- None of these additional events will be part of any tournament competition, only those events in the OHSAA order of events will be part of the tournament.

\*Not all of the above information above is new 2024, only the information related to the 5,000M is new. The rest of the information was added to the manual for clarification purposes.

### **Changing the Order of Events or the Actual Events Competed (Track & Field)**

In dual, triangular and quadrangular meets, the listed events must be competed unless the changes are listed on the contest contract signed by the school administrators/certified OHSAA assignor or communicated well in advance of the meet. If there is no exception, schools shall expect to compete in each of the events as listed. If some events are not offered or cannot be competed, the offending school, will forfeit the points.

Invitationals must list their order of events in advance of schools entering their meet; the entering of the meet is the acceptance of the modified order of events.

### **Events Must Take Place Outdoors (Track)**

All events must take place outdoors.

# OHSAA Track & Cross Country Regulations

## Use of Video/Electronic Systems for Making Officiating Decisions (Track & Cross Country)

In accordance with NFHS Rule 3-2-7, video replay or television monitoring equipment **shall not** be used to make decisions related to the competition except for finish line placement. Coaches and/or others associated with the team are prohibited from showing video to officials per NFHS Rule 3-2-8. Coaches and/or others associated with the team that show officials video or attempt to show officials video are subject to disqualification from the meet (ejection) per NFHS Rule 3-2-8. Disqualification from the meet does also bring administrative penalties including suspension from future competitions. Officials must follow the ejection process as outlined in this document.

## Modified Scoring (Cross Country)

In accordance with NFHS Rule 8-2-3 the OHSAA has adopted modified scoring. Modified scoring is a scoring procedure that would allow teams with less than five runners to score in a regular season meet. It can only be used when approved by a meet's games committee and all participating schools have been notified in advance of the meet verbally, in writing, or in the contest contract. Modified scoring does not allow games committees to change/modify any other element of the scoring process. Modified scoring shall not be used in OHSAA tournament competitions. If modified scoring is used, it **MUST** follow the procedure outlined below:

After runners in excess of each team's allotted 7 athletes are removed and the remaining runners re-ranked, the next place in the ranking will be added to each team with 4 runners. The next 2 places will be added to each team with 3 runners, and so on to give each team 5 places to be scored. This means that all teams without 5 finishers shall be awarded the same position(s) for their next scoring position(s). Therefore, if there are 109 finishers (after removing those who are not in their team's top 7), ALL teams with fewer than 5 finishers will be awarded 110th place, ALL those with fewer than 4 finishers will also be awarded 111th place, etc. until 113th place is awarded to all teams having only one runner.

## Participation Limitation (Track)

**A competitor may compete in a maximum of four track and field events.** The four events may be any combination of track and field events, including relays, or may be four track events or four field events. **This regulation applies to all competitions – regular season and OHSAA tournaments. NOTE: Once an athlete has been “checked in,” this is officially one of his/her four (4) allowable events even if he/she changes their mind at the last moment.**

An athlete who exceeds the participation limitation shall be disqualified. The forfeiture bylaws apply as written in Bylaw 11. In support of this, NFHS Rule 4-2-PEN specifies that a competitor who participates in more than the four allowable events shall forfeit all places and points and shall be disqualified from further competition in the meet/tournament. In relay events, the team's relay points and places shall also be forfeited.

**The four-event limitation applies to single and multi-day competitions – regular season and tournaments.** An athlete who has competed in an event and qualifies for the semi-finals or finals of that particular event may not withdraw from that event to compete in another event unless he/she still remains under the maximum of four allowable events.

*Please see the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade section of this manual for information on participation limits at that level.*

## **No Contest (Track)**

When a meet/event is canceled (by the meet referee in council with the games committee) due to weather, darkness when no lights are available, damage to the venue after the beginning of warm-up, or other issues out of the control of the meet management that occur after the meet/event begins; the below must be followed:

### Track Meet

- If 60% or more of the scheduled events have been completed and scored, the meet must be scored based on the completed events and will count the same as a fully completed meet. Any events not being scored per below would not be included in this score.
- If less than 60% of the scheduled events have been completed, the meet must not be scored and will be considered a "no contest". The meet shall not be included in won-lost records, shall not count towards a student/coach fulfilling any ejection consequence, shall not count towards a student fulfilling his/her transfer consequence, and shall not count towards the number of maximum allowable regular season contests permitted.

### Individual Events

- In vertical field events:
  - If all competitors who have elected to participate at opening height have completed their trials at opening height, the event should be scored based on the performances at the last height completed by all competitors who have not been eliminated from competition. The event will count as one of the allowed events for each competitor. Competitors who have passed and have not yet entered competition will be excluded from the scoring and the event will not count towards their maximum events allowed.
  - If all competitors who have elected to participate at opening height have not completed their trials at opening height, the event should be scored as a no contest and the event will not count towards the competitor's allowed number of events.
- In horizontal field events:
  - If all competitors have completed 50% or more of their attempts (when four attempts are given) or two thirds of their preliminary attempts (when competing finals), the event shall be scored based on the performances through the last round completed by all competitors. The event will count as one of the allowed events for each competitor.
  - If all competitors have not completed 50% of their attempts (when four attempts are given) or two thirds of their preliminary attempts (when competing finals), the event should be scored as a no contest and the event will not count towards the competitor's allowed number of events.
- In any running event:
  - If all scheduled sections or preliminary heats have been completed for a running event, that event shall be scored. The event will count as one of the allowed events for each competitor.
  - If all scheduled sections or preliminary heats have not been completed for a running event, the event should be scored as a no contest and the event will not count towards the competitor's allowed number of events.

Any events canceled due to safety/facility issues before the start of competition shall follow NFHS competition rules. Related to tournament competition, all events must be completed; you cannot have a no-contest.

## **No Contest (Cross Country)**

Any race not competed due to weather or darkness shall be scored as a no-contest. Related to tournament competition, all events must be completed; you cannot have a no-contest.

### Participation Limitation (Cross Country)

Competitors may only compete in one race/meet on the same day. Violation of this rule is not the responsibility of the contest official to track/monitor, and violations will be handled by OHSAA staff.

### Ninth Grade Students/Students Below Ninth Grade (Track & Field and Cross Country)

Ninth grade students in all schools are high school students and shall compete in athletics in accordance with high school bylaws and regulations. Ninth grade students are not permitted to compete in interscholastic competition on the same team or squad with students below ninth grade.

Students below the ninth grade are not eligible to compete in athletics with high school students unless they meet an exception as outlined in Bylaw 4-2, Age Limitation.

### Referee's Jurisdiction (Track & Cross Country)

By rule, the referee shall remain available for 30 minutes after the conclusion of the competition in case a protest has been filed or if there are questions still unanswered. If there are no protests or unanswered questions, officials may leave earlier.

### Inclement Weather (Track & Cross Country)

**\*NOTE:** At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

The thirty-minute rule remains in place. Any time you hear thunder, there is an automatic 30-minute wait. When lightning is seen, play would be suspended as normal and the 30-minute count would begin. The note simply allows coaches and umpires to determine whether to continue play if there is no thunder and you can determine that the lightning is not a threat. This is only applicable at night.

- **30-minute rule:** Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes.

**Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count shall reset the clock and another count shall begin.**

### Officiating Requirements (Track & Cross Country)

A minimum of one OHSAA Class 1 Track and Field official is required at all high school track & field and cross country contests. This official shall be the meet referee. It is the responsibility of the host member school to ensure compliance with this important regulation. If the school delegates the responsibility of contracting officials to a certified OHSAA assignor, then the responsibility for compliance rests with the certified assignor. The penalty for failure to adhere to this regulation is a fine of up to \$100 for the school or certified assignor and the officials involved who are not properly licensed. Registered officials should always be used, if available.

## No Jury of Appeals in Ohio (Track & Cross Country)

In 1999, the NFHS rules changed thereby eliminating the choice of using the Jury of Appeals either as a final arbiter or in an advisory capacity. Therefore, in OHSAA track and field and cross country competition, regular season and tournament, no Jury of Appeals shall be appointed. The games committee, as per rule, may serve in this capacity but may only advise the referee. **The referee shall have the final decision in all appeals. Refer to NFHS Rule 3-5 for additional information on the appeals process.**

**Please note:** In all situations involving ineligible participation, the Commissioner of the OHSAA retains final authority to rule on such participation. The Commissioner has the authority to disqualify participants who are ineligible under the Bylaws and sports regulations of the OHSAA.

## Required Roster (Track & Field and Cross Country)

Each school must provide a roster of athletes.

- If the meet has been managed using software like MileSplit, Baumspage, etc., then the coach does not need to provide an additional roster as it has already been uploaded electronically.
- If the meet has not used registration software, a paper roster must be provided.
- Competition must be delayed until the roster is provided.

This section has been updated. It is NOT new.

## Event Entry Limitations (Track & Field)

In all non-invitational /non-championship meets, each school is entitled to enter four competitors in individual events. The decision to increase the entry limitation shall be decided by the games committee, either in the contest contract or verbally in advance of the meet. Contest officials must be notified of any increase in entry limitations (greater than four) before accepting their officiating contract. For invitational and championship meets, the games committee retains the ability to limit the number of entries a school may have for an event. These limitations must be shared in the contest contract or verbally in advance of the meet.

According to NFHS Rule 4-2-4-d, in a relay race, only one team per school may be designated as a scoring team.

NOTE: In Ohio, due to our prohibition on exhibition competition, this means that when more than one relay team from the same school is competing, **NO TEAM** shall be designated as the scoring team. Each team that is entered by a school shall have the opportunity to be the scoring team. However, only one (1) relay team from a competing school may score. No conferences, leagues or individual schools have the authority to set aside these event entry limitations.

NOTE: Entry limitation shall be decided by the games committee, either in the contest contract or in advance of the meet. If no decision has been made and no agreement can be reached, each school is entitled to one relay team.

## Sub- or Non-Varsity Competition (Track & Field)

If the coaches cannot agree on the maximum number of athletes to compete in each event, extra athletes may participate as junior varsity or reserve competitors in the **same event**. However, an athlete is limited to a maximum of three events in 7-8th grade competition and four events in high school competition. An athlete may participate in both junior varsity and varsity competition on the same day, provided the maximum event participation is not exceeded. The athletes must be eligible to score, and JV or reserve races must be scored.



### Sub- or Non-Varsity Competition (Cross Country)

There is no distinction between varsity and sub-varsity participation when a single team from a school is entered into a contest. All members of said team are subject to the same uniform rules. At the meet manager's discretion, a school may enter more than one team in the competition; pending the same opportunity has been given to all participating schools and all teams are eligible to score.

### Boys and Girls Competing Simultaneously (Track & Field)

Boys and girls' competitions may be competed simultaneously provided the head coaches unanimously agree or if the referee deems it necessary. When events are competed together, they **MUST** be scored separately.

### Pre-Meet Conference and Coaches Verification (Track & Field and Cross Country)

Coaches must provide a signed verification of sporting conduct and legal equipment/uniforms to the referee prior to the contest.

- For ALL meets using MileSplit, the verification form was signed during registration for the meet and NO additional form is needed.
- This new process should help eliminate waste and streamline the process for coaches and officials.
- For the OHSAA Tournaments, coaches will complete the verification form on MileSplit when registering for the District Tournament. The form will then follow advancers through to the State Tournament, and no additional forms will be necessary.
- If the meet was not hosted on MileSplit, a verification form **MUST** be completed and turned in. Electronic collection of these forms (Google Form, etc.) is allowed.

### Multiple Day Meet (Track & Field)

A meet scheduled for either a one-day period or more than one day counts as one meet. This applies even though the days of the meet are not consecutive. NOTE: The entry limitation of a maximum of four events applies even though a meet is competed on two days.

### Scratch or Exhibition Competition & Eligibility (Track & Field and Cross Country)

"Scratch" or "exhibition" competition is not permitted under OHSAA Bylaws, all athletes must be eligible to score. When a student participates in a scheduled track and field competition, participation limitations do apply. **EXCEPTION:** The OHSAA Board of Directors may authorize exhibition competition in events within specific sports in order to accommodate students with disabilities without affecting team scoring in those sports. When authorized, a waiver from the OHSAA will be provided by the school/coach

No school, coach, athletic administrator, or any other individual may change the rules by mutual agreement. Officials do not have the authority to waive the rules.

**It is NOT an official's responsibility to interpret eligibility rules or keep track of entry limitations.**

### The Use of Lead Carts (Cross Country)

If the games committee authorizes the use of a lead vehicle, they **MUST** ensure that:

- Vehicle is operated by a responsible adult, no one under the age of 18
- No students, even if they are over the age of 18
- There is a safe distance maintained between the vehicle and the lead runners.
- Is fast enough to not cause a risk to the student athletes.
- No passengers are allowed unless approved by the referee
- A time clock may be carried on the back of the vehicle if it is properly secured.

- Time clocks on lead vehicles is PROHIBITED at tournament competition

### **Medical Devices (Track & Field and Cross Country)**

Medical devices can be utilized by athletes in track and field as it is considered a non-contact sport. These devices include but are not limited to inhalers, EpiPens, insulin pumps and heart monitors.

Per OHSAA policy, “Such medical necessity shall be specified in writing and signed by the prescribing physician, and the device shall be padded and securely attached to the player’s body underneath the uniform. The medical statement shall be shown to the head contest official (referee) prior to the athlete’s being permitted to participate.”

- No waiver is needed from the OHSAA office.
- The doctor’s note should be looked at and returned; it should not be collected.
- Inhalers & EpiPens can be carried by an athlete and do not need to be secured under the uniform. They can be carried in a fanny pack.
- Water cannot be carried in a bottle or camel back pack by an athlete; this is considered an aid.
- Water can be distributed by meet management to all runners as allowed by NFHS rules.

“No medical appliance and/or medical device shall pose any risk of injury or hazard to the student-athlete, teammates and/or opponents. The head contest official (referee) has jurisdiction to disallow any medical appliance and/or medical device deemed unsafe for athletic competition.”

Headgear worn for medical reasons is **NOT** considered a medical device and **DOES** require a waiver from the OHSAA office if it does not comply with headgear regulations.

### **Implements Used in Field Events (Track & Field)**

All rules relative to safety in field events must be strictly adhered to. In addition, in those events in which implements must be weighed and gauged or certified as legal (shot put and discus), once those implements are certified, competitors may not remove them until the competition has concluded. **Only legal implements, as inspected by the implement inspector, shall be used IN WARM-UPS AND COMPETITION (Rule 3-19-2).** Per NFHS Rule, athletes may not use implements that are less than the minimum specifications or exceed the maximum specifications (i.e., college implements) during warm-up since **ONLY NFHS legal and approved implements are acceptable.**

The use of the term “common implements” means that the games committee has determined that competitors may use only those implements provided by the competition site. In all other circumstances, competitors may provide their own implements that shall be determined to be legal as mandated by the games committee in accordance with NFHS rules. No official has the authority to compel an athlete to share his or her implement with another competitor. **Rule 6-2-10a-** allows for an additional trial when an implement breaks and becomes non-compliant during competition due to no fault of the competitor.

In the pole vault, per Ohio modification, the Head Vault official provided that he presently holds a verified and valid OHSAA track and field officiating permit, as well as the field referee or head field judge, may verify the legality of poles.

**Pole Vault Verification** - NFHS Rule requires that prior to competition the coach must verify that each of that school’s pole vaulters and poles meet the requirements specified in the article that pertains to protecting the safety of the vaulter. Each state association is authorized to determine its own procedure regarding coach’s verification. For several years, Ohio has used a procedure requiring the coach to stipulate to the head pole vault event judge the weight of each vaulter and the pole rating of each pole submitted for competition for each vaulter. **Each school that conducts the pole vault event shall adopt this form or develop its own form to maintain compliance with this important rule.**

## Team Competition in Field Events (Track & Field)

NFHS rule 5-10-1 clearly identifies relays as races between teams of four competitors, not one of whom may run more than one distance (leg)." Therefore, there is no such event as a relay field event. The following interpretations are made to apply to "**Team Competition in Field Events.**" Invitational Meets sponsoring team field events shall determine the number permitted to participate for each team (2 or 3 or 4).

If a team enters and competes the required number (2 or 3 or 4), the team score shall be determined by adding the individual best of each team member.

If one or more team members fail to attain the starting height in pole vault or high jump, or fouls all trials in long jump, shot or discus, the team total is still determined by adding the best efforts of all team members. Thus, in a three-person team, the team score could be from the efforts of two members, and if the total is high enough, the team could still score points in that event.

In the team pole vault or high jump, the following procedure is recommended in the case of a tie in team competition:

- A. The Games Committee may establish that the tie remains a tie.
- B. If the Games Committee adopts a tie-breaking procedure, the following procedure is recommended.
  - i. The team that has the competitor with the best performance of all competitors shall be awarded the higher place.
  - ii. If the tie still remains, the team that has the competitor with the fewest misses at the height last cleared shall be awarded the higher place.
  - iii. If the tie still remains, the team that has the competitor **tied for the best performance** with the lowest total number of unsuccessful trials throughout the competition shall be awarded the higher place.
  - iv. If the tie still remains, the team with the lowest total of unsuccessful trials throughout the competition shall be awarded the higher place.
  - v. If i, ii, iii, iv fail to break the tie, the result remains a tie.
- C. In meets with limited entries, in the discus, long jump and shot put, the games committee may allow only four trials with no final trials as specified in Rule 6-2-7.

## Mixed Gender Relays & Mixed Gender Team Field Events

With the addition of Mixed Relays to NFHS Rule 7-2-1, the OHSAA has adopted the below format to serve as guidance that **MUST BE** followed when these events are competed.

- Waiver is obtained from sports administrator (Dustin Ware) allowing the events.
- All schools have been notified in advance of the change to the order of events per NFHS and OHSAA policy.
- The below competition rules are followed:
  - 4x100MR, 4x200MR, 4x400MR, 4x800MR, 4x1600MR, Distance Medley, Sprint Medley
    - Female athletes **MUST** be the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> leg
    - Male athletes **MUST** be the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> leg
  - Shuttle Hurdles
    - Female athletes **MUST** be the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> leg
    - Male athletes **MUST** be the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> leg
  - Team Field Events
    - **MUST** contain an equal number of male and female athletes

- When throwing implements are used, they MUST follow NFHS and OHSAA competition regulations
- All events MUST be scored
  - 50% of the points awarded to each gender
- All NFHS rules apply to competition
- NO meet, conference, official or district may set aside these rules

## **Step Up Starting Procedure (Cross Country)**

### **Before the race**

Final instructions are given (including uniform warning), and athletes should remove warm-ups upon return.

### **Runners to the line**

- Once runners return to the line, no additional run-outs are allowed.
- Runners line up 3 meters behind the line and wait for starting commands.
- Clerks/Assistant starters may walk the starting line to ensure athletes are ready BEFORE the long whistle blast ONLY, if they are not able to confirm athlete readiness verbally.

### **The Start**

- Hold the red flag and starting device parallel to the ground
- Signal with one long whistle blast. The red flag and starting device are slowly raised overhead at the same time
- Runners step up to the line and become motionless
- The assistant starters, positioned on the ends and/or behind the line signal with a white flag when all runners are motionless
  - The starting device must not be fired until receiving the white flag from the assistant starters. A recall should be issued by the assistant if the starting device is fired before they signal with the white flag.
- The starter fires the starting device and drops the red flag at the same time.
- Move to the side as quickly as possible
  - If moving to the side is not possible, please stay motionless and let the runners know you will not be moving in your instructions.
- Fire the starting device again if a recall is needed within first 100M

## **Cross Country Course (Cross Country)**

The maximum course length may be 5,000M

### **Finish Line Aids**

Finish line aids of soft wool yarn or other soft breakable or unbreakable material are prohibited.

## **Seated Athlete Guidelines (Track & Field)**

### **Seated Athlete Competition Guide**

Please visit <https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Track-Field/OHSAA-Seated-Division> for more information and to view the Seated Athlete Competition Guide.

# Uniform, Jewelry & Headgear Regulations (Track & Field and Cross Country)

## Shoes

The rules require all track and field competitors to wear on both feet shoes with an upper portion and a definitely recognizable sole and heel. The shoes must be fastened securely to the foot with laces, zippers, Velcro or other closures. Slippers and socks do not meet the rule requirements.

## Removal of Any Part of the Team Uniform

Excluding shoes, while in the area of competition as defined by the games committee, is illegal. This shall lead to a warning and if repeated, to disqualification from the event. If the incident recurs, the contestant will be disqualified from further competition in the meet. (OHSAA ejection policy would apply in this case!)

## Uniform Tops/One-Piece Uniforms

Each athlete must wear a full-length track uniform top or a one-piece uniform issued or approved by the school. Track tops must be full-length (i.e., either tucked into the bottoms or hanging BELOW the waistband of the bottoms when the athlete is standing erect). Shirts are not required to be tucked in unless they obscure a hip number. Bare midriff tops are not allowed. The top shall not be knotted or have a knot-like protrusion. Numbers are no longer required on the back of the uniform top.

## Uniform Bottoms/One-Piece Uniform

Each athlete shall wear track bottoms and/or a one-piece uniform issued or approved by the school. The loose-fitting boxer-style shorts are permitted for boys and girls. The waistband of a competitor's bottom can be rolled but must be worn above the waist as per Rule 4-3-1b4.

## Legal Items on School Uniforms

School identification on the tops and/or bottoms and one-piece uniform; athlete's name on the top of the one-piece or two-piece uniform; a single manufacturer's logo/trade name, no more than 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2 ¼ inches on each item of apparel. **NOTE: New in 2022, Rule 4-3-1 now permits logos larger than 2 ¼ or multiple logos on the waistband of a uniform bottom ONLY.** The American flag, not exceeding 2 x 3 in permitted on EACH item of uniform; one commemorative/ memorial patch is permitted per uniform subject to the same dimensions as a manufacturer's logo.

## Uniform Numbers

Uniform numbers are no longer required on the back of contestants' uniforms. It is **NOT** a uniform violation if some members of team have numbers and some do not granted all other aspects of the uniform rule are met.

## Visible Undergarments

Any visible undergarment worn under the uniform top and/or bottom is now considered a foundation garment. FOUNDATION GARMENTS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO LOGO/TRADEMARK/REFERENCE OR COLOR RESTRICTIONS (Rule 4-3-1b7). Visible items worn under both the tops and the bottoms of a uniform do not have to be the same color.

## Misc. Uniform Topics

Headgear, headbands, socks and shoes are not part of the competitors' uniforms and therefore **DO NOT** need to match.

## Additional Restrictions for Relay Races and Cross Country Competition

Each team member shall wear the same color and design of school uniform, although the length of the top, bottom or one-piece uniform may vary. Any visible undergarment worn under the uniform top and/or bottom is now considered a foundation garment. **FOUNDATION GARMENTS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO LOGO/TRADEMARK/REFERENCE OR COLOR RESTRICTIONS (Rule 4-3-1b7)**. Visible garments worn under the top/one-piece uniform and/or the bottom/one-piece uniform do not have to be the same color. If worn by more than one team member, that apparel does not need to be the same color nor necessarily the same length.

NFHS Rule 4-3-2: All relay and cross country team members must wear uniforms clearly indicating, through predominant color, school logo and color combination of all outer garments worn as a uniform, that members are from the same team. The official should be able to observe that all members are from the same team. For examples of legal and illegal uniforms, please refer to the state rules interpretation meeting. Manufacturer logos do not need to match.

## Headgear, Hair Control Devices & Headbands

Hats, caps and headbands that are; not offensive or unsporting, not abrasive or hard, properly secured, and do not pose a danger to themselves or other competitors **are allowed**. The referee may ask a competitor to remove a hat, cap or headband if it is not properly secured, if it poses a danger to the competitor/other competitors, or if it could damage equipment. The referee has the authority to decide what **is safe**.

Section 1. Competitors may wear a Navy Watch-Style knit cap.

Section 2. Competitors may not wear a hat with a bill.

Section 3. Competitors may wear a headband with or without ear protectors, provided the headband is properly secured to the head and does not interfere with another. The headband does not need to be worn as the manufacturer intended and may include decoration.

Section 4. Pole vaulters are permitted to wear helmets and safety headgear.

Hair control devices and/or hair accessories are permitted. Bandanas, pre-wrap, or other items not intended to be used as headbands or hair control devices **are legal** as long as they are not offensive or unsporting, not abrasive or hard, properly secured, and do not pose a danger to themselves or another competitor.

## Jewelry

**The prohibition of wearing jewelry has been removed from the rules for track and field and cross country competitions.** The referee may ask a competitor to remove an accessory if it is not properly secured, if it poses a danger to the competitor, or if it could damage equipment.

## Wristwatch

A wristwatch, secured to the person, may be worn in competition. While the wearing of a GPS or Smart Watch is **not** prohibited; the use of use GPS and electronic communication on the watch is prohibited per NFHS Rule 4-6-5.

## Religious Apparel

Any athlete who presents that they need to wear headgear, skirts, pants, etc. for religious purposes should be allowed to participate without delay. No waiver is needed for the wearing of any religious items regardless of if it complies with uniform rules in NFHS Rule 4. Garments worn for religious reasons (e.g. dark skirts or pants) do not need to match the color and design of uniforms worn by other relay/cross country team members.

## Important Officiating Reminders (Track & Field and Cross Country)

### Use of Firearms as Starter Pistols

Contest officials are not exempt from the state law prohibiting firearms to be brought onto school property. However, the following interpretation, obtained from OHSAA legal counsel, has been authorized to assist those officials who are using a starter's pistol for track and field competition.

Amended HB 442 is a recent amendment to O.R.C. §2923.161. See this link for the complete text of the amendment <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=124> HB 442. The conduct prohibited under this section is the "discharge of a firearm." A firearm, for purposes of this law, is defined as a weapon "capable of expelling or propelling one or more projectiles by the action of an explosive or combustible propellant." If the starter is using a "starter's pistol," that device does not meet the definition of a firearm and therefore does not fall under the conduct prohibited. Thus, the new provisions do not affect officials who use a true starter's pistol. However, those starters who use modified 22 caliber or other types of pistols to start competition run the risk of violating this code section and may have to defend their actions on the grounds provided in Section B, that is that they are "employees" with permission and their use of the pistol is within the scope of that permission. The difficulty in asserting this relationship is the "employee" vs. "independent contractor" status of officials. The OHSAA maintains that officials are independent contractors and not employees of member schools or the Association when officiating at regular season and/or tournament contests. The OHSAA Board of Directors will continue to investigate this matter in terms of prohibiting starting devices that are capable of discharging projectiles. Until such action is taken, officials are hereby advised of the risks of using those devices.

**In addition, schools should give strong consideration to the purchase of a gunless starting device in light of the strong concerns about firearms.** The OHSAA Officials Contract stipulates the following: *"The above named official is expressly authorized to bring onto school premises a **starter's pistol** for the contest as long as the same is used in connection with the event/contest identified herein. Schools that do not wish to authorize the use of starter's pistols should make gunless starting devices available for the referee/starter for cross country and track and field contests."*

### Ejection Report Forms

Officials shall file a written report with the school and the OHSAA office whenever a coach or a player is ejected from a contest. The form may be obtained online at [ohsaa.org/officials/officialsreport.htm](http://ohsaa.org/officials/officialsreport.htm). In addition, the official should telephone or email the school principal or athletic administrator no later than the next business day after the ejection unless the official has notified that administrator at the match site. The offending school (coach, athletic administrator or principal) must file a written report with the OHSAA anytime a coach or player is ejected from a contest, home or away. See the Sports Regulations enclosed with this mailing for the full text of the regulations governing player and coach ejections.

### Pre-Season Preparations

We have encouraged coaches to invite local officials to meet with their teams during pre-season workouts. It allows the officials to meet the athletes and discuss new rules. It gives athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to competition days. We also recommended inviting an official(s) to a pre-season meeting with team parents. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for parents to learn more about the sport. Many of you already participate in such activities, but for those that do not, please get involved!

## Officials Uniform Requirements (Regular & Post Season)

- Black, unadorned officiating slacks/shorts/skirts (no jogging suits, stretch/yoga or denim), plain (no stripes, designs, etc).
- Short sleeved or long-sleeved white polo shirt with the \*OHSAA logo embroidered or sublimated on the right chest (3"x3"), optional US Flag on right sleeve. On left sleeve, "OHSAA Registered Track & Field Official" in black letters.
- When a jacket, pullover, vest or other outer garment is worn it shall be black and unadorned except for the official \*OHSAA logo on the left side (the local/state association initials, name and/or logo) may be on the right side) and the US Flag may be placed on the right sleeve, 4" down from the shoulder. The official's name may be on the right side.
- Jewelry may be worn and visible, including wedding rings and/or medical alert identification (bracelet or necklace). A religious medallion is permitted, provided it is not visible. A watch is permitted to be worn during a meet. In general, jewelry may be worn provided it is safe, tasteful, and not distracting. Meet management may request an official to remove jewelry if he/she deems it to be unsafe or a distraction.
- Rain suites/rain gear are not subject to OHSAA logo and uniform guidelines. However, they may not contain the initials, name and/or logo of other governing bodies.
- Hats are not required as part of the uniform. However, when one is worn it must meet one of following criteria:
  - a) Be unadorned other than a manufacturer's logo
  - b) Include the \*OHSAA logo
  - c) Include the initials, name and/or logo of your local official's association
  - d) Include the initials, name and/or logo of the Ohio Track and Field and Cross Country Officials Association
  - e) Include the initials, name and/or logo of a OHSAA level tournament or invitational.
- Name tags/badges are not a required part of the uniform. However, when one is worn it must meet one of following criteria:
  - a) Be unadorned other than a manufacturer's logo
  - b) Include the \*OHSAA logo
  - c) Include the initials, name and/or logo of your local official's association
  - d) Include the initials, name and/or logo of the Ohio Track and Field and Cross Country Officials Association
  - e) Include the initials, name and/or logo of an OHSAA level tournament or invitational.
- No items containing the name, initials or logo of other governing bodies can be worn.

**Any official out of uniform in the regular season must be asked to change. If they cannot make their uniform legal, they should be treated as a "non-official" for the meet. Any official who is out of uniform for a tournament must be asked to change. If they can't make their uniform legal, they should be sent home without pay.**

\* Officials may only wear items with the "OHSAA Officiating Logo (old logo)" when officiating. Wearing anything with the "Administrative & Marketing Logo" (new logo), when officiating, is prohibited. For the purposes of this document, "OHSAA Logo" refers to the officiating logo.



## Comments to News Media

Each year, unpleasant situations arise as a result of comments made to the news media by coaches. The OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws reads in part, "Great care shall be exercised in the selection of officials, well in advance of the contest and agreed upon by schools involved" and goes on to say, "Public criticism of officials is a direct reflection upon those who were responsible for assigning the officials to the game. Officials/Umpires are trained and expected to make no derogatory comments directly to the media or through the use of social media regarding other officials, the players, coaches or schools.

Coaches and participants are expected to follow the same procedure and make no derogatory public comments directly to the media or through the use of social media regarding not only the officials, but also the players, coaches or schools. Failure to follow this request will result in penalties as outlined in Bylaw 11.

## **Notes From the NFHS on 2024 Rules Changes**

**3-8-1** — As technology continues to evolve in the sport of track and field and cross country, not all Fully Automated Timing systems require separate operators and evaluators. The change gives the Games Committee and meet management the ability to set timing official requirements for each individual meet.

**4-2-1 NOTE (NEW)** — This change gives state associations the flexibility to modify the number of permitted events for each athlete beyond four events, provided it does not exceed six events.

**5-3-1, 9-4-1 (NEW)** — With the number of varying track sizes in the high school space the change clarifies that all track staggers are dependent on the geometry of each individual track, and a competent surveyor should determine the lane staggers.

**5-7-4c, d NOTE (NEW); 8-4-4 NOTE 2 (NEW)** — This change provides a clear definition of a false start and how it should be consistently officiated. Extraneous motion before the device is fired does not necessarily require a false start to be charged unless the runner leaves their mark with hand or foot after the set command or leaves their mark with a forward motion without the starting device being fired.

**5-14-1, 2** — The rules change offers clearer guidance to officials and umpires officiating hurdle events and that if a hurdle is displaced by hand this is an infraction.

**6-2-2d (NEW)** — This clarifies for officials and event judges that in the vertical jumps when a competitor enters for the first time, at any height and no matter the number of competitors left, this competitor is only permitted one minute for their attempt. **6-3-2b** — The addition offers guidance to officials when two or more tied competitors withdraw from the competition/jump-off at the same time.

**6-3-2b NOTES (NEW)** — The new note explains that an athlete withdrawing from a jumpoff concedes the higher place but does not negate the performance in the event nor is it unsporting to simply withdraw in this scenario. The addition helps explain how to officiate these scenarios.

**6-4-1, 6-5-1, 6-6-1** — The rules change offers flexibility to athletes in throws events to apply tape to their fingers provided the fingers are not taped together and all fingers can move independently. Additionally, it permits athletes to wear a wrist wrap as long as there are no artificial aids within the wrap such as hard plastic pieces to keep the wrist stiff.

**8-1, 8-5** — The rules change clarifies the course layout for ease of use by meet managers and additionally reorganizes section on teams into articles for easier reading.

**9-6-1 (NEW)** — The rules change offers guidance on the relay exchange zone in indoor track and field with the varying sizes of indoor tracks across the country.

**Cases related to the 2024 NFHS Rule Changes can be found on page 3 of the 2024 NFHS Case Book and on Page 4 of the 2024 NFHS Rule Book.**

## **2024 NFHS Points of Emphasis**

### **Fair Starts**

It is the starter's responsibility to ensure a fair and legal start and anticipate problems. The interval between the set command and the firing of the starting device should be approximately two seconds. After a starter gives the order "set," if any competitor is in motion, the starter shall not fire the starting device. Firing the starting device too soon doesn't allow athletes to get ready, and firing the starting device too slow also creates a situation of unfairness.

Starters may for any reason cancel a start by directing all competitors to "Stand Up." The following are some of the reasons that a starter may cancel a start in races with legs of less than 800 meters:

- Noise at the start line,
- Starting block problem,
- Obstruction on the track,
- Slow athlete getting set,
- Misfire of starting pistol,
- Hands on the line,
- Extraneous movement after the set command. In distance races the following are some of the reasons that a starter could halt or recall the start.
- Runners not steady,
- Toes on the line,
- Failure to come to the line in a timely manner,
- Impeding a position of another athlete,
- Fall during first 100 meters due to contact.

Starters play a huge role in fair, consistent and legal starts for student-athletes across all events.

### **Sportsmanship**

Sportsmanship rules help officials, parents, coaches, and student-athletes develop and reinforce values that apply to the development of the whole person. Respect for others, honesty, fair play, learning, and understanding the rules are critical life skills that, when practiced, will enhance any individual's character. The absence of good sportsmanship jeopardizes one of the fundamental principles of participation in education-based athletics and complicates the team-building process. A sportsmanship priority is keeping winning and losing in perspective. Understanding that losing with dignity is an important lesson, everyone must learn and practice. A collaborative, working relationship should be a priority between officials, game administration, coaches, and student-athletes to promote good sportsmanship during a track meet. This includes treating people with respect and using appropriate language, actions, and language that build people up and values each person.

It is critical to remember that winning means you were the best version of yourself that day. The beauty of track and field is that one constantly tests themselves against one's best time, height, or distance. Continual

improvement is a hallmark of successful student-athletes, programs, teams, and coaches. This improvement also involves positive sporting behavior, a fundamental ingredient of education-based high school sports.

### **Cross Country Safety**

Training for cross country is unique in that there are so many options afforded to the runner(s) to accomplish their workouts. Not being limited to the track allows the runners access to parks, city streets, highways and country roads. However, each of these options creates safety concerns that all runners and coaches should keep in mind. Workouts and runs should be fun, relaxing, carefree experiences. Sadly, the need for runner safety tips is evidenced by a dramatic increase in pedestrian deaths in the United States, as well as eight reported running-related motor vehicle crashes resulting in nine deaths and two disabling injuries among middle school and high school cross country and track and field runners between 2011 and 2021.

It is critical that administrators, coaches and athletes promote and practice safety and risk minimization strategies as cross country runners share the road with vehicles and drivers that have become increasingly distracted on the roads. Some key safety measures that can be promoted by school coaches and others to their cross country runners include:

- Using sidewalks when available or run facing traffic;
- Staying alert and avoid wearing headphones and using electronic devices, including cell phones;
- Crossing roads at crosswalks and intersections, when available. If not, cross at a well-lit location;
- Avoiding running when it is dark. If it is dark, wear bright, reflective materials and/or use a flashlight or head lamp;
- Following the rules of the road;
- Avoiding running along eastbound roads at sunrise or along westbound roads at sunset.
- Providing a safety orientation for first-year runners;
- Running in pairs;
- Never running against traffic lights;
- Avoiding running in higher traffic speed areas;
- Running during lower traffic times when running along a road; and
- Avoiding loitering along the road before and after runs.

Coaches need to plan when developing a road route where stop lights, routes and heavy traffic exist.

Educating the athletes on where to go for safety in case of weather, emergency situations and hydration stops is crucial to athlete safety

## NFHS Permitted State Adoptions from Ohio (Track & Field and Cross Country)

The OHSAA has maintained a stance of being “100% compliant” with NFHS Track & Field Rules. The NFHS Rules carefully permit each state the right to adopt certain rules that are specific to that state and are known as “**State Adoptions.**” These “State Adoptions” do not cause any fundamental change in the contest from state to state. These permitted track & field “State Adoptions,” and Ohio’s decision on the adoptions are as follows:

### High School Modifications

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Modification</b>
Rule 1-3	Javelin and Hammer Throw are not permitted in Ohio.
Rule 3-2-3a	In High School, the referee/starter is required to be a Class 1 registered official; In 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade the referee/starter may be a Class 3 registered official.
Rule 3-2-6	Conferences may not adopt special rules for interrupted events
Rule 3-2-1 3-2-4k 3-5	No Jury of Appeals in Ohio
Rule 3-4-1	Referee MUST be Class 1 registered official for high school meets (recommended for middle school)
Rule 4-1-3	Field event contestants must report before the start of their flight. For events run as “open pit” the start of their flight is the start of competition.
Rule 4-2-2	PENALTY: When athletes exceed the participation limitation, the team is penalized as if they had used an ineligible athlete
Rule 4-2-4	OHSAA has established limitations as described in the Track and Field Manual. Schools and Conferences may not put aside these event entry limitations.
Rule 4-2-4-d	Teams CANNOT designate in advance which team will score in relays; however, only one team from each school may score
Rule 4-3-1a3	Spikes are limited to ½” unless the games committee stipulates a shorter length.
Rule 4-3	Head gear may be worn, including but not limited to headbands (with or without sequins) and/or ear covers and navy watch style caps.
Rule 5-2-4	In TOURNAMENT competition, the 4x400 meter relay shall start using a 3-turn stagger, the 4x800 relay and the 800 meter run shall use a 2-turn stagger, and the 1600 and 3200 meter run shall use a 1-turn stagger
Rule 5-8-2	Finish line aids are NOT permitted

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Modification</b>
Rule 6-2-10	In “team field events,” each athlete participating in horizontal events shall get 4 attempts with no finals
Rule 6-3-2b	Jump offs for qualifying places in tournaments are NOT tie breakers, and those involved in the jump off shall be allowed a reasonable warm-up after the competition is completed and before the jump off begins. If the tie for the qualifying position(s) is KNOWN to exist before the bar is raised to compete for higher places, those tied for the qualifying place(s) shall be allowed to make their fourth attempt before the bar is raised.
Rules 6-8-23 & 6-2-13a	In the event of a broken pole, competitors are allowed one run through without a bar with a replacement pole
Rule 6-8-17	The head pole vault judge who holds a valid OHSAA T&F officiating permit may be designated to certify the legality of poles
<b>Rule 7-2-1</b>	<b>The 5,000M is an allowable special event per the regulations listed in this document.</b>
Rule -8-2-3	The OHSAA has accepted modified scoring.

### Middle School Modifications

Order/Events: A revised order of events is specified in this manual. This revised order shall be used unless schools otherwise agree.

### **Clarification On Appeals (Track & Field and Cross Country)**

NFHS Rule 3-5-1 stipulates that a Jury of Appeals, **if appointed**, shall serve as the final board of appeals. When the NFHS changed this rule in 1999 and designated the Jury of Appeals as the final arbiter of all appeals with authority to overrule the referee, the OHSAA determined that no Jury of Appeals should be appointed in any contests sponsored by the member schools of the OHSAA in the sports of Cross Country and Track and Field. **OHSAA Bylaws requires that the decisions of the contest officials (in Cross Country and Track and Field, the Referee) are final.**

In OHSAA Tournament competition and many invitational tournaments, a Games Committee may be appointed. The Referee always retains the option to consult with members of the Games Committee as well as Head Finish Evaluators utilizing fully automatic timing systems in rendering decisions. By rule, when the situation under consideration is not specifically covered by the NFHS rules, the Referee may also confer with the Head Umpire and/or the Head Field Referee or a Head Event Judge.

Regarding perceived or real failure of the **approved** F.A.T. systems (primary and all back-up systems), including microchips in the Cross Country event, the referee has the authority to hold up the official results until the correct results can be ascertained from either the primary system or the back-up system(s). **This is applicable whether an appeal has been lodged or not.**

Appeals concerning correction of errors that result from a failure of the F.A.T. system or systems, a misapplication of the rules or failure to follow the prescribed conditions of competition shall be filed within 30 minutes after results have been posted or made official. **However, it is not necessary for an appeal to be filed** if, in the opinion of the referee or other contest officials, there has been an error in any of these situations, including but not limited to a failure of the F.A.T. system, which results in the misplacement of student-

athletes. The primary responsibility of officials is to ensure fair competition and to correct errors whenever possible. To this end, it is required that the referee remains at the competition site for at least 30 minutes after the posting or announcement of the results.

## Ejection Procedure (Track & Field and Cross Country)

- **ALL ejections REQUIRE a report to be completed and filed with the OHSAA.**
- **Ejection Reports are completed and submitted electronically. This automatically sends the report to the school.**
- In the event of a coach or player ejection, he/she is ejected from ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection PLUS all contests at all levels until two regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level of the ejection or disqualification. Ejected coaches must also pay a \$100 fine and complete the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) "Teaching and Modeling Behavior" online course within 30 days of the ejection. The responsibility for compliance rests with the school's administration.
- Ejected **COACHES** are required to LEAVE the premises immediately. If no assistant coach is present, the game is over and the score stands 'as is.'
- Ejected **PLAYERS** are to remain in the BENCH AREA under the supervision of the coach.
- As of 2001 – Any player or coach ejected for fighting is ejected from ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection and will be ineligible for all contests at all levels until **FOUR** regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification.
- **ALL EJECTIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT PERMITTED TO BE APPEALED** per the OHSAA's Board of Directors.
- Though every ejection has its own story, do not call the OHSAA office asking for an appeal of the ejection. It will not and cannot be overturned. The circumstances surrounding the ejection can and should be expressed on the "School Response Form" that will be received by the school after the ejection occurs.

## General Message on Health & Safety (Track & Field and Cross Country)

The safety of our student-athletes is of utmost concern at all times. Information regarding the following important topics can be found at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org) and at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org):

- Heat Stress and Athletic Participation
- Recommendations for Hydration to Prevent Heat Illness
- Suggested Guidelines for Management of Head Trauma in Sports
- Communicable Disease Procedures (can also be found in the NFHS 2008-09 Rules Book)
- Disordered Eating
- Information on Nutritional Supplements
- Links to the following sites:
  - Joint Advisory Committee on Sports Medicine
  - Ohio Athletic Trainers Association
  - American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
  - Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth
  - National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA)
  - Gatorade Sports Science Institute News

## Medical Hardware (Track & Field and Cross Country)

On the advice of the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (see nfhs.org), the following guidelines are provided:

Unless the specific rules code stipulates otherwise, athletes in sports of a collision/contact nature should not be permitted to wear devices such as insulin pumps, heart monitoring equipment and/or other diagnostic or therapeutic appliances while participating in interscholastic contests. In its deliberations on this issue, the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee of the NFHS could find no medical reason to authorize the wearing of these appliances during competition.

However, in the event that a physician requires a student-athlete to wear a therapeutic device during competition, such medical necessity shall be specified in writing and signed by the prescribing physician, and the device shall be padded and securely attached to the player's body underneath the uniform. The medical statement shall be shown to the head contest official prior to the athlete's being permitted to participate.

## Concussion Management (Track & Field and Cross Country)

### Implementation of State Law and NFHS Playing Rules Related to Concussed Athletes and Return to Play Protocol

It is important for all individuals involved in interscholastic athletics to recognize the potential for catastrophic injury and even death from concussions. Thus, it is extremely important that each coach, administrator, contest official and medical support personnel review their responsibilities in protecting students. Further, both students and parents have responsibilities in this area as well.

**Note:** It has always been the ultimate responsibility of the coaching staff, in all sports, to ensure that students are only put into practice or contests if they are physically capable of performing. However, all individuals involved in the conduct of interscholastic competition have responsibilities in this endeavor.

In January 2011, the OHSAA Board of Directors adopted a sports regulation which incorporated the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) playing rules related to concussion recognition and management. On April 26, 2013, legislation adopted by Ohio's General Assembly on concussion and head injuries in youth sports became effective. On February 14, 2013, the OHSAA Board of Directors mandated that these regulations become effective on April 26, 2013, for the remainder of the spring sports season and thereafter. This OHSAA regulation, as amended to incorporate this recent legislation, now reads:

Any student, while practicing for or competing in an interscholastic contest, who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest by either of the following:

- 1.) The individual who is serving as the student's coach during that practice or competition.
- 2.) An individual who is serving as a contest official or referee during that practice or competition.

## Return to Play Protocol

If a student is removed from practice or competition due to a suspected concussion or head injury, the coach or referee who removes the student shall not permit the student, **ON THE SAME DAY THE STUDENT IS REMOVED**, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or contest official is responsible. Thereafter, which means no earlier than the next day, the coach or contest officials shall not permit the student to return to practice or competition until both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- 1.) The student's condition is assessed by either of the following:
  - a. A physician, who is a person authorized under Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (OCR) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (M.D. or D.O.)
  - b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition.

- 2.) The student receives **written authorization** that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance. Click here <http://ohsaa.org/medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf> to retrieve OHSAA's Medical Authorization to Return to Play (RTP) form.

A school district board of education or governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school may authorize a licensed health care provider who is NOT a PHYSICIAN to make an assessment and grant authorization for a student to return to participation ONLY if the provider is acting in accordance with one of the following as applicable to the provider's authority to practice in Ohio:

- 1.) In consultation with a physician;
- 2.) Pursuant to the referral of a physician;
- 3.) In collaboration with a physician, or
- 4.) Under the supervision of a physician.

**Note:** A physician or other licensed health care provider who makes an assessment or grants clearance for a student to return to participation may be a volunteer.

## Coaches Requirements

All coaches, paid and volunteer, must possess a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit. When renewing this permit, the coach will be required to complete an online concussion education course as stipulated in the section entitled **Approved Online Concussion Education Course**. This course is valid for three years.

## Contest Officials Requirements

State law states that no school "shall permit" an individual to referee interscholastic athletic contests unless the individual holds a Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or has successfully completed within the last three years a training program in concussion recognition. Therefore, all OHSAA licensed officials shall possess either a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or show evidence of completing an approved online concussion education course as stipulated in the section entitled Approved Online Concussion Education Courses. This course is valid for three years from the date of completion.



## **Student and Parent Requirements**

All students and their parents or legal guardians shall review and sign the “Concussion Information Sheet” which has been developed by the Ohio Department of Health and which shall be distributed by OHSAA member schools to all students and their parents prior to each sports season. Students and parents shall review and sign this form each year and should keep a copy of the form. In addition, parents and students are encouraged to complete an approved concussion education course.

## **NFHS Suggested Medical Clearance Return to Play Protocol**

- 1.) No exertional activity until asymptomatic.
- 2.) When the athlete appears clear, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc.
- 3.) Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as running or skating and may also begin progressive strength training activities.
- 4.) Begin non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, fielding, batting, etc.
- 5.) Full contact in practice setting.
- 6.) Game play/competition.
  - Athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next level. (It is often suggested that an athlete not be allowed to progress more than one level per day.)
  - If symptoms recur, athlete must return to previous level and should be reevaluated by an appropriate health care professional.
  - Medical check should occur before contact. (Final written clearance from the medical professional shall be obtained before the athlete engages in any unrestricted or full contact activity.)

## **OHSAA Concussion Authorization to Reenter Form**

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports-Medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf>

## **OHSAA Concussion Report Form**

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports-Medicine/OHSAAConcussionReport.pdf>

## Communicable Disease Procedures (Track & Field and Cross Country)

Though most schools have a Certified Athletic Trainer present at Varsity contests ***and*** all coaches are required to maintain a valid Pupil Activity Certificate through the Ohio Department of Education that includes a Sports' First Aid component, it is important to keep up-to-date on the remote risk that blood-borne infectious diseases can be transmitted during basketball practice and contests. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in blood as well as other bodily fluids. Procedures for reducing the potential transmission of these infectious diseases should include, but should not be limited to the following:

1. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the athlete may participate.
2. Routine use of gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood and other body fluids is anticipated.
3. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated (in contact) with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
4. Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with an appropriate disinfectant before competition resumes.
5. Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices.
6. Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices should be available for use.
7. Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition resolves.
8. Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.
9. Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling dressings, mouthguards and other articles containing body fluids.

For more information, go to the OHSAA's website at: <https://www.ohsaa.org/communicablediseases>

# Lightning and Inclement Weather (Track & Field and Cross Country)

## Recognition

Coaches, certified athletic trainers, athletes and administrators should be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately 2-to-3 miles, anytime that lightning can be seen or thunder heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:

- **Monitor Weather Patterns** – Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity
- **National Weather Service** – Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings. A watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions.

## Management

- **Evacuation** – If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters. A list of the closest safe structures shall be announced and posted at all athletic venues.
- **Thirty-minute rule** – Once lightning has been recognized, competition shall not be resumed until at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard to begin or resume a contest. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, this would allow the storm to move 10-to-12 miles away from the area and significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. **Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock, and another count should begin.**



**OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, Ohio 43214

(p) 614.267.2502

(f) 614.267.1677

Web site: ohsaa.org

**OHSAA TRACK & FIELD and CROSS COUNTRY**

**COACH'S VERIFICATION OF SPORTING CONDUCT & LEGAL EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS  
FOR USE IN REGULAR SEASON & TOURNAMENT COMPETITION**

SCHOOL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_ BOYS \_\_\_\_\_ GIRLS \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD COACH'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ (printed)

**OHSAA standards require contest officials to enforce all NFHS rules relating to sporting conduct, ethical behavior and legal uniforms and equipment. Acts that intend to demean opposing competitors, team members, spectators and officials are not in keeping with the ideals of interscholastic athletics and will not be tolerated. Let this competition reflect mutual respect!**

**Coach's Verification**

I certify to the tournament referee that all contestants under my supervision are legally equipped, attired in legal uniforms and free of all dangerous jewelry in accordance with NFHS rules. I further certify that all student-athletes and other team personnel have been advised of their responsibilities relative to good sporting conduct during this competition. In addition, I understand and accept responsibility for adhering to the OHSAA participation limitation of four events per individual athlete per tournament contest.

Coach's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to area designated by the meet officials or games committee.



**Ohio High School Athletic Association**

4080 Roselea Place  
Columbus, Ohio 43214  
(p) 614.267.2502  
(f) 614.267.1677  
Web Site: ohsaa.org

**SAMPLE POLE VAULT CERTIFICATION FORM**

Directions: Please complete all blanks and sign. This form shall be handed to the head pole vault official when the vaulter(s) report. Presenting an improperly completed form or if no form is presented will result in the vaulter(s) being excluded from competition. PLEASE PRINT. Include first and last name.

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPETITOR	NUMBER	VAULTER'S WEIGHT	POLE RATING(S)

\_\_\_\_\_  
COACH'S SIGNATURE

## Uniform Warning Report

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Violation: \_\_\_ (1) Illegal Logo \_\_\_ (2) Uniforms do not match  
\_\_\_ (3) Removal of uniform in competition area \_\_\_ (4) Other

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting official: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

### Referee's Decision

\_\_\_ (1) Warning \_\_\_ (2) Disqualification from: \_\_\_ (a) event \_\_\_ (b) meet

Referee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Uniform Warning Report

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Violation: \_\_\_ (1) Illegal Logo \_\_\_ (2) Uniforms do not match  
\_\_\_ (3) Removal of uniform in competition area \_\_\_ (4) Other

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting official: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

### Referee's Decision

\_\_\_ (1) Warning \_\_\_ (2) Disqualification from: \_\_\_ (a) event \_\_\_ (b) meet

Referee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

