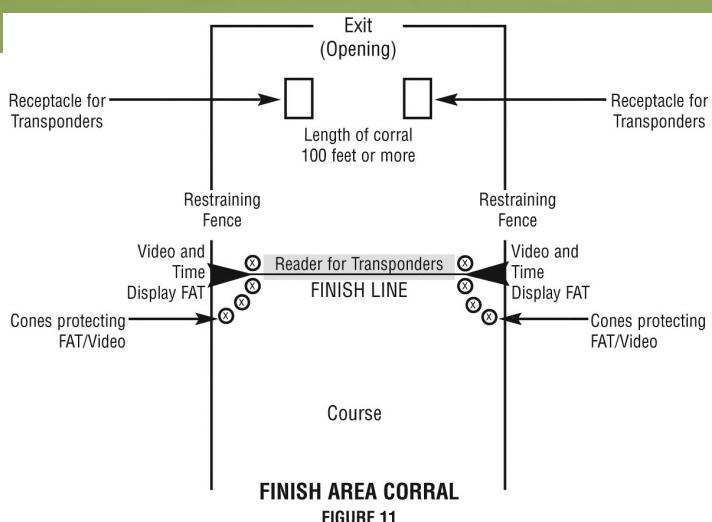


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Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes

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Language Clarification: Throwing and Jumping Events



Officials

Head Starter to Inspect Starting Blocks

Cross Country

Finish Corral Recommended with Transponder Usage

National Federation of State High School Associations

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Review of 2016-17 Rule Changes

The head starter now inspects the starting blocks. Placing the responsibility of inspecting all starting blocks is more appropriate with the starter, who has this expertise, rather than with the implement inspector who has expertise with throwing implements. (3-6-4, 3-19-3)

Head event judges may use white and red flags to signal fair or foul for a field event trial. The use of flags will assist with efficient administration of the field events. Communication between officials, coaches and fans is enhanced by the visual signal, similar to the use of flags by umpires. (3-10-7)

The definitions of trial/attempt, flight, round, pass, foul and what determines the initiation of purposeful action of completing the specific throwing or jumping event are expanded for clarity. The changes update the rules to accepted current sport terminology. (6-1-1, 7-1-1)

To account for the thickness of the synthetic covering of an indoor shot, which is not present on the outdoor implement, a maximum diameter is added to the rules in the specifications for the implement. (6-5-2)

Updates to the current javelin specifications eliminate reference to wood, which is no longer a commonly used material. The javelin shall be constructed of metal or other suitable material, which could be wood or newer materials, with a metal point or rubber tip. The change will permit use of newer materials, such as carbon fiber, in the construction of the javelin. (6-6-1)

Updates the size of the takeoff board to accepted sport specifications by recommending it be 8 inches wide, but permits up to 24 inches. Existing boards will not become non-compliant. (7-6-3)

Removes duplicate language contained else-

where in existing rules and adds language regarding when the order of competition may be changed for consistency in all field event rules. (7-6-10, 6-2-5)

Allowing the use of the double painted boundary lines marking both the inside and outside boundaries of the cross country course. This method provides additional guidance to the runners, better defines the race course for spectators, and allows for natural barriers (grasses, hedges, etc.) which appear on many of the newer courses. (9-1-3b)

Recommending the use of a video/photograph back-up system when order of finish in cross country is determined using a transponder system. The review using the back-up is activated when the timing system indicates a one-tenth second or less differential. Transponders can read early or late, come off the runner etc. The video back-up can confirm close finishes and also assist if other problems arise using the transponder system at the finish line. (9-3-3a, b)

A finish corral is recommended at cross country meets in which the transponder system is used for the order of finish. The finish line is opened to its full width allowing competitors to race through the line. The use of a chute may restrict running space. The corral enhances competitors' ability to perform administrative tasks as directed by meet management and then progress in an orderly fashion out of the corral culminating all race activity. (9-3-4, 5 & 9-4-6, 7)



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Acknowledgments to authors and editors who contributed to the 2016 NFHS Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes:

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Graphic Designer: Angela Hays
NFHS

Points of Emphasis

1. Role of officials inspecting duties, a general review – A well-run meet begins when each official competently performs each of his/her pre-meet responsibilities. These responsibilities include not only those covered by the rules but include the “common sense” approach to making sure your event is ready to go for the competition. Prior to the beginning of inspecting duties, the officials should discuss the method of clearly marking implements that pass inspection as well as those not passing inspection and their being removed from warmups and competition. This should be done in a fashion that makes it easy for the event judges to quickly determine the legality of the implements once at each specific event venue. The referee, field referee or head field judge has the responsibility to oversee all implement and apparatus inspectors. The weighing, measuring and inspecting of all implements in throwing events are responsibilities of the implement inspector(s). It is important that only legal implements are permitted for use in warmups and competition. This season, by rule, the starter has the responsibility to inspect all starting blocks to be used in the running events. Each pole to be used in the pole vault competition shall be inspected by the field referee or head field judge and meet the requirements in Rule 7-5-3. Once at each field event venue, to be certain the venue is ready for competition, the head event judge and accompanying crew should observe the equipment, layout and marking, necessary areas are cordoned off for risk minimization and all necessary equipment for the conducting the event is present. Any problems should be reported to the field referee or referee who in turn may need to work directly with the meet director and host administration to bring the venue into compliance for competition.

2. Use of flags by officials – With the change in the rules to no longer call “mark” in the field events, the high school meet will run much more efficiently when the field event judges use flags to signal fair or foul on a trial. The use of the flags will assist with efficient event administration and enhance the communication between officials, coaches and fans. The head event judge will be equipped with both a white and red flag. When a trial is completed, if the competitor fouls at the ring or arc the judge immediately raises the red flag. If everything is legal at the ring or arc, the event judge checks with the sector judge to make sure the attempt is legal or illegal. If legal, the event judge raises

the white flag and red if the attempt is illegal. Actions by a competitor cannot be a foul after the official has ruled fair except when the official makes an immediate correction of a mistaken action, such as raising red flag when it should have been white and immediately correcting .

3. Number of competitors in sections of distance races – The rules permit the size of sections to be determined site by site unless state association policy would determine otherwise. When determining the number of competitors to be placed in each section, it is important to consider the size of the field, the quality of the performances of the competitors involved and the relationship to risk minimization. A section should not be so large as to create an environment that increases the risk for injury due to the competitors being too crowded and not able to freely run.

4. Forces disassociated with competitor's actions in high jump and pole vault – When a competitor has legally and is clearly over the crossbar and a force not associated with the competitor causes the crossbar to be displaced, it shall not be considered a foul. Examples of a disassociated force would include such situations as the wind blowing the crossbar off the pins or the pole contacting and rebounding off the plant box padding. It is NOT considered a disassociated force if the vaulter, for example, releases the pole and it falls into the crossbar without that cause being from wind or rebound. It is the responsibility of the competitor to have a clean jump or vault. In the case of vaulting, the competitor must have a clean release of the pole so that it does not fall into the crossbar.

5. Multiple logos on uniform bottoms are non-compliant – There continues to be emphasis placed on coaches and athletes selecting and wearing uniforms that are in full compliance with the rules. **When an item is selected as a uniform bottom, it shall not be in compliance if the waistband has more than one logo or reference to a specific brand and/or a reference elsewhere.** Many of the items with multiple references of the manufacturer on the waistband are not actually uniforms but rather an undergarment or base layer. Thus, the item is not made to be a uniform. Coaches and athletes should be aware of this problem and avoid selecting non-compliant items and try to “get by” with wearing as a uniform.

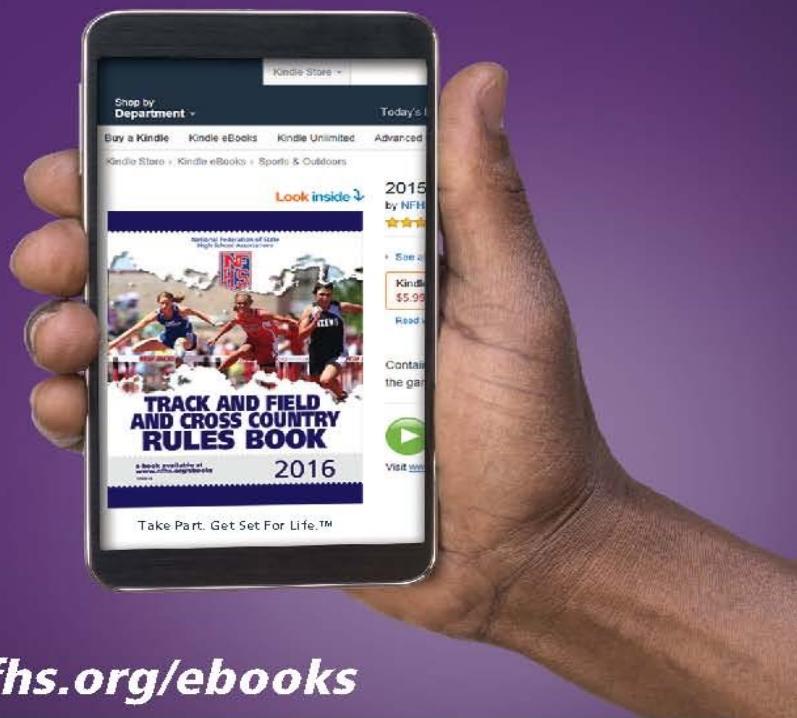


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Starting Blocks - Who Has The Responsibility To Inspect Them?

Rules 3-6-4(NEW) and 3-19-3 change the responsibility of inspecting all starting blocks from the Implement Inspector to the head starter. In doing so, it is recognized that the expertise of the Implement Inspector lies with the throwing events. It is more appropriate to assign the duty to the starter, who has that expertise and is the frontline official who handles the starting blocks the most.

When inspecting starting blocks, starters should pay attention to the following:

1. Spikes underneath the blocks

- No spikes are worn or missing.
- Spike length is appropriate for the track surface.
- Spike length is sufficient to prevent slippage. (3/8" spikes are regarded as practically "slip proof" assuming all other conditions are correct.)

2. Pedals

- Most pedals contain hinges allowing competitors to adjust the angle. Make sure the pins, nuts, and bolts have not come loose due to constant use.
- Make sure the rubberized surface where the foot makes contact is not loose or worn.
- Sometimes meets will supply mismatched sets of blocks. Make sure all pedals fit properly.
- Keeping extra pedals handy is a wise precaution to keep the meet going smoothly.

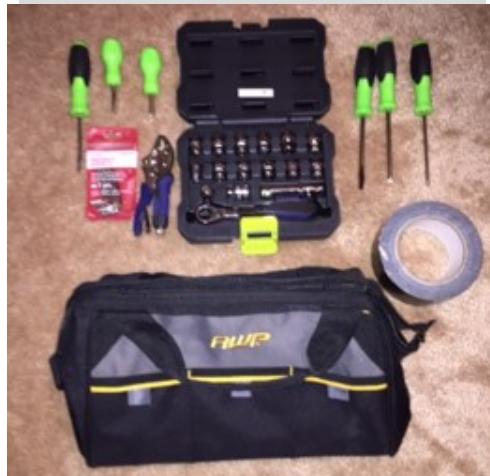
3. Spine

- With time, heat, and constant use, the block's spine can warp and become bowed or u-shaped.

This is evident when a competitor

presses down on the rear of the spine and the front elevates slightly, or vice versa. Blocks with this defect should be replaced. If that is not possible, enlist block holders to ensure no slippage.

- Check for loose nuts or bolts on the



spine.

4. Other notes regarding starting blocks and their handling:

- Starters should keep a small tool kit to include a small adjustable wrench, screwdriver(s), lock wrench or vise grip, allen wrench set, and hex wrench or mechanics

tool set with sockets.

- Carry with you a supply of various sizes of spikes, to fill in missing spikes on starting blocks.
- Starters should make sure there are more blocks than lanes in the event of a block malfunction.
- Starting blocks are durable, but not indestructible. Treat them with care. As you move them between races never throw them. Lay them gently.
- For your safety, handle very carefully! It's very easy to forget about those spikes underneath the blocks until one scrapes/punctures an individual's hand, arm, leg, and clothes.

Every starter should add the above starting block inspection to his/her checklist of pre-meet duties and continue to monitor the starting blocks throughout the competition.

Properly inspected and maintained starting blocks play a major role in the safety of the competitors.

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Terminology for Officiating Field Events - The Basics



Field events present their own unique language, in and out of competition. Use of the correct terminology not only allows a field event to run smoothly but can also help the coach and competitor better understand the event as well as aid in safety all around a venue. While most field events have some common language, there are some events that possess a different set of terms unique to the event(s). These events can be divided into three distinct categories:

1. horizontal jumps (long jump & triple jump)
2. vertical jumps (high jump & pole vault)
3. throws (discus, shot, & javelin)

As the track season begins with often some new and inexperienced coaches and athletes, it is helpful to cover the language at the pre-event meeting. While it is the coach's responsibility to ensure his/her athletes understand the language and rules, it is the primary duty of the official(s) to enforce the rules and use the proper language to do so. Meet management, the field event referee and the coaches must all work together with a common goal of conducting a smooth and efficient meet that is both fair and safe for all competitors.

With proper language and communication, this can easily be accomplished.

A. General Field Event Terms

- 1. Attempt/Trial** – Refers to all of a competitor's action when time starts to his/her single purposeful action to complete the challenge of the particular event - Each competitor must initiate his/her respective trial within a specific time limit.
- 2. Consecutive attempts-successive trials** – All field events: A competitor may, at the discretion of the event head, take one attempt after another attempt (i.e., successive or consecutive trials, or "back to back") in an event if the competitor needs to be excused for another event (not for his/her convenience). In the vertical jumps, this often occurs as the competition ends. In this case, the rules allow for longer time limits between jumps.
- 3. Electronic devices** – May be used in unrestricted areas and coaching boxes, providing the location does not interfere with the progress of the meet as determined by the meet referee. Shall not be used to transmit information to a competitor during a trial or for any review of an official's decision.
- 4. Fair** – A term used in the horizontal jumps and throwing events for an attempt that is measured. "Fair" is used interchangeably with the term "legal."
- 5. Flight** – A round of trials for a group of competitors in a field event or a group of competitors competing at the same time in a field event.
- 6. Foul** – All field events: This term refers to an unsuccessful attempt that is counted as a trial but is not measured (recorded) because the competitor has not followed one or more of the rules of the competition.
- 7. Pass (an attempt/trial)** – To forgo either one or all remaining attempts either at a height (in vertical jumps) or for the competition (for all field events) - A pass must be communicated to the event official prior to the clock being started.
- 8. Point of contact (throws and horizontal jumps)** – The first mark or indentation in the landing surface made by the implement (throws) or by the competitor himself/herself (horizontal jumps).
- 9. Preliminary/Final** - In the throwing and horizontal events, flights consist of a group of competitors taking a maximum of three preliminary attempts. One or more competitors greater than the num-

Terminology for Officiating Field Events - The Basics (cont.)

ber of scoring places will then qualify for the final flight, where they will take an additional maximum of three attempts.

10. Qualify – To achieve the right to compete at the next level (either preliminaries or finals) of an event
- The number to qualify for the finals in an event is set by the games committee.

11. Runway – The area of the venue where competitors accelerate prior to vaulting, jumping (both long and triple) and releasing the javelin - See the NFHS Rule Book for specifications.

12. Second best performance - In the final placing for the horizontal and throwing events, any best performance mark that is identical for two competitors shall be broken by looking at the second best performance of those competitors.

13. Time foul – all field events:
Called when a competitor does not initiate the purposeful action of the event within the specified time after the competitor's name has been called. If a competitor has been excused for another event, his/her name shall not be called for a trial.

B. Horizontal Jumps

1. Foul line – In the long and triple jumps, should a competitor break the plane of this line with his/her shoe, the attempt will not be measured.

2. Horizontal Jumps – Term that collectively refers to both the long and triple jumps.

C. Throws

1. Adherents – Any substance applied to the hands in order to main-

tain a better grip with the implement.

2. Back Half – Throwing Circle – This area is defined as outside the throwing circle and behind lines eight inches in length and two inches wide that separate the front and back halves of the circle.

3. Cage – A portable or permanent structure used in the discus that provides risk minimization for athletes, officials and spectators.

4. Circle – The area where the shot and discus are released. The circle is often referred to as a ring. See the NFHS Rule Book for specifications.

5. Foul line arc – In a javelin attempt, should the competitor touch with any part of his/her body this curved line, or arc, or beyond this arc, the attempt will not be measured.

6. Implement – A shot, discus or javelin.

7. Put – To legally throw the shot (verb) or also may refer to the actual attempt (noun) - "A legal put shall be made from the shoulder, with one hand only, so that during the attempt, the shot does not drop behind or below the shoulder."

8. Sector or Landing Sector – In the throwing events, this is area of the venue where the implement is to land and an attempt is measured. See the NFHS Rule Book for specifications.

9. Stop Board or Toe Board (shot put) – A fixed and constructed section of the throwing circle used in the shot put to prevent

the competitor from accelerating into the sector and otherwise fouling his/her attempt.

D. Vertical Jumps

1. Approach (HJ) – The actions of the competitor in making an attempt.

2. Apron (HJ) – The area from the plane of the bar extending away from the landing area

3. Crossbar – (VJ): A circular bar that sits on the pegs and defines the height to be cleared - See the NFHS Rule Book for specifications.

4. Front buns (PV) – The smaller mats on either side of the planting box that extend away from the back of the planting box in the direction of the runway.

5. Jump-off – (VJ). In high school competitions, a jump-off occurs when two or more athletes are tied for first place even after considering the fewest attempts at the last cleared height and total failures up to and including the tied height. Competitors take one more attempt at the height at which they failed. If no one clears, the bar is lowered one inch (HJ) or three inches (PV). If the bar is cleared by more than one athlete, then the bar is raised one inch (HJ) or three inches (PV).

6. Landing pit – (VJ) Refers to the padded landing area in and around the high jump and pole vault area that aids in protecting athletes from injury - The sections must be connected and tied together with a top landing pad cover.

7. Landing system or pit (PV) – The collection of mats, including the front buns and the cover where the



The Basic (cont.)

vaulter lands after the attempt. The sections must be connected and tied together with a top landing pad cover.

8. **Limit of travel (PV)** – The minimum and maximum distance from the zero point that the vaulting standards may be moved.
9. **Make – (VJ)** - A successful or cleared attempt at a particular height. A make is recorded as an “O”.
10. **Miss – (VJ)** Defines a failed attempt. A miss is recorded as an “X”.
11. **Planting box (PV)** – The box, mounted flush with the surface of the runway, where the vaulter places or plants the end of the vaulting pole.
12. **Standards – (VJ)** Movable uprights that raise or lower the crossbar in both the high jump and pole vault.
13. **Stop Board (PV)** – The back plane (surface) of the planting box where the pole strikes.
14. **“Tapping”(PV)** – A technique, illegal during warm-up or competition, where a coach or assistant taps his/her hand on the back of the vaulter during the course of the vault to assist in getting through the swing and land in the landing system (pit).
15. **Top hand-hold band (PV)** – A clear mark on the vaulting pole which limits how high along the pole a competitor may place his/her hand.
16. **Vertical Jumps (VJ)** – Refers both to the high jump (HJ) or the pole vault (PV). Competitors vault or jump over a crossbar set at a particular height.
17. **Zero-point (PV)** – The point at the top rear of the planting box that sets the reference point for measuring the limit of travel of the vaulting standards. A vaulter who breaks the plane of the zero-point (touching the mat or ground be-

yond the zero-point) during an attempt with the pole or any part of the body

Shot Put Size – Indoor vs Outdoor

Rule 6-5-2(NEW) defines the maximum size specification for the indoor shot. For many years there has been a maximum size specification for both the boys and girls outdoor shots. The new addition adds 20mm to the maximum diameters for both the boys and girls indoor shots. As more schools add field houses with all purpose floors, more schools are able to host and provide opportunities for other schools to participate in indoor track & field meets. The addition to the previous rule is to allow for synthetic materials to be used to cover the indoor shots and indicates the size of shot due to additional covering.

Defining a maximum size specification for the indoor shots will:

1. Assist in the reduction of injuries, by controlling the use of overweight shots.;
2. Facilitate the identification of legal shots;
3. Create a more efficient process of checking in at weights and measures;
4. Aid in the smooth and efficient administration of the event; and
5. Create consistency in the pool of shots available for competition.

Officials, coaches, and competitors should be reminded that outdoor shots are not permitted to be used during the indoor season.



Order of Competition in Field Events

Rules of competition order in field events can be categorized into two distinct groupings: Horizontal Jumps & Throws and Vertical Jumps.

Horizontal Jumps and Throws

(Rule 6-2 & Rule 7-2)

Competition order is determined and defined by where in the competition the attempts are being taken.

1) Preliminary rounds:

- a. The initial competition order for the preliminary rounds is determined by the Games Committee.
- b. Often, when more than one flight is necessary, flights will be seeded based on season-best performances. Typically, these flights will have no less than five competitors. However, some state associations may make adjustments to flight size for their sanctioned state series.
- c. These flights may compete in any order – worst to best, best to worst, or random.

2) Finals:

- a. One or more competitors than there are scoring positions shall advance to the finals, with all competitors tying for the last position advancing.
- b. To be eligible to compete in the finals, a competitor must have at least one legal attempt during the preliminary rounds.
- c. If a qualifying competitor withdraws from competition in the finals, there shall be no substitute.
- d. The competition order for the finals is determined by performances in the preliminary rounds. The competition order for the finals will be the reverse-

order of the preliminary round performances, with the best mark competing last and the worst mark competing first.

Competitors who are simultaneously competing in field events and running events are governed by rules which allow them to be excused from one event to compete in another. When a competitor is excused from the Horizontal Jumps & Throws, Rule 6-2-5 & 7-2-2, defines the options and the procedures the event official follows.

3) Excused competitors:

- a. To accommodate competitors participating in other events, the head event judge may change the order of competition by any method during either the preliminary or final rounds. Options include, but are not limited to
 - i. Allowing the competitor to have successive trials;
 - ii. Allowing the competitors to jump or throw out of order; and
 - iii. Allowing the competitors to have more than one attempt in a round.
- b. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event must inform the head event judge when they leave and when they return.
- c. It is up to the Games Committee to determine how long a competitor may be excused.
- d. Competitors excused to participate in another event must return by the time the round of competition is completed. Failure to do so will result in the loss of remaining attempts.

In smaller meets or meets with limited entries the games committee has the

authority to alter both the number of attempts and the format for attempting them. However, the rules for excusing athletes to compete in other events apply to this altered competition format also.

4) "Four-Attempt" competitions – The games committee may allow all competitors just four total trials, replacing the preliminaries and finals format. (See Rule 3-2-4f)

a. The initial competition order may be determined by the Games Committee.

b. Often, an "Open Pit" format, where the competitor takes his/her attempt in the order that the competitor determines is conducted in the Horizontal Jumps. When this "Open Pit" format is utilized, competitors are given a predetermined time framework in which all attempts must be completed.

Vertical Jumps

(Rule -7-2)

Due to the unique format of their incremental competition, Vertical Jumps require their own set of defined order of competition procedures.

- 1) Each competitor is allowed a trial in order in which the names are drawn or assigned by the games committee.
- 2) When the number of entries dictates, the games committee may assign competitors to flights of no less than five for preliminary competition or may conduct the event in continuing flights.
 - a. Using continuing flights means using an officiating technique called "Five-Alive" or "Five-Active", though some states through policy specify using "Three-Alive" or "Four-Alive".

(Cont. page 10).

The Javelin - A Constructive Look

Up until 2016, the high school javelin could only be constructed of wood or metal. Since few of us are old enough to remember wooden javelins and there are now carbon fiber javelins, a rule change was necessary to reflect commonly held construction and practices. Rule 6-6-1, updates the materials specifications of javelin construction to not only reference wood, but newer materials as well. Eliminating the reference to wood, which is no longer a commonly used material and stating that, to allow metal or other suitable materials to be used in the construction of javelins is addressing current trends.

Note that wood is still a suitable material, but you won't find any on the market.

For those interested in how a metal javelin is made, take a look at this vid-

eo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bujFq-9Pu04>. The video makes reference to specifications using Imperial Units.

From a construction standpoint, there are many things that can go wrong with a javelin to cause it to be disqualified at a meet.

1. The most common problem with the high school javelin is the grip. The cording will wear and break free from the shaft. (*That is not allowed and must be repaired.*)
2. The other most common problem is wear on the point. That will cause weight to be lost and the balance point will shift. (*Since the distance from the balance point has to fall within a range allowed by rule, the javelin could become*

illegal.)

3. Another problem that does show up from time to time is older javelins that the school has had for many years. The latest change to the javelin specification was in 1999 and that was the 600-gram javelin thrown by the girls. (*Older javelins will have the distance from the balance point to the tip be much too long.*)

For schools using the optional rubber tip, do not just put the rubber tip over a steel tipped javelin. The weight of the rubber tip will cause balance problems in addition to violating Rule 7-6-1-Note. The reason for that note is safety. Steel points will eventually wear through the rubber and become dangerous, as the metal tip protrudes.

Order of Competition in Field Events (cont.)

b. In "Five-Alive", a competitor clears a bar, passes a turn at a height, or is eliminated, the next competitor in the competition order will be moved up. The number of competitors in the active flight remains constant.

c. When the number of competitors remaining at a given height is fewer than nine, all competitors will then become part of a single continuous flight.

3) Competitors who wish to be excused to compete in another event must inform the head event judge when they leave and when they return.

a. Competitors excused to participate in another event shall not be called for a trial.

b. To accommodate those competi-

tors who may be excused to participate in other events, the head event judge may change the order of competition.

c. Time limits for competitors excused to compete in another event shall be determined by the games committee.

d. Competitors excused to compete in another event must return by the time the round of competition is completed. Failure to do so will result in competitors having a "P" for a passed attempt be recorded on the event sheet. The competitors would then be advanced to the next bar height.

In all field events the Referee, under Rules 6-2-6 (throwing events) and 7-2-13 (all jumping events), may alter any established order of trials and shall

alter a plan for successive trials by prescribing single trials in the preliminaries and in the finals if weather or other conditions might result in unfairness to any competitor.

All individuals involved with field events competitions officials, coaches, volunteers, and athletes must be aware of the various rules which govern the order of competition. This knowledge of the governing rules will facilitate the smooth and efficient administration of each field event at a track & field meet.



Cross Country Finish Area - Chute or Corral?

The finish of a cross-country race can be a chaotic experience for both runners and officials. It is important that the finish area be designed to:

1. Handle a large volume of competitors;
2. Provide for accuracy in time and place finish;
3. Enhance risk minimization;
4. Provide fairness to each competitor; and
5. Minimize the time competitors spend in the area.

Two different and distinct methods for the set-up of the finish line area may be utilized. How meet management plans to time and place each competitor determines which finish line method to utilize.

Finish Area Chute

A finish line chute is necessary if the method of timing and placing cross-country competitors is to record the time as the runner crosses the finish line, and then later record the place of that runner. The timing staff then matches up the time and place of each runner for the development of the results and team scoring. If hand timing is used the meet officials do this manually.

When this method is used, it is critical that the runners be kept in order as they finish the race until their final placement has been established. This is done by the construction of chutes. Unless the meet is very small, at least two chutes should be constructed. For larger meets, at least three and maybe four chutes will likely be necessary. Meet officials are much more active when this method is used, as they must place each runner in the chute in the order that the runner finished

the race. There should be a finish line judge who would establish the finish order if the finish is close. Competitors must remain in that finish order, as they move through the chute, until their identification tag is handed in.

The chute(s) should be a minimum of 100 feet in length, about two to three feet wide, and controlled by one official opening and closing the chute to keep everyone moving in the order of finish. See the current "NFHS Track and Field Rules" (page 69) for a diagram of a single and double chute, the recommended dimensions of those chutes, number of officials and volunteers, and their placement.

Other officials are placed along the chutes to keep the competitors moving forward toward the end of chute where their placement will be determined. At the end of the chutes, emptying one chute at a time, the order of finish is established by the removal of an identification tag from each athlete's bib (race number) and placing that tag in order on a device that will keep the tags in order. Often this is a string, spindle, coat hanger, or thin stick.

When chutes are used, it is very important to have sufficient volunteers (non-officials) placed along the length of the chute. Their role is to encourage and assist exhausted finishers through the chute and to assist with the removal of the tags, so that they can be handed to the designated person, as they exit the chute. If a competitor were so tired that he/she cannot move through the chute, the volunteer would remove the tag from the runner and take her/his place in the chute as a filler.

Finish Area Corral

The finish line corral is employed

when timing and placement of runners is achieved by the use of computerized transponders. A transponder would either be attached to the competitors' front bib (one transponder), or to both shoes (two transponders). The use of the transponder method results in recording both the time and place of the runners as they cross the finish line. No other involvement with the runners is necessary except for the removal of the transponder(s), which should be returned to the timing staff/company responsible for the race. This method is particularly effective when many runners are expected to finish very close to each other and within a short period of time.

When transponders are used, one timing/sensor mat is typically placed on the finish, with a second mat slightly behind the finish line. Placement of the mats is very much determined by the type of transponder chip and its sensitivity, and placement should be left to the timing company hired for the meet. It is important that there be barriers next to the finish line so no runner may finish without actually crossing the timing/sensor mats. Just past the finish line, there should be an open area a minimum of 100 feet in length and 20-30 feet in width, fenced off from spectators, where competitors may quickly gain their composure and receive water or other assistance as is needed. A diagram with specifications and personnel recommendations can be found on page 70 of the NFHS Rule Book.

This area, commonly called a "corral" should open up to an area wider than the width of the finish line where runners needing special assistance can be handled to the side without interfering with other finishers. The area should then narrow down to facilitate the escorting of competitors (Cont. page 12)



Want to become an official?

Start your training today!

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee and the USA Track & Field Officials Training Subcommittee are combining efforts and experience to provide the NFHS Pre-Meet Notes, an online track and field education publication. It is our goal to encourage more individuals to become track and field officials. Another way to ENJOY the sport!

High School - Contact your state high school athletic/activities association at
www.nfhs.org >State Association Listing >NFHS Member State Associations

USATF - Contact USA Track & Field at
www.usatfofficials.com >Certification

Start Your Career Today

The Appropriate Use of Flags in Field Events

The appropriate use of flags in the field events allows the events to be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner, with as little distraction for officials and competitor as possible. Here are some basic guidelines for using flags to officiate field events. These guidelines reflect current NFHS Rules.

3-10-7(NEW). This new rule updates to the accepted procedural standard of the sport.

- 1) Red and white flags are used to indicate whether an attempt was foul (red flag) or fair (white flag).
- 2) Only one official at an event should have red and white flags to avoid confusion. This official should be posted at the take-off board (for the horizontal jumps), at the bar (for the vertical jumps), or at the circle/foul line (for the throws).
- 3) Though only one official has the flags, officials should work together (typically through hand signals) to ensure that all sides of a throwing circle are observed.
- 4) A white flag (indicating a fair attempt) should be raised only when the attempt is completed. This means:
 - a. For horizontal jumps – when the competitor has left the landing area in a legal fashion and did not cross the foul line on take-off.
 - b. For vertical jumps – when the official is sure that the crossbar has not been dislodged by the competitor. The official should make sure that the competitor has exited the landing area without dislodging the crossbar. If the crossbar is shaking, the official should pause long enough to be certain that the crossbar will not fall because of an action of the competitor during the attempt.
 - c. For throwing events – when the throw has landed in the sector and the competitor has legally exited the circle or runway.

5) A red flag should be raised when a violation has occurred that makes the attempt a foul, including exceeding the allowable time for a trial.

6) Red and white flags should also be used to control access to the jumping or throwing area during both warm-ups and competition. This will help to provide a safe competition area. A red flag indicates that the venue is closed while measurements are made, sand is raked, and implements are retrieved. A white flag is then shown to indicate that the venue is clear and prepared for the next competitor.

Though the NFHS rule book does not address using a timer, the accepted procedural standard of the sport is the use of a yellow flag, used by the timer in many meets to indicate when the athlete has 15 seconds in which to initiate his/her attempt. The timer raises the yellow flag overhead and holds it there until the time expires or the athlete makes his/her attempt. If the competitor fails to initiate the attempt in the allowed time, the timer drops the yellow flag and the red flag is raised by the official with it.

Cross Country Finish Area - Chute or Corral? (Cont.)

out of the finish area by meet officials. At least eight officials should be available for this effort. Runners need to be encouraged to keep moving and exit the area. Marshals should be placed at the end of the corral to keep coaches, parents, non-running teammates, and spectators out of the corral. In both methods, particularly in qualifying and championship meets, it is strongly recommended that a second or back-up system be employed to both time and record placement in the race. (Rule 9-3-3)

Vertical Jumps Bar Displacement - Is It Always A Failed Attempt?

As a coach or spectator at the vertical jumps of a Track & Field Meet, a quick visual observation or glance at the bar, after an attempt, provides you with a quick acknowledgment of the attempt. If the cross bar remains up, it is a fair attempt. Seeing the bar down indicates a failed attempt. But are these two outcomes always true?

It is a foul/miss if the competitor displaces the crossbar from the pins, on which it originally rested, with the body or pole. However, there are times in the vertical jumps when a crossbar dislodged from the standards will not be a foul/miss. Let us examine the rules, situations, and outcomes associated with them.

1. RULE 7-3-17- If improperly fastened supports slip downward when a jumper contacts the crossbar, the head event judge shall rule *no jump and allow the competitor another trial.*

SITUATION #1: The competitor attempts the jump and fails the attempt. The official then notices that one of the standards slipped down when the vaulter contacted the crossbar.

2. RULE 7-3-18 - A crossbar displaced by a force disassociated with the competitor after he/she is legally and clearly over the bar shall *not be a fault and is considered a successful attempt.*

SITUATION #2: In the pole vault, a competitor clears the bar and releases the pole properly. The pole gets caught up in the box padding with wings and the pole is bounced towards the standard, causing the crossbar to become dislodged.

SITUATION #3: A vaulter, with a

tailwind, clears the bar and releases the pole properly. The wind takes the pole into the crossbar and dislodges it.

SITUATION #4: In the pole vault, a competitor clears the crossbar when the designated pole catcher, in an attempt to grab the properly released pole, inadvertently knocks it into the crossbar causing it to fall into the pit.

SITUATION #5: In the high jump, the competitor clears the crossbar but the force of he/she landing on the pit causes the pit to shift, hitting the standards and therefore causing the crossbar to become dislodged.

Note: If the head event judge is certain that the landing pad caused the bar to be dislodged, *the jump should be ruled as a successful jump.*

Comment: It is important that the event official visually inspect the landing pit before each attempt to proactively maintain proper placement and ensure that the pit will not dislodge the standards or crossbar.

3. RULE 7-5-27a- It is a foul if the competitor, displaces the crossbar from the pins on which it originally rested, with the body or the pole.

SITUATION #6: A vaulter jumps and contacts the crossbar. The crossbar comes to rest on top of the pole vault standards.

4. RULE 7-5-27a-Note - If the crossbar and/or uprights are placed incorrectly by the contest official, the trial is *not recorded as a foul*

and the vaulter has an additional attempt.

SITUATION #7: A competitor, in the pole vault, requests that the standards be set at a particular mark. The competitor does not clear the bar. After the failed attempt, it is discovered by the officials that the standards were not set at the requested mark. The standards were placed incorrectly by the official.

5. RULE 7-6-27f- *It is a foul* if the competitor after clearing the crossbar, contacts an upright and displaces the crossbar.

SITUATION #8: The competitor clears the crossbar, lands in the pit and while exiting the pit, rolls against the standard causing the crossbar to fall.

Note: If the head event judge made the determination that the competitor was attempting to exit the pit after completing the attempt as opposed to leaving the pit as part of the continuous motion of landing in the pit, it is not a foul.

Comment: If the event official is not sure of what caused the crossbar to be dislodged, the event official shall rule *no jump and allow the competitor another trial.*

The position of the crossbar at the conclusion of the jump is not always a true indicator of the validity of the attempt. A well trained and knowledgeable event official utilizes proper application of the rules in the vertical jumps and ensures that each competitor is treated fairly and receives the correct mark.

Appropriate Number of Competitors in Track & Field Distance Races



Even in distance races (1600 meters and above) athlete safety and equity of competition is of primary concern.

Too many competitors in a single section of a distance race may result in a fall, injury, an unfair start, or unfair competition. When determining the number of competitors to be placed in each section, it is important to consider the size of the field, the quality of the performances of the competitors involved and the relationship to risk minimization. A section should not be so large as to create an environment that increases the risk for injury due to the competitors being too crowded and not able to freely run.

Other specific factors to consider when setting up a distance race are:

1. Indoor or outdoor race;
2. Number of lanes on the track (6, 8 or 9 lanes);
3. Is a separate arced staggered starting line marked across the outer half of the track (typically a one turn stagger) available;
4. Is the race run as a qualifying, single final, or timed final (several sections);
5. Method of timing and placing (fully automatic timing or hand timing/finish-line judges);
6. Overall meet time-period allocated in the schedule of the meet; and
7. Conference or state association regulations and bylaws;

Most outdoor high school tracks are built with eight lanes around the track, and a single waterfall start line, for distance races. Only one row of competitors would be assigned for the start of any given race. Should there be 16 or fewer runners competing in the race then the entire field should start from the waterfall starting line, across the entire width of the track. The

maximum number of runners starting on the waterfall start should be 16 runners. This would assign two competitors for each lane on the track.

Some high school tracks have a separate arced staggered starting line marked across the outer half of the track, creating a double waterfall start area. This second start line would be configured as a one turn stagger. For entries greater than 16, but less than 25, a double-waterfall start should be used. In the double waterfall, two-thirds of the full field should start on the main waterfall, across the entire width of the track, and the remainder on the one-turn staggered waterfall across the outer half of the track. The maximum number of runners starting on the outside waterfall start would be 8 runners. Therefore the maximum number of runners competing with the double waterfall start of a race would be 24.

Time constraints, to the meet schedule, often times eliminate the potential or opportunity for multiple sections in distance races. When this occurs and the race, with a large number of entries, is limited to one and only one section, then multiple rows of runners would be utilized for the race. Under this situation, the 16 fastest seeded runners would be on the first or front row of an outdoor race.

For distance races conducted on indoor tracks, typically a six-lane facility, the appropriate reduction in the number of runners assigned to run in a race should be applied. The two-third and one-third procedure, and the assignment of the faster seeded runners on the first row should be followed. To reduce the chance of athlete injury, and allow for a more orderly start and transition, if possible, a two-turn staggered start should be used for indoor distance races.

Double Boundary Lines For Cross Country Courses

At nearly every Cross Country Meet, one question is sure to be asked, "How close do I have to run to the course line?" Often times the official's answer leads to more questions and interruptions from coaches, trying to gain an advantage by determining the shortest distance between two points on the course, determined by the course line.

NEW in 2016, Rule 9-1-3b permits the use of double boundary lines marking both the inside and outside boundaries of the cross country course. The use of the double boundary lines, to mark the course will:

1. Clearly define the running path;
2. Provide better guidance to the runners;
3. Establish defined spectator areas for course viewing; and
4. Allow for natural barriers (grass, trees, hedges, large rocks, etc.) which appear on many of the newer courses.

The competitors in cross country races will benefit by:

1. Being kept on course by a more visible representation of the course and
2. Providing a visual aide to prevent coaches and spectators from interference.

In addition, course officials will be able to utilize the double boundary lines as a visual indicator to:

1. Determine if a competitor is running off of the course, to gain an advantage;
2. Establish if a competitor is running outside of the legal boundaries; and
3. Verify that a competitor has aban-

doned the race.

Remember that direction flags in red, yellow, and blue are still required (Rules 9-1-1, and 9-1-3a). Flags should be:

1. One foot square;
2. At least 6 feet above the ground; and
3. Visible for 100 feet.

National Federation of State High School Associations



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National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study

As high school sports participation continues to increase in the United States, the number of sports injuries have the potential to increase. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and the NFHS Sport Rules Committees use information from the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIO™) to monitor rates and patterns of sports injuries among high school athletes. During the 2014/15 academic year, High School RIO™ collected its 7th year of track and field exposure and injury data.

High School RIO™ data shows that both boys' and girls' track and field have among the lowest injury rates of the 22 sports under surveillance. Boys' and girls' track and field injuries have remained relatively stable over time. During the 2013/14 academic year, hip/thigh/upper leg sprains/strains were the most common injury



in track and field representing 41.9% of all boys' and 36.5% of all girls' injuries. Injury patterns differ by event. For example, pole vaulting accounted for 5.1% of all track and field injuries.

However, 2 of the 6 (33.3%) concussions sustained in track and field occurred while pole vaulting. Understanding such patterns of injury is one important tool when considering injury prevention efforts such as a new rule change to keep track and field athletes as safe as possible

while they enjoy participating in their sport.

If you are interested in more information on the High School RIO™ Study or a certified athletic trainer is interested in becoming a reporter for boys' and/or girls' track and field, please visit <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/ResearchProjects/piper/projects/RIO/Pages/Study-Reports.aspx> for summary reports.

Interested in More Information or Becoming a Reporter?

To become a reporter for boys' and/or girls' track and field, please visit <http://injuryresearch.net/rioreports.aspx> for summary reports or send an email to highschool-rio@nationwidechildrens.org

The Horizontal Jumps Take-off Board

The takeoff board in the horizontal jumps governs the start of the measurement for the distance jumped. The board is rectangular shaped, fitting firmly in position on the ground, level with the runway and the surface of the landing area. It is positioned so that it is perpendicular to the running direction of the event. Rule 7-6-3 has been undated to recommend a width of 8 inches for the takeoff board, even though the size may vary up to 24 inches in width. This places the size of the board in alignment with the accepted current specifications of the sport.

The rule also states the takeoff board may be manufactured from wood or synthetic substances. Tracks made of an artificial surface often have takeoff boards that are removable, being inserted only for competition. Also permitted, on a hard surface runway, is a painted foul line of a contrasting color and with the same size specifications, in lieu of an inserted takeoff board.

Some coaches believe that the size, of the takeoff board, does matter when it comes to the inexperienced or beginning jumpers. They advocate for takeoff boards up to 24 inches in width for beginning jumpers. When placing multiple takeoff boards on the same runway, to accommodate different events and skill levels, all takeoff boards should be of an identical width, as specified by Rule 7-6-3.

The horizontal jumps takeoff board is often one of the most neglected pieces of field equipment.

It is installed when the track is built and seldom replaced. For safety, the board should be kept firm, maintained with a contrasting color (for visibility), and replaced or repainted when it is worn or deteriorated.

Correct Height & Placement of Hurdles

Who is Responsible?

Hurdle events present a unique challenge as the competitors not only compete against each other, but against up to ten obstacles between the starting and finish lines. Hurdles also present a challenge to meet management and officials, as their heights and placement varies for the different length races and also for girls and boys races.

No coach of a hurdle competitor, official, or referee wants to hear these words from a competitor who has just finished a hurdle race:

"There was a hurdle at the wrong height in my lane" or "There was a hurdle not placed in the right location in my lane"

To ensure hurdle races are set up correctly, the appropriate hurdle marking must be clearly indicated on the track.

These marks should be inspected and determined on a walk-a-round by the referee prior to the start of competition.

The following rules assist in the proper placement of hurdles:

1. Rule 5-2 describes the specific color markings;
2. Rule 5-4 defines the required heights; and
3. Rule 5-4-6 specifies the weight setting for each corresponding height

However, who is responsible to ensure that the correct marks, heights, and weight settings are utilized for a given hurdle race? Rule 3-11 describes umpires as being responsible to oversee the track races. Remember, umpires are the eyes and ears of the referee. Depending upon the type of meet and the availability of meet personnel, there may be a crew assigned to ensure the proper placement, set-up, and removal of the hurdles.

If this is the case, the umpires serve to double check the placement and set-up. The umpires then signal the referee, when the hurdles are ready for competition, and the referee in turn indicates to the starters that they may begin the race.

In the absence of a crew or specific meet personnel to set-up the hurdles for each appropriate race, then it is the umpires responsibility to set-up the hurdles. Although the rules book is silent on this matter, the accepted procedural standard of the sport recommends their assistance in the set-up of hurdle races. If an adequate number of umpires are not available, it then falls under the jurisdiction of the referee to ensure proper set-up.

A good practice is the use of 3x5 cards, prepared by the referee or meet management given to the primary parties involved in the proper set-up - hurdle crew members and umpires. On each card is listed the following:

1. Gender;
2. Event distance;
3. Color for hurdle placement;
4. Hurdle height; and
5. Weight measurement.

Meet directors and meet managers should take into account the importance of running events by ensuring knowledgeable and competent umpires are assigned, just as knowledgeable and competent officials are assigned to the other track & field events. Knowledgeable umpires and hurdles crews will ensure hurdle races are executed as smoothly and efficiently as possible by ensuring the correct positioning and placement of the hurdles on the track.

Video/Photographic Back Up System In Cross Country



Disposable bib with two passive timing chips at the back



Active chip timing transponder



A ChronoTrack race controller with RFID antennas for detecting transponders attached to runner's shoes.

Rule 9-3-3a & b (NEW) recommends the use of a video/ photographic equipment for cross country when transponders are used for place finish. This equipment would activate a review when the timing system indicates a one-tenth second or less differential between finishing competitors. Many timing systems that are in use at Cross Country meets are now utilizing video/photograph equipment as a back-up system to determine final place positioning.

Officials should be aware of the different types of equipment being used at the finish line when determining how to properly utilize these systems. As part of their pre-meet duties, officials should be prepared to discuss the video/ photograph set-up with the timing operator to ensure that it is properly recording the finishers and will give an accurate picture when necessary.

Reasons why a back-up system using video/photograph equipment might be necessary include:

1. Inaccurate reading of the transponders;
2. Transponders not remaining attached to the runner;
3. Runners wearing the incorrect transponder; and
4. To confirm close finishers.

Generically, there are two types of transponder timing systems; active and passive.

1. An active transponder consists of a battery-powered transceiver, connected to the athlete, that emits its unique code when it is interrogated.
2. A passive transponder does not contain a power source inside the transponder. Instead, the transponder captures electromagnetic energy

produced by a nearby exciter and utilizes that energy to emit a unique code.

In both systems, an antenna is placed at the finish, and in some cases, intermediate time points and is connected to a decoder. This decoder identifies the unique transponder code and calculates the exact time when the transponder passes a timing point. Some implementations of timing systems require the use of a mat on the ground at the timing points while other systems implement the timing points with vertically oriented portals.

There are several types of systems that would be acceptable under this rule.

- 1) A basic video recorder would be the simplest to use. This would be setup pointing along the finish line.
- 2) A video based photo finish system, as utilized for track events.
- 3) A computer based system used by some schools for track events would be the best.
 - a. Camera aligned to the finish line.
 - b. Camera viewing runners from the front as they cross the finish line, recording their bib numbers.
 - c. These cameras would be linked to the computer.

The recommendations of Rule 9-3-3a & b (NEW), are made to ensure the accuracy and validity of the results, of the place finishers, in a cross country competition.

Coaches, Don't Miss Your Mark—Pro-active Preparation

Each year the NFHS Track and Field committee evaluates suggested rules changes sent in by coaches, officials and administrators. Often these suggestions are not really for the officials to enforce but rules that the coaches should take care of with some pro-active preparation of their athletes and a little pre-planning with paperwork. Here are some suggestions to help the high school coach and athletic director make the season more enjoyable for their student-athletes.

Many state associations and/or coaches associations have pre-season meetings. It is extremely important for coaches to attend these meetings either in person or via webinar if available. In addition to learning about the latest coaching techniques, information regarding how to enter athletes, how to host meets, knowing the format of the state meet, important timelines, state specific by-laws, and the most recent NFHS rules changes will be discussed.

There are many NFHS rules that coaches need to know and to share with their athletes. No one expects a coach to have all of the rules memorized, so keep a copy of the Rule Book with you at

meets. A copy of the NFHS Case Book is also a good reference when issues arise. Remember to use common sense when applying them to situations. Now that athletes are able to wear jewelry, coaches should still be responsible for what is being worn. Large, dangling earrings or huge medallions could be distracting and cause unnecessary attention for an athlete. As the coach, you can tell the athlete that this is not appropriate for a track meet.

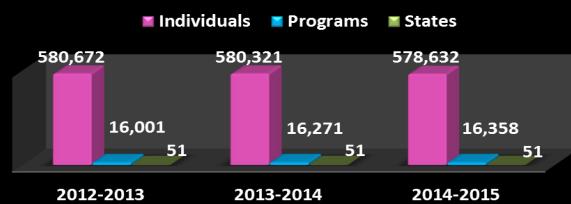
When sending relay teams to the check-in tent, make sure they are all dressed according to the rules. It's very stressful for your athletes to be sent away to change right before their race. Field athletes should know where to check in, the order of flights, how many attempts they get, how much time they get per attempt, how and when to check out of their field event for a running event, how they qualify for finals and when finals are to take place. Be sure to tell your athletes the order of events so they can gauge proper warm-up and be at the venue at the correct time. Some At-large invitationals provide minimal event calls to be made. Athletes should know when and where

to check in based on the published order of events. Finally, let your athletes know of situations where they could be disqualified or penalized, such as aiding or impeding another runner, taking off the uniform in the competition area, using an illegal implement, unsporting conduct, or watching video in a restricted area.

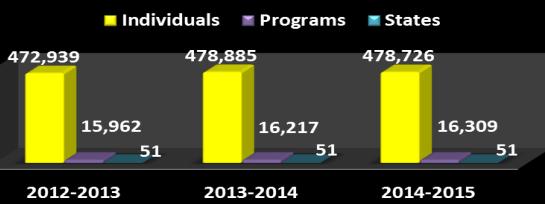
Coaches should also become familiar with current websites for entering athletes into meets. The state association may have a particular website to enter athletes into the state meet. Be sure to login early so it's not a scramble at the end of the season. Additionally, when entering athlete's performances, always use the same spelling and version of the athlete's name. For example, if an athlete's name is Thomas, don't use Tom or Tommy. Otherwise, this causes multiple entries of the same athlete and may change the state rankings, causing confusion for other coaches. Along with using these websites to enter athletes into meets, many will keep a ranking of athletes in your state and across the country. Let your athletes know about these websites so they can keep track of their improvement throughout the season.

NFHS High School Participation Survey Results

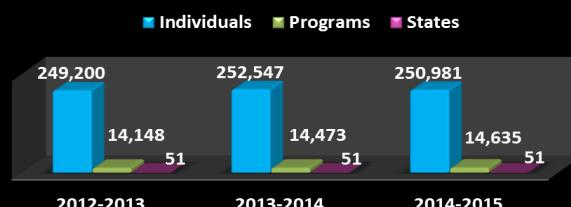
**Boys Outdoor Track & Field Participation Data
2012-2015**



**Girls Outdoor Track & Field Participation Data
2012-2015**



**Boys Cross Country Participation Data
2012-2015**



**Girls Cross Country Participation Data
2012-2015**



Coaches Education Opportunities



**Coaching
Track and Field**

Course Objectives

- ◆ Types of races – sprint and endurance
- ◆ Running form – proper posture, arm movement, and leg movement
- ◆ Start and Drive phase – block and standing start
- ◆ Types of jumps – horizontal and vertical
- ◆ Jump elements – approach, take off, flight and landing
- ◆ Throwing – basic skills for each event type
- ◆ How to teach skills for correct form
- ◆ Teaching progressions to combine skills into full movement

Units

- ◆ Running
- ◆ Jumping
- ◆ Throwing

- Coaching Track and Field, developed by USA Track and Field and the NFHS is hosted by decorated Olympic athletes Dan O'Brien and Hyleas Fountain.
- The course presents the fundamentals of running, jumping and throwing, as well as the importance of sound mechanics and how to teach these basic skills.
- After taking this course, you will be able to identify key points or stages of a skill, and use visual demonstrations with verbal cues to help athletes execute a particular technique or skill.
- Members of USA Track and Field will receive a \$15 discount as an added benefit.
- Course participants have unlimited access to course & resources for one year from date of purchase.
- This course can be used as an elective to fulfill AIC or CIC certification requirements.
- Approved by NFHS for 5 course clock hours.
- This course, developed by USA Track and Field, the NCAA and NFHS has been designed to help both coaches and athletes.
- Coaches will learn to develop and teach the introductory skills of pole vaulting to his/her athletes.
- After completing this course, each participant will have a better understanding of the fundamentals of pole vaulting, as well as the best practices and techniques that will help educate and promote safety in the sport.
- Course participants have unlimited access to the course & resources for one year from date of course delivery.
- This course can be used as an elective to fulfill CIC certification requirements.
- The course is approved by NFHS for 3 course clock hours.

**Coaching
Pole Vault**

Course Objectives

- ◆ Starting a beginner—teaching proper standing grip height, width of hands on pole and position on pole.
- ◆ How to instruct beginning level pole-vaulters through skill development drills and build confidence
- ◆ Maintaining a safe practice and competition environment — proper pad placement and securing vault mat pads

Units

- ◆ Starting a Beginner
- ◆ Basic Laws of Physics
- ◆ Drills and Teaching Techniques
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Equipment and Facility
- ◆ Interactive Exercises

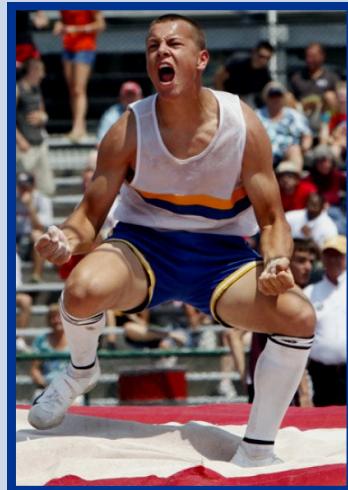
More Information at [nfhslearn.com!](http://nfhslearn.com)

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Fax: 317-822-5700



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We're on the web!

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The image displays four NFHS publications:

- TRACK AND FIELD AND CROSS COUNTRY RULES BOOK 2016**: Features a female runner in mid-air over hurdles.
- TRACK AND FIELD AND CROSS COUNTRY CASE BOOK 2016**: Features a female runner in mid-air over hurdles.
- 2015 and 2016 TRACK AND FIELD AND CROSS COUNTRY OFFICIALS MANUAL**: Features a male runner in mid-air over hurdles.
- Cross Country Official Scorebook**: Features a female runner in motion.
- TRACK and FIELD Official Scorebook**: Features a male runner in mid-air over hurdles.

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