

Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes

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Rule 5-10-7, Note—Relay handoffs within exchange zone



Rule 7-5-19—Range of standard upright placement

2013



Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes

National Federation of State High School Associations



Relay Exchange Rule is Clarified

2013

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This year, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee added a Note and clarifying clause to the rule defining the baton exchange. The Note to Rule 5-10-7 states, "The incoming and outgoing runners shall not simultaneously touch the baton outside of the 20-meter exchange zone." In the rule, it states the baton shall be handed "within the exchange zone."

The actual exchange occurs when the outgoing runner first touches the baton and ends when the outgoing runner has sole possession of the baton. It does not matter where the runners are; it is only required that the exchange occurs while the baton is in the 20-meter zone (often marked by inward facing triangles or lines) to be legal. The baton must be passed off; in other words, from the hand of the incoming runner to the hand of the outgoing runner. It may not be thrown or tossed. Both competitors cannot be touching the baton at the same time outside the 20-meter exchange zone. The baton must be in sole possession of the outgoing runner before the competitor exits the zone.

If, by chance, the baton is dropped outside of the zone, only the competitor who drops it may pick it

up. However, if the baton is dropped within the exchange zone, either one of the runners may retrieve it as long as there is no interference with the other competitors.

Ideally, there should be four umpires at each zone – two at the beginning of the zone and two at the end. However, in many high school meets,

this is impractical. With less than four umpires, there are priorities on where to place the umpires. It is important to realize that in the 4x100, 4x200 and the first exchange of the 4 x 400, the exchanges are staggered and it can be difficult to observe the baton position in all 8 lanes. For the



The baton exchange must take place within the 20-meter exchange zone.

4x100, the most experienced official should be at the first zone because the exchange zones are staggered the most. The position which allows for the best view of all exchanges is on the outside of the track, about 10 feet past the end of the 20-meter exchange zone. The umpire is looking for any signs of a poor exchange such as tripping, pushing, shoving or slowing of competitors in a particular lane. Any infractions observed should immediately be reported to the head umpire or the referee.

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Another Year, Another Change on Uniforms



The NFHS Rules Committee took action on uniform rules for the upcoming season regarding the penalty for a violation. To start, the basic visible undergarment requirements remain the same: fabric of a single, solid color, unadorned; and single logo (school and/or manufacturer) of no more than 2 1/4 inches. The rules permit stitching in a different color than the fabric if it "functions as the actual seam of the undergarment's construction" (Rules 4-3-1(b) & (c) Notes and 9-6-1(b) & (c) Notes). On shirts, "actual seams" are often found along the sides of the body and around the armpit. But they may also be found in other places to hold the undergarment in a particular position. Note that actual seams are rarely in the form of a logo. An official's inspection should be cursory and brief; if intense analysis is needed, officials should err on the side that it complies with the rule. While the uniform rule was modified, it is still a violation for wearing an illegal uniform in competition. Coaches maintain the ultimate responsibility to ensure that all competitors are legally attired.

Although the ultimate compliance responsibility rests with the coach, meet officials enter into the equation at the meet and have two roles, preventative and enforcement.

Preventative: Officials should make an effort to monitor illegal uniforms or the wearing of jewelry a priority. Having

the competitor make the necessary uniform adjustments or removing jewelry prior to competition, when feasible, will eliminate the need for the "warning" or possible disqualification.

Enforcement: Officials shall issue a warning and further penalties when a competitor is not in compliance with the uniform rules. The meet referee is then responsible for informing the competitor's coach of the warning and that another violation will result in disqualification from the event.

The adjustment of this penalty to an individual warning and disqualification for a subsequent violation of the same rule is more appropriate for the severity of the actual violation. The responsibility remains with the coach to have athletes in legal uniforms for competition. Preventative officiating should also significantly reduce potential violations. Officials must follow the rules at **all** meets, including local meets and conference meets. A lack of knowledge or a personal disagreement with the uniform rule is no excuse for failing to enforce this and all rules during a meet. The meet referee should be certain he or she is aware of any special terms set forth by the games committee and communicate such information to the officiating crew. Good effort by coaches and officials will help the athletes compete with minimal rules violations.

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Primer for Head Event Judges in Field Events



The assignment of the head event judge of a field event can be daunting. However, keeping in mind the following reminders and anticipating potential problems will help your event run smoothly.

Prior to the event, make sure that you have or will be provided

the proper equipment for your event. Measuring tapes, clipboards, flags (if used), pencils, athletic tape, brooms, gloves, towels, timers/stopwatches and a current rule book are some of the items that may be used for your event. As a head event judge, attendance at any coaches/officials meeting prior to the event is extremely helpful. These meetings may include important information involving height progressions and the potential use of continuous flights in the vertical jumps. Also, information regarding the use of pooled implements (implements which have been inspected and, in effect, have lost their identity and can be used by any competitor without additional permission from their owners). Will there be competitors participating in more than one field event and/or running event? Will this involve your event? (See below).

On the day of the event, you and your officials crew should arrive early – a minimum of one hour for all events except for the pole vault, where two hours is recommended. *Risk minimization is your number one priority.*

- Carefully inspect the netting of the discus cage for any holes. Grab the netting and extend it towards you. Add at least three feet to the maximum point of stretch and call this the buffer zone where no competitor or official may get any closer.
- Check that the sectors are cordoned off with flagging, recommended a **minimum** of 10 feet parallel to the sector lines.
- Ensure the proper placement of padding for both high jump and pole vault pits.
- For the horizontal and throwing events, look for how the competitors will enter and exit the pits and throwing circles. This is especially important in the horizontal jumps should more than one pit be in use at the same time and in close proximity to each other.

For all field events, discuss with your crew the need to supervise warm-ups at all times, especially in the throwing events where eyes must be kept on the throwing circles. As a head event

judge who may be unfamiliar with some or all of your crew, ask them which positions they may be comfortable or uncomfortable in working. This ensures that competitors will receive the benefit of the official's expertise and provide that the event flows with minimal problems. Also, it may be extremely beneficial to enlighten your crew with any potential scenarios that may surface. Provide your expectations for the crew.

As a point of emphasis this year, when using flags, define clearly

how they will be used during the event.

Inform your crew and competitors a red flag indicates a foul and a white flag indicates a measured attempt. One suggested method is to use only one set of flags at the circle, arc or runway to avoid any potentially confusing scenarios. For those officials judging at the circle, arc or runway without flags, use thumbs up or thumbs down to indicate fair or foul, respectively. **Keep the flags raised (fair or foul) until sector officials acknowledge they see it. Acknowledgement may come from one of the sector officials raising or waving a hand.** Though there is no explicit provision for the use of a yellow flag in the NFHS rules, the head event judge may opt to have a flag raised at about 15 seconds prior to the attempt as a visual indicator

to the competitor that his or her time is close to expiring. This option may be helpful, especially if no visual timers are being used.

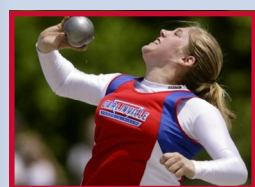
Another point of emphasis in this year's rules of competition involves understanding how excused competitors may complete their attempts. As a head event judge, it is your responsibility to determine, immediately prior to competition, which competitors are involved in a running or other field event at the same time as your event. The excused time limit is determined by the games committee (Rule 3-2-3). The head event judge should communicate this time limit clearly to the affected competitor(s) and note the time when the competitor leaves for the excused event. For both the throwing and horizontal events, and in both preliminaries and finals, the head event judge can accommodate the competitor by changing "the order of competition by any method" (Rule 6-2-5). Methods may include having the athlete use successive or alternating jumps/throws. For the vertical jumps, the order of jumping may be altered to assist the excused competitor (Rule 7-2-11).



Field event judges may use flags, although not required by NFHS rules. White and yellow flags are **required** for the umpires in running events.



Basic Training: Throwing Implements Inspection



High schools may tend not to regularly inspect implements except at “big deal” meets such as invitationals and state championships. As a result, illegal implements are often used at lower-level meets. This can have far-reaching consequences later in the season. Here are a few examples:

- At a qualifying meet for the state championship, one school had two boys’ shots disqualified for being underweight; both boys qualified for that meet by less than an inch. The difference in weight was more than enough to account for that difference.
- At a recent high school invitational meet, seven shots of an incorrect, lighter weight were impounded by the head field judge.
- At another invitational meet, a 3 kilogram shot was identified and impounded by the head field judge. It was written off as unintentional, that the contestant had no idea what weight of shot the competitor was supposed to use.

When illegal implements are not screened out, they can be used by some competitors (inadvertently or deliberately) to produce qualifying performances for post-season competition at the expense of other competitors. Likewise, there may also be instances where illegal implements are unsafe for use.

But implements have specifications in addition to weight. These are as important as the weight being above the minimum. For example, the discus and javelin fly aerodynamically so their size and shape affect the distance they travel. Therefore, all dimensions need to be checked. This can get complicated in the case of the javelin, since not all javelin specifications are in the NFHS Rules Book. Under Rule 6-6-2, the javelin must meet

all IAAF specifications; however, the important ones are listed in the NFHS Rules Book and will suffice.

The importance of implement inspection is shown in this year’s new rules. Rules 3-19-2 and 6-2-17 specify that illegal implements shall not be brought to the event venue and used in warm-ups and/or competition. One might ask why contestants would do this. The reason is generally that some athletes like to warm up with a heavy implement, most often the shot. This is okay, as long as the implement also meets the size specifications. The only other specifications for the shot, besides weight, are the diameter, roundness and surface roughness. As long as a heavy shot meets these specifications, it is permitted. Otherwise, it does not go to the venue. It should be **marked with the actual weight** so it doesn’t accidentally get thrown in competition. It would be good practice to inform the head event judge that there is a heavier implement in the pool.

Shots require periodic inspection. Depending on the nature of the throwing area, the surface of a shot can become rough or gouged. In either case, a rough or gouged surface is easier to grip and, therefore, creates an unfair advantage. Rough shots can be sanded or filed. Most gouged shots, however, need to be retired.

A rule change this year for the discus (6-4-2) corrects an issue from a few years ago and now fits what is reasonably manufactured. The rim now has to be between 12 and 13 millimeters thick, measured at a point ¼-inch from the edge. This is consistent with the other rules codes. However, it is not an easy measurement to take without a special gauge that most schools don’t have. But it is important – the thickness of the discus rim directly impacts its

handling qualities during the throw. Some brand-new rubber discuses have "out-of-spec" rims due to loose manufacturing tolerances.

Rubber discuses have other problems as well. Since they are really designed for practice and are made by mold-injecting and curing the rubber, they are frequently too large or too small in overall thickness, in overall diameter or a combination of both. Given that the thickness and diameter specifications allow a variation of only 2 millimeters, it is not surprising that some brand-new rubber discuses are "out-of-spec" in thickness or diameter. Also, normal use wears the rim of a rubber discus just enough in about half a season to no longer meet the smoothness rule. It may also become too thin. Taken together, these are reasons to consider whether purchasing rubber discuses is right for your school.

A steel-rimmed discus may sometimes get out of specifications, but can often be repaired. A rim that is rough can be smoothed with a piece of drywall sander or a file. When a discus is too thick, it is often because the flat plates become dished out. That discus can be taken apart and those plates flattened with a small hammer or pair of pliers. Another cause of thickness is grass and dirt getting under the plate. The discus can again be taken apart and the plate cleaned. Quite often, when that discus is put back together, it will be within the specifications.

There are two styles of javelin being used in high schools. Most are the steel-tipped javelins that are used in collegiate and open competition. Some have a rubber tip, which tend to have the balance point off of the grip. Since the specifications for the grip require that it be around the center of gravity, the balance point must fall within the grip. This can only be fixed with a rebuilding of the javelin. At the very least, the grip needs to be moved. That may change the profile measurements and therefore, must be done by a professional. Other than that, the javelin is not easily fixed on inspection. About all that can be done is to clean the javelin and perhaps glue the grip.

Coaches should review the rules of competition and the implement specifications with their athletes so everyone knows which implements they are to throw. Schools need to take care of the implements because they can become illegal after wear. Throwing onto rough surfaces accelerates the wear. Ultimately, implements that become illegal should be retired or repaired.

CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENT INSPECTION

Shot

1. **Check the weight**
2. **Check the diameter.**
3. **Check the surface for roughness or gouges.**

Discus

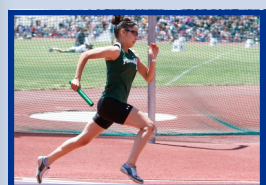
1. **Check the weight**
2. **Check the diameter**
3. **Check the overall thickness.**
4. **Check the rim thickness.**
5. **Check the rim for gouges.**
6. **Check the surface for roughness.**

Broken Javelin Results in Replacement Throw

Rule 6-6-9 indicates that should a competitor's javelin break during the throw it shall not count as a trial and a replacement throw is awarded. This change for the awarding of a replacement throw when the javelin breaks is consistent with the high school philosophy that competitors should not be penalized for equipment failure. It is important for the head event judge to confirm that the original throw is legal in all respects if a replacement throw is to be awarded to the competitor.

Number of Competitors to Advance to Finals in Field Events

Rules 6-2-3 and 7-2-3 now provide that, unless there is specific action from the games committee, at least one or more competitors than there are scoring places shall qualify for the finals. This change in the rules provides for greater consistency in the number of competitors to advance to the final round of competition. Coaches and officials will know in advance what to expect for the advancement in field events. However, if the games committee is going to advance more than one competitor beyond scoring places, this condition for the competition must be communicated to the coaches and the respective head event judges before the competition to avoid confusion when indicating the competitors to move on to the finals competition.



Working Together: Meet Management and the Referee

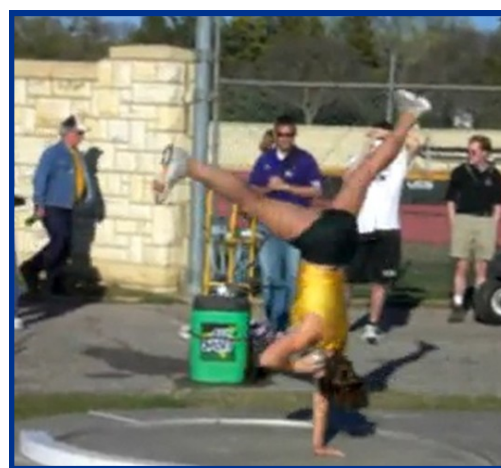
Meet management (meet director and/or games committee) and the referee must work together to have a smooth-flowing and effective track meet. A common goal for both is a fair and balanced competition, along with what is the most important item – safety. Meet management has the basic administrative responsibilities of the meet (Rules 3-2-1 and 3-2-2), while the referee has jurisdiction of the competition and the enforcement of all competition rules violations.

Meet management establishes the schedule, advancement procedures, scoring, approved markers and starting heights. The fewer deviations from the rules and common practices for the mechanics of the competition, the easier it is for coaches, competitors and the referee. One example of changes could be in meet scoring. About 90% or more of high school meets use the scoring table in Rule 2-1-2. However, in special invitational meets, meet management may choose to use double points in the relay competition to emphasis team competition. One area of the rules that cannot be amended is required safety items and the pre-meet inspections of each competition venue by the meet management and the referee.

Once established, the administrative terms and conditions for each meet should be in writing with sufficient copies provided to the referee, in order to have the key officials aware of the provisions for the enforcement of these special conditions along with the rules. Without a written copy, it is very difficult for the referee and event officials to uniformly enforce the rules at all venues. With proper planning and communication, it becomes easy for meet management and the referee to work together.

Cartwheeling Clearly Prohibited in Shot Put

A few years ago, it became an internet video sensation in the track and field community: a female shot putter stands in the back of the ring, executes a one-handed cartwheel and then releases the implement from her other hand, all while staying in the ring. There was



no rule prohibiting it at the time, so many viewed it as a legal attempt. It is actually illegal, as the shot at one point is below the shoulder, but many did not make this connection to the high school rule. The same technique appeared on the professional stage in Europe. As social media continued to pick it up, more and more athletes started to try this new method. At every level, there was concern with this technique.

Shortly thereafter, the IAAF (international governing body for track and field) passed a rule prohibiting the technique for reasons of risk minimization. USATF and the NCAA followed suit. This year, the NFHS includes the same rule for clarity.

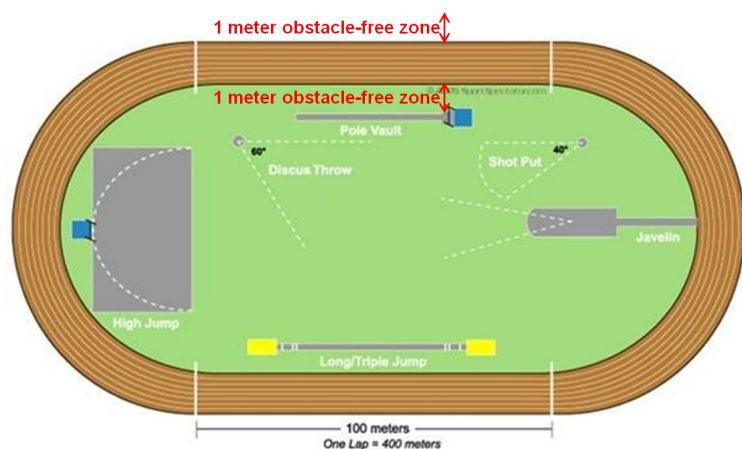
The safety concern should be obvious, that competitors will land on their head while unsuccessfully executing the cartwheel. There are similar prohibitions for other events for reasons of risk minimization, such as no somersaults in the long jump or spinning in the javelin throw.



Clearing the Path: Removing Unnecessary Obstacles

Risk minimization has become an issue at facilities where sports events are conducted, and track and field meets are no exception. There have been athletes, while attempting to leave the track after relay exchanges, who have crashed into electronic display boards, promotional advertising boards or even tripped on starting blocks, which are often placed close to the track rail after being removed from the track.

A new Rule 5-1-5 recommends a 1-meter "obstacle-free zone" on



the inside and outside of the track. Before the next track meet starts and while it is underway, take a moment and focus on how you can improve safety around you. A few things to think about:

- The inside and outside perimeters of the track often become collection locations for hurdles, signs, equipment and even vehicles such as "Gators" and golf carts. It is extremely important to maintain these areas as obstacle-free zones for the purpose of risk minimization.
- Vertical jumps venues are also a growing concern. Pallets and other devices are often used to elevate the pads (and increase their life). While it is a good idea to drain them on pallets to eliminate soaking up water from the weather or irrigation head, it is unacceptable for them to protrude beyond the pads. If the pallet dimensions are not consistent with the pad dimensions, the pallets need to be removed during warm-ups and competitions. By rule, all hard and unyielding surfaces that extend out from beneath the sides and back of the landing pads shall be padded, as per Rules 7-4-4 and 7-5-9.

All parties involved at the meet should take responsibility for ensuring that the conditions around the venue are reasonably safe and look for ways to eliminate the hazards. Good risk minimization practices help keep athletes, coaches, spectators and officials from injuries.

Rules Committee Adds Time Limit for Consecutive Jumping Field Event Attempts

For years, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Book has established time limits for competitors. The general rule is that a competitor has one minute to initiate an attempt (pole vault, 1.5 minutes). There is often an ongoing issue of consecutive attempts at the high school level because competitors participate in multiple events. In the past, time limits for consecutive attempts were not addressed in the Rules Book.

Sometimes high school associations, coaches, meet directors or officials would set their own time guidelines, resulting in various time limits from meet to meet.

For 2013, the NFHS Rules Committee has added the following chart and a new time limit for consecutive jumps to the Rule Book.

Number of athletes competing at the start of the round	Individual Events			Combined Events		
	HJ	PV	Other FE	HJ	PV	Other FE
More than 3	1	1.5	1	1	1.5	1
2 or 3 remaining	3	4	1	3	4	1
1 remaining	5	6	1	5	6	1
Consecutive Trials	2	3	2	2	3	2

A few reminders:

- Consecutive trials are multiple jumping attempts by the same competitor. The added time helps the competitor who, because he or she is competing in more than one event at the same time, needs to take consecutive attempts. In the pole vault and high jump, a competitor making the last attempt at one bar height and the first attempt at the next bar height **is not** considered a consecutive attempt.
- If a competitor fails to initiate the jump within the time limit, it is considered a foul.
- A competitor can pass a jump or height at any time, except for a jump-off in high jump and pole vault for first place, but must inform the head event judge before the start of the clock.



Continuous Flights Revisited: "5-Alive" vs. "5-Active"



At large invitational meets, there is often a question concerning the procedure for conducting the high jump and pole vault in order to keep the events moving and maintain interest. Rule 7-2-8 allows for the use of "continuing flights" when there are large fields. The purpose of these continuing flights is to keep the competition moving and the competitors warmed up for their second or third jumps at a height, instead of having them wait until everyone has completed their first jump. As a competitor clears a bar, passes a turn at a height or is eliminated, the next competitor in order will be moved up so that the number of competitors in the continuing flight remains constant at five.

This year, the rule was rewritten and edited for clarity. Two methods are provided for including the next competitor in the vertical jumps. In each method, the basic premise is the same: five jumpers remain in the continuing flight until they make the jump, have three misses at the height or pass their remaining attempt(s). When this happens, the next jumper is added to the flight. The difference is where the next jumper is added to the continuing flight. In one method, commonly referred to as

"5 Alive," the new jumper is placed in the location where the previous jumper had been participating in the jumping order. This is generally the method for the NCAA and other levels of competition. The other method, called "5-Active," places the new jumper at the end of the jumping order.

In each, the process continues until you have eight or fewer competitors remaining at the height. At that point, the competitors are called in the order they appear on the event card (sheet).

Each method has its pros and cons, as listed in the chart below.

Let's look at an example using each method:

5-Alive

There are 20 jumpers (A-T) jumping at a height. The first five jumpers are A, B, C, D and E.

A, B, D and E miss their first jumps; C makes her first jump. F is added to the order. So, the order is now A, B, F, D and E.

A, B and E miss their jumps; F and D make their jumps. So the order for the next jumps is A, B, G, H and E.

B, E and G miss their jumps; A and H make their jumps. Because A, B and E had

	5-Alive	5-Active
Pro	A jumper who misses will always have four attempts by other competitors before his/her next attempt.	May be easier to read jumping order because it is top to bottom on the flight sheet.
Con	It may be difficult to administer because competitor order is not from top to bottom of the flight sheet.	- New competitors may not be included in the order. - Jumpers do not always have a consistent number of other jumpers prior to their next attempt.

their third attempt, I, J and K are added. (This would have happened whether it was a make or miss.) The next jumping order is I, J, G, H and K.

G, H and J miss their jumps; I and K make their jumps. So the order for the next jumps is L, J, G, H and M.

"5 Alive", in chart form (with the jumps in superscript):

Competitors			
A	X ¹	X ⁶	O ¹¹
B	X ²	X ⁷	X ¹²
C	O ³		
D	X ⁴	O ⁹	
E	X ⁵	X ¹⁰	X ¹⁵
F	O ⁸		
G	X ¹³	X ¹⁸	X ²³
H	X ¹⁴	X ¹⁹	O ²⁴
I	O ¹⁶		
J	X ¹⁷	O ²²	
K	O ²⁰		
L	X ²¹		
M	O ²⁵		
...	...		

5-Active

There are 20 jumpers (A-T) jumping at a height. The first five jumpers are A, B, C, D and E.

A, B, D and E miss their first jumps; C makes her first jump.

F is added to the order so the order is now A, B, D, E and F.

A, B and E miss their jumps; F and D make their jumps. So the order for the next jumps is A, B, E, G and H.

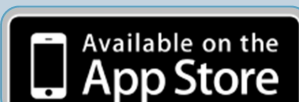
B, E and G miss their jumps; A and H make their jumps.

Because A, B and E had their third attempt, I, J and K are added. (This would have happened whether it was a make or miss.) The next jumping order is G, H, I, J and K.

G, H and J miss their jumps; I and K make their jumps. So, the order for the next jumps is L, J, I, L and M.

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"5 Active", in chart form (with the jumps in superscript):

Competitors			
A	X ¹	X ⁶	O ¹¹
B	X ²	X ⁷	X ¹²
C	O ³		
D	X ⁴	O ⁸	
E	X ⁵	X ⁹	X ¹³
F	O ¹⁰		
G	X ¹⁴	X ¹⁶	X ²¹
H	X ¹⁵	X ¹⁷	O ²²
I	O ¹⁸		
J	X ¹⁹	O ²³	
K	O ²⁰		
L	X ²⁴		
M	O ²⁵		
...	...		

Both "5-Alive" and "5-Active" can present challenges to the head event judge and the competitors. However, with continued use and application, a familiarity will develop and both methods will serve their purpose well. It is important the method to be utilized is clearly communicated be-

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Vertical Jumps Rules More Similar in All Rules Codes

Over the years, rules changes have brought the high school rules in closer alignment to other rules codes. Three rules changes for this year in the vertical jumps (pole vault and high jump) are in that vein. While these new rules were not expressly prohibited by the prior rules, the rules changes remove possible ambiguity in interpreting the rules.

Crossbar Endpieces

In prior years, the rules have not specified any requirements for the end pieces on the crossbar. This year, rules changes to Rules 7-4-6 and 7-5-11 specifically allow the use of the two most commonly encountered end pieces: four-sided flat end pieces and now semicircular end pieces.

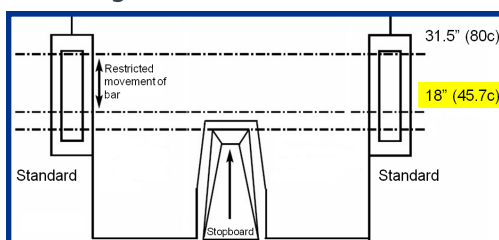
Chalk or Adhesive

In prior years, the rules permitted vaulters to use chalk or an adhesive on their hands. Rule 7-5-21 now allows the vaulter to use the chalk or adhesive on their hands **or** on the pole, as is allowed in the NCAA and USATF rules. Whether the chalk or adhesive is applied to the hands or the pole, the purpose and effect is the same – to improve the vaulter's grip.

The rule also now expressly states that forearm covers may be worn.

Pole Vault Standard Placement

Previously, the allowed range for the placement of standards was 15.5 inches to 31.5 inches. This year, the minimum placement changes to **18 inches (45.7 cm)**. Requiring a standard setting of at least 18 inches is to improve risk minimization factors – by requiring a minimum setting of 18 inches, the vaulter is forced to aim the trajectory of the jump farther into the landing area. This reduces the risk that the vaulter might have a short trajectory and land in front of the pads or in the plant box. There are different settings of which officials should be aware if working with other rules codes.



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. High School RIO™ is currently collecting its 4th year of track and field exposure and injury data. 2010-11 High School RIO™ data shows that both boys' and girls' track and field have among the lowest injury rates of the 20 sports under surveillance. Additionally, boys' track and field injury rates have dropped slightly over the past 3 years. Thigh/upper leg sprains/strains are by far the most common injury in track and field representing 33.6% of all boys' and 24.9% of all girls' injuries. Injury patterns differ by event. For example, pole vaulting accounted for 6.4% of all track and field injuries. However, 9 of the 24 (37.5%) concussions sustained in track and field occurred while pole vaulting. Understanding such patterns of injury is one important tool when considering a new rule change and keeping risk minimization as a priority in the efforts to keep track and field athletes as safe as possible.



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

Snapshot of 2013 Rules

New requirements for passing the baton in the exchange zone, and the penalty for wearing an illegal uniform highlighted changes in high school track and field rules for 2013.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field Rules Committee approved 16 rules changes at its June 6-8, 2012 meeting in Indianapolis. All rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Rule 5-10-7 now states that the baton shall be handed from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner **within the exchange zone**. In addition, a new note states that "the incoming and outgoing runners shall not simultaneously touch the baton outside of the 20-meter exchange zone." "This change will provide consistency in enforcement and will minimize a judgment call," said Becky Oakes, NFHS director of sports and staff liaison to the Track and Field Rules Committee. "The new language fits the current technique of exchange method in high school track."

A competitor wearing an illegal uniform will first be issued a warning and will be required to make the uniform legal prior to further competition. A subsequent violation during the competition would result in disqualification from the event. Previously, the competitor was automatically disqualified for an illegal uniform.

"This adjustment of the penalty for an illegal uniform is more appropriate for the severity of the actual violation," Oakes said. "The rule has been loosely enforced during the regular season and more strictly enforced at state tournament time. The responsibility remains with the coach to have his or her athletes in legal uniforms for competition." Among the changes in rules for field events, the most significant perhaps is a revision in the pole vault. The standards or uprights shall be set to position the crossbar from **18 inches** beyond the vertical plane of the top of the stopboard, instead of the previous distance of **15.5 inches**. The maximum distance remains 31.5 inches.

"This change will help vaulters land more in the center of the pad, providing a better range of placement of the standards and positioning the crossbar for risk minimization," Oakes said.

Two additional changes approved by the rules committee focused on reducing the risk of injury. Rules 3-19-2 and 6-2-

16 were revised to state that only legal implements used in throwing events are allowed in warm-ups. Also, a new article in Rule 5-1 recommends, when feasible, an obstacle-free zone on the inside and outside of the track at least 1 meter in width.

Five other changes in throwing events were approved by the committee:

- Rule 6-2-2 requires the three preliminary trials to be taken in flights of no less than five in the order in which the competitors are listed for competition.
- In Rule 6-2-3, with no action from the games committee, one more competitor than places scored will advance to the finals.
- In Rule 6-4-2, a range of ¼-inch is allowed in the rim thickness of the discus (.472 inches to .512 inches).
- In Rule 6-5-9j, it is a foul if the competitor uses the "cartwheel" technique in the shot put.
- In Rule 6-6-9, if the javelin breaks during the throw or in the air, it shall not count as a trial provided the throw is in accordance with the rules. A replacement throw shall be awarded.
- In Rule 7, the committee approved the following revision to Rule 7-4-6 in the high jump: "In addition to the commonly used four-sided flat crossbar ends, the use of a crossbar fitted with alternative ends (semicircular) is permitted."

In addition, the rules committee added time limits for consecutive attempts in jumping events which had not been addressed previously.

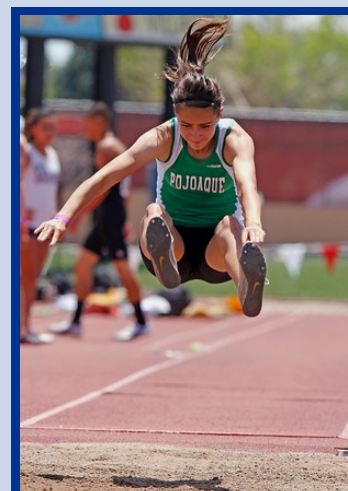
Outdoor track and field is the second-most popular sport for boys, with 575,628 participants, and most popular sport for girls, with 468,747 participants, as the high school level, according to the 2011-12 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey. The sport ranks second in school sponsorship with 16,218 schools sponsoring the sport for boys and 16,143 sponsoring the sport for girls.

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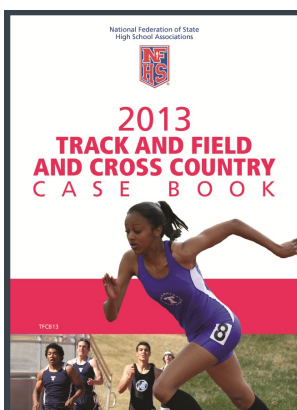
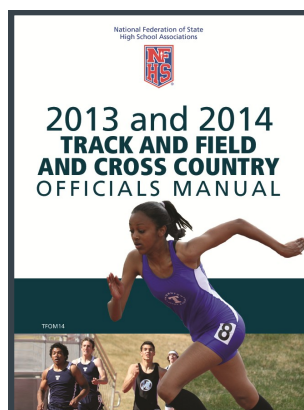
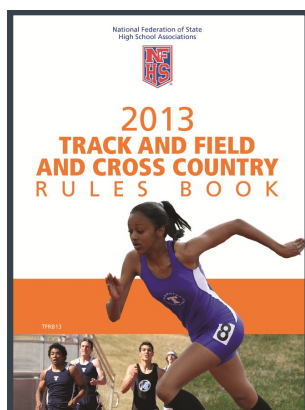
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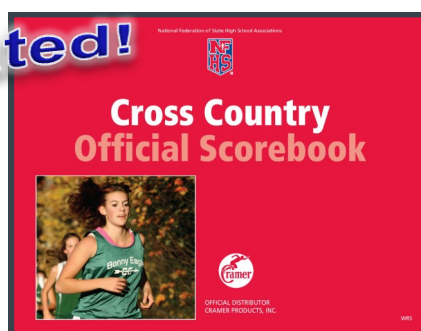
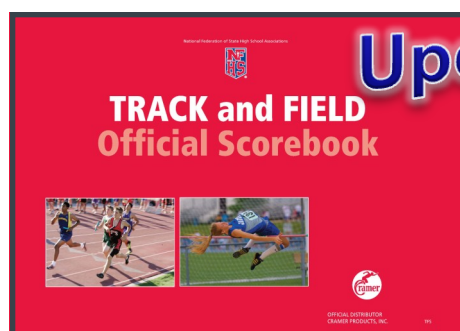
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