



Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes

2009

National Federation of State High School Associations

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Inside this issue:

- Leaving Ground **2**
in Pole Vault
is a Foul
- Music in My Ears **3**
or Not
- A Matter of **3**
(Tenths of a)
Second
- The Crossbar's **4**
Cloth Marker: A
Retrospective
- That Runner is **4**
Wearing A Hat.
How is That
Legal?
- Recent Pole Vault **5**
Rule Changes
- Spotlight: **6**
Umpiring the
4x100 Meter
Relay
- Basic Training: **8**
Officiating the
Javelin Throw
- Start of the Race **11**
- What is Excused **11**
Time and How
Does it Work?
- Breaking Ties in **12**
Running Events



Welcome to NFHS "Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes"

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee has identified a need to provide additional educational opportunities for officials and coaches in track and field and cross country. Training materials for new and experienced officials assist in administrating meets more effectively. This same need exists for the newer officials working USATF meets. In many cases, the same individual works high school and USATF meets.

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee and the USATF Officials Training Subcommittee are combining our efforts and experience to provide educational articles to address new NFHS rules and other areas to assist officials with their responsibilities. The articles will assist coaches in knowing and understanding the rules as well. This joint outreach helps accomplish the missions of both organizations to provide quality experiences for their participants in the sport and a training service for officials.

Through "Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes" and other training materials, we hope to provide teaching tools to assist

officials in being prepared in the sport and to provide enjoyable experiences for all athletes through well-run competitions.

There continues to be an increased need for sport officials in most sports, and track and field is no exception. For more information on becoming a registered/certified official, contact:

High School— Contact your state high school athletic/activities association at: www.nfhs.org —> Member Associations —> State Associations
USATF— Contact USA Track & Field at: www.usatfofficials.com —> Certification



Bungee Cord Prohibited for Pole Vault

Early last season, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee clarified that the use of a bungee cord is not permitted during the competition or warm-up period prior to the event. The bungee cord is considered a training device inappropriate for use at interscholastic meets. This prohibition is now expressly stated in Rule 7-5-4: "A competitor shall not use a bungee cord, variable weight pole, a pole which is improperly marked or a pole rated below his/her weight during competition."



This year, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee revised Rule 7-5-29b to clarify its original intent: pole vaulters shall be charged with a foul if their feet leave the ground in an attempt to clear the crossbar and are unsuccessful, but not when momentum causes their feet to leave the ground while aborting an approach.



Leaving Ground in Pole Vault is a Foul

As the song goes, “everything old is new again.” This applies to the pole vault rule (7-5-29) regarding whether the vaulter leaving the ground is considered a foul. In a revision last year, vaulters were allowed to leave the ground and not have a foul charged to them provided they did not touch the ground or landing system beyond the vertical plane of the zero point. This year, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee revised Rule 7-5-29b to clarify its original intent: pole vaulters shall be charged with a foul if their feet leave the ground in an attempt to clear the crossbar and are unsuccessful, but not when momentum causes their feet to leave the ground while aborting an approach.

“The change in 7-5-29 last year by the committee was not intended to allow a vaulter to abort a vault but rather to have the opportu-

nity to stop and abort the approach,” said Becky Oakes, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Track and Field Rules Committee.

Although the decision is somewhat subjective, here are a few things to consider when making the determination of foul or no foul:

- *Did the athlete begin to slow down prior to planting the pole in the box?* If he or she did, it may indicate the athlete wanted to abort the approach, and ultimately, the vault.
- *To what extent did the athlete leave the ground?* If the athlete’s feet were only a few inches or so off the ground, this may be an indication that he or she tried to abort the approach.

- *Did the athlete remain in an upright position?* If the athlete planted and planned to abort, he or she would tend to jump straight or lean forward. If he or she leaned back when leaving the ground, it might indicate an attempt.
- *Did the pole have an arc as the vaulter returned to the ground?* If the pole has a noticeable arc, it may indicate an attempt.

Ultimately, it is the head event judge’s decision whether the vaulter leaving the ground is ruled an unsuccessful attempt. If the head event judge determines it was due to momentum, this should be immediately communicated to the vaulter so he/she can execute a restart of the approach and attempt if time remains.

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Music in My Ears or Not: The Games Committee's Question Regarding Electronic Devices

Unlike other rule codes which prohibit the use of any personal electronic devices within the competition area (except for management purposes), the NFHS Track and Field Rules Book authorizes the games committee to determine what, if any, restriction(s) to place on the use of electronic devices in the competition area.

Before we begin, it is important to realize the NFHS rules limit the use of wireless devices for communicating with competitors during competition, even if electronic devices are otherwise permitted. (Rule 4-6-8e.) Also, photographs, videos, or other visual reproductions of a competitor's performance cannot be viewed by that competitor before the completion of the competition. (Rule 4-6-8g.)

Because the use of personal electronic devices by coaches, contestants or officials is not completely prohibited, how does the games committee decide when to restrict, and if so, to what degree? Here are a few areas for the games committee to think

about when making the decision:

Risk Minimization: This is a perennial point of emphasis and something that should factor into every decision. The wearing of earphones at a throwing venue may result in an athlete not hearing a warning shout to avoid an errant flying implement. This would apply not only to throwing venues, but to any venue near or within range of a throwing venue. This may not apply to every event venue.

Officials' Instructions: Even if risk minimization is not a major factor, a fair and efficient meet requires athletes to hear the official's instructions and respond appropriately to commands affecting them (e.g. being called "up" in a field event or the clerk's instructions in a running event). However, once an athlete's attempts are concluded, this no longer becomes a factor.

Enforcement: Any restriction is only as good as its enforcement. A games committee may decide not to have any restriction because it will be difficult to enforce consistently throughout the meet.

Formality of the Meet: At an early season meet or dual meet, the games committee (which may even be a committee of one) may decide that the informality of the meet does not justify the restriction.

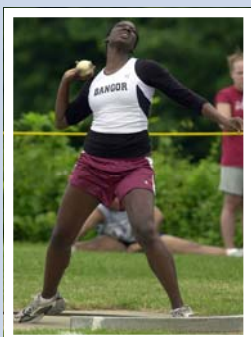
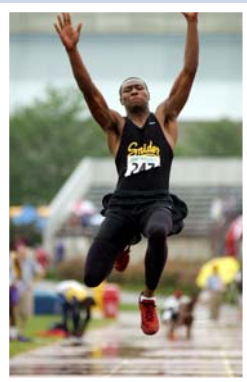
Ultimately, the games committee, after weighing these and other considerations, has to decide the appropriateness of personal electronic devices for that particular meet, unless determined otherwise by state association policy.

A Matter of (Tenths of a) Second

When it comes to hand timing, it really is a matter of TENTHS of a second. While most stopwatches display to the hundredths of a second, Rule 3-9-4 states that non-fully automatic times "shall be rounded up to the next tenth of a second."

So, a time of 00:10.42 on the stopwatch is recorded as 10.5 seconds. A time of 00:10.50 on the stopwatch is also recorded as 10.5 seconds. Proper instructions should be provided to all timers to ensure times are being recorded accurately.





The Crossbar's Cloth Marker: A Retrospective

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee has eliminated the option to place a cloth marker on the crossbar for sighting purposes in the high jump and pole vault.

With today's crossbars being bright with contrasting colors, this option has fallen into disuse. However, when cloth markers were first used, they served a real and necessary purpose. The first three types of crossbars were made from saplings, then bamboo, and then angle iron. All were earthen (tan/brown) in color and very difficult to see, especially at venues with any type of spectator bleachers, bench-type seating, fences, or rooflines in the background with horizontal lines. The crossbar blended in with the background resulting in athletes having trouble "finding the bar." Additionally, many competitors, because of the lack of wide

availability of prescription eyeglasses, may also have had depth perception problems. Thus, allowing a piece of cloth to be affixed to the bar assisted with the visual acuity difficulties related to the bar. It also was useful in determining the wind direction and velocity.

The introduction of the angle iron-bar afforded the opportunity for it to be painted with two different alternating contrasting colors, usually yellow and black. While this could have been done with the bamboo and sapling bars, these crossbars often had a short lifespan – breaking when struck with the body, usually upon landing on the mat.

With the introduction of fiberglass bars, solid dark colors were initially supplied. Over time, companies evolved into placing promotional information at the

center of the bar in contrasting colors to the rest of the crossbar. The use of separate wind indicator devices, such as wind socks or ribbons, placed near the mats were introduced as requirements for outdoor competitions by various rule books.



Current crossbars are of bright, contrasting colors and no longer present a sighting problem.

This negated the need for using the cloth marker for that purpose. Corrective lenses being commonplace eliminated or reduced the depth perception problems. Therefore, the original purposes for the cloth marker have been eliminated.

That Runner is Wearing A Hat. How is That Legal?

It is a cold and windy day, and two schools are having their first outdoor meet of the season. The distance runners want to wear stocking caps and gloves. Is that legal?

This is one of the nearly 40 items that Rule 3-2 permits

the games committee to decide. For dual meets, the games committee is often the coach of the host school. While not every item needs to be decided for every meet, some should be decided so that confusion or problems do not develop later.

Back to our cold outdoor meet. Rule 3-2-4o allows the games committee to "[r]estrict the wearing of items which are worn in excess of the school uniform required by rule." If the games committee does not impose a restriction, then

(see Hat p. 7)

Recent Pole Vault Rule Changes

Over the past few years, the pole vault event has probably seen the most rule changes, with most focusing on risk minimization. Here is a quick review of the changes. (Rule references refer to the 2009 NFHS Rule Book.)

Weight Rating to be Placed on Pole

(2000) (Rule 7-5-3)

The manufacturer's pole rating had to be included on the pole in a contrasting color, a minimum size of 3/4 inch, on or above the top hand-hold band.

Increased Pit Size

(2003) (Rule 7-5-7)

The minimum pit size increased to 19'8" wide by 20'2" deep, with a minimum width of 19'8" beyond the back of the standard bases. These were the dimensions recommended by the American Society for Testing and Measurement. This same year, pit sizes also increased in the NCAA.

Plant Box Padding ("box collar") Required

(2003) (Rule 7-5-14)

Required a minimum of 2 inches of dense foam padding to pad exposed "hard and unyielding surface" when the landing system is not flush with the plant box.

Reduction in Crossbar Depth Settings

(2004) (Rule 7-5-19)

The range for setting the crossbar was reduced to 15.5 to 31.5 inches (40 to 80 cm). Previously, the crossbar could be set anywhere up to 12 inches in front of the zero point to 30 inches (76 cm) behind the zero point.

Athlete Weight and Pole Verification by Coach

(2006) (Rules 7-5-3 and 7-5-3 Note 2)

Clarified that prior to the competition, the coach must verify that the vaulter's weight is appropriate for the pole being used and al-

lowed the state association to determine its own procedures to implement this rule.

Only Manufacturer's Pole Rating Mark Acceptable

(2009) (Rule 7-5-3 Note 1 and 7-5-4)

The failure to have the manufacturer's 3/4-inch contrasting color weight rating band on or above the top handhold position renders the pole illegal for use in competition.



Etchings, serial numbers, etc., although containing pole characteristics for the manufacturer, shall not replace the pole rating manufacturer's mark. Homemade marks placed on poles are not acceptable. (This includes pre-1995 poles.)

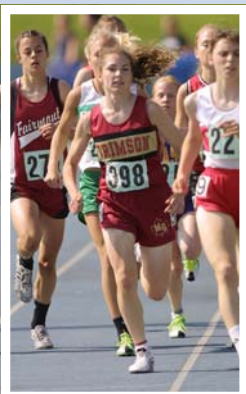
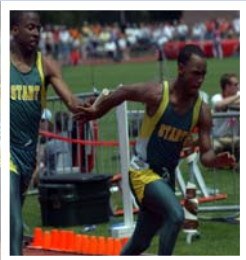
Emphasis that Poles Cannot be Altered

(2009) (Rule 7-5-4 Note)

Emphasized, for risk minimization purposes, that a pole altered "in any fashion" renders the pole illegal for use in competition. This applies most specifically to poles that have been cut.

A Quick Review of Changes

1. Increased Pit Size
2. Plant Box Padding Required
3. Reduction in Crossbar Depth Settings
4. Athlete Weight and Pole Verification by Coach
5. Weight Rating to be Placed on Pole
6. Only Manufacturer's Pole Rating Mark Acceptable
7. Emphasis that Poles Cannot be Altered



Spotlight: Umpiring the 4x100 Meter Relay

In the ideal world, every high school track and field meet would have at least 12 umpires positioned around the track for every race. In the real world, it may be difficult to get one person for each exchange zone of the 4x100 meter relay. In this spotlight, we will discuss umpiring the 4x100 meter relay in the following four topics: (1) exchange zone specifications, (2) positioning of the outgoing runner, (3) actual baton exchange, and (4) positioning of umpires and tips on what to observe.

Exchange Zone Specification: The exchange zone is 20 meters long (Rule 5-3-3). It is commonly marked with inward facing triangles; these triangles are part of the 20-meter zone. It may also be marked with lines which are included within the 20 meters. In the 4x100 meter relay, there is also a 10-meter acceleration zone (Rule 5-3-4) which precedes the exchange zone, commonly marked with a small triangle or distinctive line. (This is sometimes called the "international," "run-up," or "fly" zone.) This mark is included within the 10 meters.

Positioning of the Outgoing Runner: The outgoing runner must take his or her preparatory position entirely within the team's lane and anywhere in the acceleration or exchange zones. Team members are permitted to put markers (generally tape) down on the track; all marks must be in the team's lane.



The size, number, and type permitted is determined by the games committee. (Rule 5-9-9)

Actual Baton Exchange: The exchange BEGINS when the outgoing runner first touches the baton. It ENDS when the incoming runner has completely released the baton. The exchange must occur WITHIN the exchange zone.

A few points to remember:

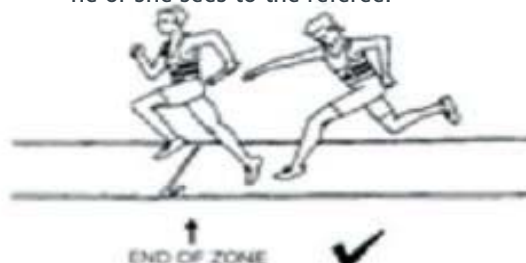
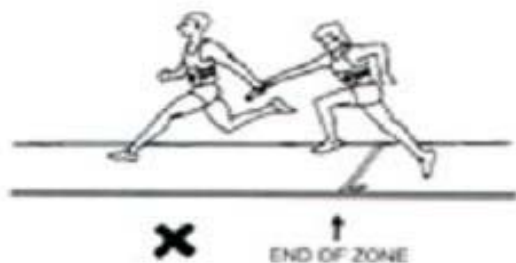
- It is the position of the BATON that is decisive: the baton must be within the exchange zone during the exchange. The position of the runners is irrelevant.
- The exchange must be a handoff – the baton cannot be thrown between team members.
- If the baton is dropped within the exchange zone in a genuine attempt to pass (i.e. not thrown), either runner may recover the baton. (Rule 5-9-7)

Umpire Positioning and Observation

Tips: As stated in the introduction, the ideal world would have at least four umpires at each exchange zone (two at the beginning; two at the end). With less than four, there are priorities on where to place the umpires. If you only have one umpire at the exchange zone, you need to assign the most experienced person to the first exchange zone. Because the race is run in lanes, the starting lines (and, therefore, the exchange zones) are staggered so each team runs exactly 400 meters. This means that the end of the first exchange zone of the outside lane is further down the track than the first exchange zone of the inside lane. To see as much as you can, you will want to position yourself about

(continued)

8-10 feet past the end of the exchange zone in the outside lane. This allows you a narrow field of vision of the end of the exchange zones for all the lanes. While you may not see all the exchanges, any slowing of athletes should get your attention so you can focus on that team's exchange. A similar position in the second and third exchange zone is recommended. With more umpires, you can fill in positions on the inside and outside



of the track and at the beginning and end of the exchange zones.

Umpires should also be alert to any interference which occurs. Because the 4x100 meter relay is run entirely in lanes, the incoming runner can and should remain in his or her lane after the exchange until the exchanges in the other lanes have occurred. If a runner leaves his or her lane and interferes with another lane, the umpire should report what he or she sees to the referee.

Hat

(continued from pg. 4)

the athletes may wear items that do not violate the jewelry rule or become unsporting. Because a hat and gloves (for distance runners) are not jewelry, they would be permitted. [Note that gloves for relay athletes are prohibited by Rule 5-9-5.] But the games committee can also impose a partial restriction, such as allowing unadorned headbands but disallowing hats.

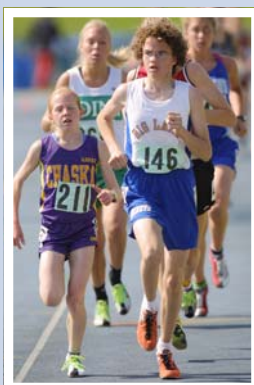
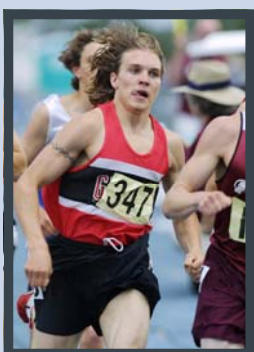
Here are a few other examples of games committee decision items:

- The track at the host school is very new and the groundskeeper does not want to have tape put on the track for relay exchanges. The host coach (acting as the games committee) informs the visiting coach that they will use half tennis balls for markers. This is permitted under Rule 3-2-4b, which allows the games committee to specify the type of marking material that can be used.
- The host school is using FAT timing with hip numbers. Since the jersey may cover the number, host management wants to require that the jerseys be tucked into the shorts so numbers are clearly visible.

Under Rule 3-2-4j, the games committee is permitted to "[d]eclare that the top portion of the uniform must be tucked into the bottom portion."

The games committee making decisions on these items may prevent having to solve problems or misunderstandings during the meet because, as seen above, unless the games committee has expressly disallowed certain items, they are considered legal unless state association policy restricts them statewide.





Basic Training: Officiating the Javelin Throw

Although the javelin event is not sanctioned in every state, this event is exciting for competitors and spectators alike. As with all events, risk of injury and efficiency in running the event can be accomplished with good planning, officiating, and coaching.

The rules specific to the javelin are set forth in the NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Book in Rule 6-6.

Preparation of Javelin Venue:

The javelin venue should have ample space to accommodate both the runway and the landing area, eliminating any potential overlap with adjacent venues. The runway should be a minimum length of 120 feet (36.5 m) and be marked by two parallel lines 13 feet, 1½ inches (4 m) apart, and terminated by a foul-line arc with a radius of 26 feet, 3 inches (8 m). See Figure (page 10). The foul-line arc shall be marked with either a white marking material or a white plastic, metal or wood band 2¾ inches (7 cm) wide. (NFHS rules permit use of a metal band.) The band is placed within the landing sector, with the edge toward the runway coinciding with the foul-line arc. Foul line

extensions 2¾ inches (7 cm) in width and at least 5½ inches (75 cm) in length shall be placed or painted on each side of the runway to the side boundaries at the intersection of the foul-line arc and the inside of the side boundary lines. The landing sector into which the javelin must fall is defined by extending radii through the two intersections of the arc with the runway lines and a point midway between the runway lines which is 26 feet, 3 inches (8 m) from the foul line. See Figure (page 10). The intersection point should be clearly marked on the runway with paint or other marking material. The lines designating the landing area should be placed along the edge of the extended radii, outside of the landing sector, so that an implement landing on the line would be outside the landing sector.

Implements:

The specifications for the javelin for boys and girls competition are set forth in the NFHS Rule Book at Rule 6-6-1 and 6-6-2. It should be noted that NFHS rules permit a rubber tip in lieu of the metal point on the javelin. State associations determine what option for the javelin tip applies to their state.

Risk Minimization Procedures Before and During Competition:

No javelin event, including practice and competition, should take place unless trained personnel, preferably certified officials, are available to conduct the event. All athletes must be instructed on javelin risk minimization rules and regulations prior to being allowed to throw or compete, and no throws should be permitted after the conclusion of the competition. A designated area outside of the marked landing sector should be roped off with brightly colored flags, fence, etc., and posted warning signs. One or more marshals should be placed to assure that no athletes or spectators enter this designated area without supervision. All competitors waiting to throw shall be made to wait well behind the throwing area, and all thrown javelins shall be retrieved by designated officials or trained volunteers who will return the implements to a designated point behind the foul-line arc. During warm-ups, it is recommended that retrievers wait outside the sector until directed to retrieve the implements by an official at

(continued)

the foul-line arc, who will step onto the runway and raise a red flag to halt warm-up throws, usually after five implements have been thrown. Once the sector is clear, the foul-line official shall signal the next five javelins to be thrown. Upon completion of warm-ups, and prior to the beginning of competition, the runway should be designated as closed by placement of a brightly colored cone or other similar object in the center of the runway at the foul-line.

Position and Duties of Officials:

- Please note: Many of the positions described below can be combined when the optimal number of officials is not available. For example, both timer and flight coordinator duties or marker and sector judge duties may be handled by one individual.

Tape puller: pulls tape through runway point ("A"); tape on the right side of the sector; competitors enter from left side to avoid the measuring tape

Flight coordinator: calls competitors up; closes runway after five warm-up throws; may serve as 1st recorder

Timer: fouls competitor failing to initiate throw within one minute of being called "up;" may serve as 2nd recorder

Arc Judge #1: serves as tape reader (announces measurement); holds flags indicating fair or foul

Arc Judge #2: indicates fair or foul to arc judge #1 using "thumbs up or thumbs down;" may serve as 3rd recorder

Marker: marks first point of contact –

this judge remains outside the sector until the javelin lands; if a sufficient number of officials exists, then each is positioned at short, intermediate and long range from foul line (arc)

Retrievers: retrieve on opposite side as markers; if in sufficient numbers, relay javelins from long to short distances to arc

Sector judges: indicate fair or foul; one judge with flags; another using "thumbs up or thumbs down"

The Competition:

The general rules of competition for throwing events are applicable in the javelin competition. See NFHS Rules 6-1-2 and 6-1-3.

Before any throws are made in competition, the event judge should again advise the competitors of risk minimization and competition rules. Taping of any part of the throwing hand or fingers of a competitor is not permitted except to cover an open wound that must be protected by tape. Taping of the wrist is permissible. Gloves may not be worn, but a support belt is allowed. Meet management may permit the use of footwear other than track shoes. The competitor must hold the javelin by the whipcord grip, although one or more fingers and the thumb may touch the javelin shaft.

It shall constitute a foul if the competitor:

1. Makes a 360-degree turn before the javelin is released.
2. Uses a delivery other than an over-arm, above-the-shoulder motion of the throwing arm.

3. Throws the javelin so that it does not land within the sector lines.
4. Touches on or over either the runway lines, or on or over the foul-line arc before the throw is marked.
5. Fails to hold the javelin by the whipcord grip.
6. Exits the runway before the implement has landed and the judge calls "Mark."
7. Fails to exit the runway under control behind the foul-line arc and the perpendicular side extension after the javelin has landed.
8. Fails to initiate a trial within one minute after be called.

In the event of any foul, the throw is not measured but counts as trial.

Measurement:

The measurement of a throw shall be made from the nearest edge of the first point of contact made by the javelin to the point on the inside edge of the foul-line arc, in line with the center of the circle 26 feet, 3 inches behind the arc (See "A" on Figure). If measuring with a tape, after the field marker has placed the end of the tape at the point of landing, the tape puller should pull the tape through the center of the circle ("A") assuring a straight line between the landing point and the center of the circle, allowing the tape to be read at the inside edge of the foul-line arc. Note that under NFHS rules, the javelin need not land point first – it is a fair throw without regard to what part of

(continued)



the implement first makes contact with the ground. If the implement lands flat such that it cannot be determined that one end or the other was first to hit the ground, measurement should be made from where the end of whipcord grip nearest the foul arc touched the ground.

Measurements should be made to the nearest lesser inch, or even numbered centimeter, and should be made

with a non-stretchable tape such as fiberglass, nylon or steel. Measurement by a certified measurement device (such as laser) is permitted.

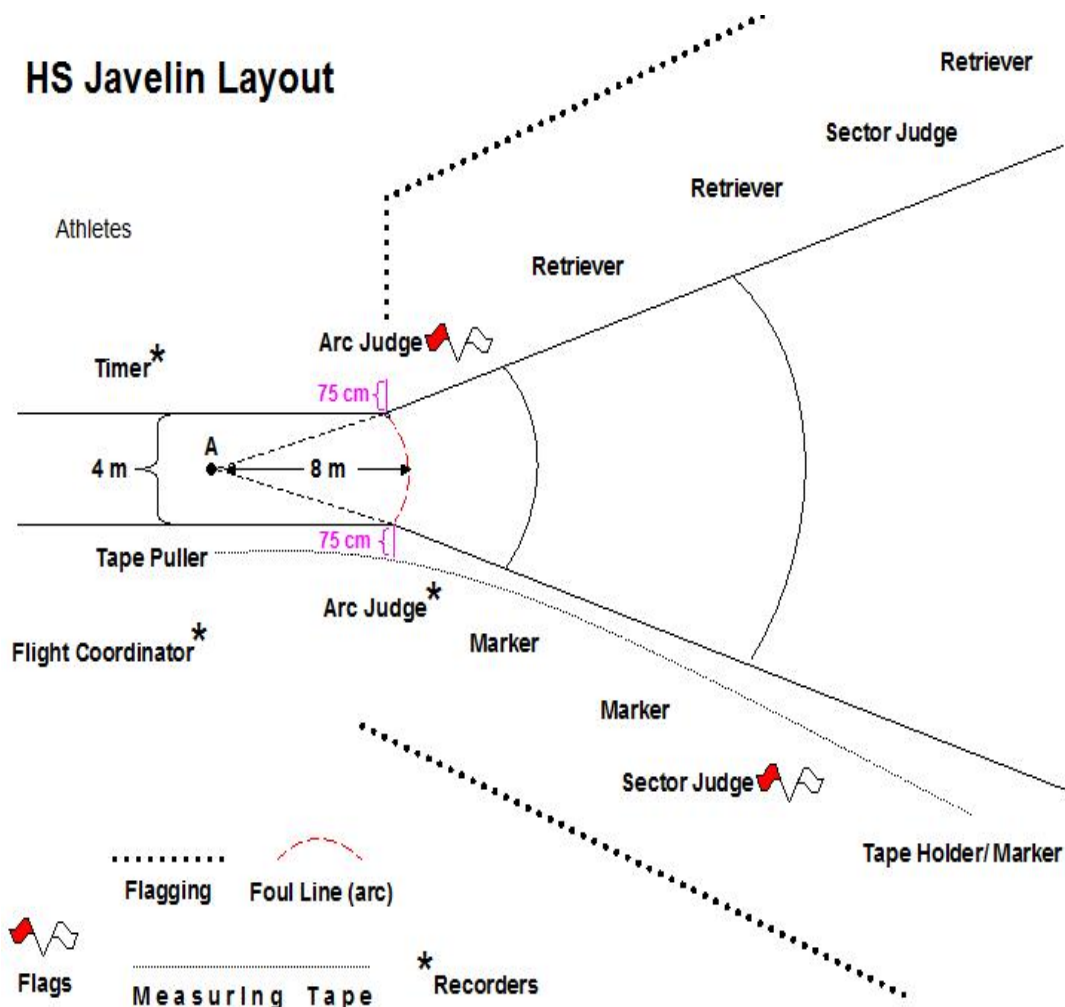
Conclusion of Competition:

At the conclusion of the competition, the results should be checked for accuracy, the places determined and turned in as designated by meet management. The implements should be col-

lected and distributed to the athletes, or returned to an area designated by meet management for later distribution to the athletes. The venue should be designated as closed by placement of a brightly colored cone or similar object on the runway at the foul-line arc.

FIGURE

HS Javelin Layout



Start of the Race

Two changes were adopted in the rules which impact the starting of the race. Rule 3-9-2 specifies that for gun starts only a closed-barrel starter's pistol shall be used. In some states, by state law, and for all practical purposes, on any school property, pistols used for starting purposes should be disabled from being able to discharge live rounds of ammunition. When using a

gun for the starting device, starting pistols are now, required by rule, to be a closed-barrel starting pistol, incapable of discharging a live round. Track and field and cross country starters should cease using any caliber pistol that is capable of firing live ammunition.

The other change allows the option for the use of a .32 or .22 caliber starter's pistol for any indoor or outdoor

meet where a FAT system is being used. The FAT systems do not require the noise of a .32 caliber, and a .22 caliber is clearly heard by competitors and provides adequate smoke for manual timing. Either caliber is acceptable for NFHS record purposes.



What is Excused Time and How Does it Work?

The games committee is allowed to set the time limit and procedure to follow when athletes need to be excused from one field event to compete elsewhere during the meet. (Rule 3-2-3o) There is no set procedure or time limit since the site may dictate a longer time is necessary if some distance might be involved from one event venue to another. For purposes of this discussion, we will use 10 minutes as the time allowed.

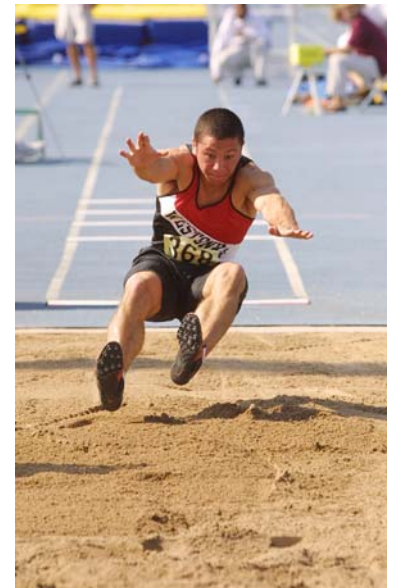
A typical procedure that does not disadvantage the majority of the competitors in an event has the competitor check out with the head judge for that field event. The head judge shall record

the time the competitor(s) checks out on the flight sheet or separate page. That competitor would have 10 minutes FROM THAT TIME, to return to the event without penalty. If he/she takes longer, the competitor runs the risk of having the bar raised or a jump or throw not being allowed. If the athlete is given a time limit from the time a running event ends, then the rest of the field may have to sit around with nothing to do but cool down.

For competitors excused for running events, it is advisable to check out, go to the clerk and return. They can then go directly to the starting line for their race

without having to leave the field event for an extended time. In the case of other field events being involved, this may require multiple absences from each of the events. The judges need to know this so that jumps or throws may be taken out of order in accordance with Rules 6-2-6 and 7-2-6. Preventive officiating by the event judge may include asking the competitor prior to the competition in which other events they are competing.

If a contestant is entered in two events being held at the same time, the other competitors in those events should not be the ones to pay the price for that



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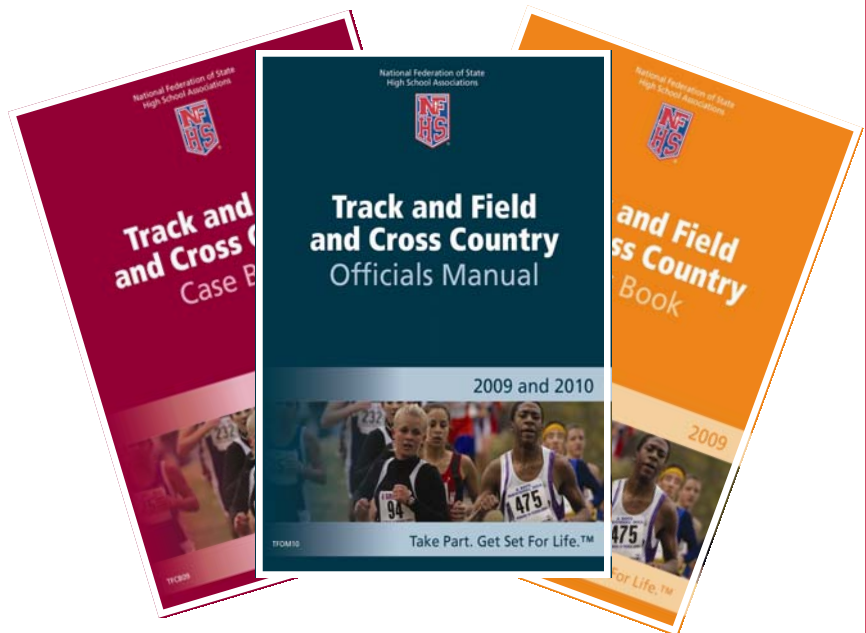
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(continued from pg. 11)

competitor's decision to compete in simultaneous events. The meet officials can increase efficiency of the meet for all competitors through an organized procedure of excusing competitors.

Breaking Ties in Running Events

Fully automated timing is considered accurate and reliable to use 1/1000th to break ties and advance competitors to a subsequent round of competition. Therefore, it is reliable and accurate enough to break ties to determine final places of lane assignments. Using the timing system to its fullest capability allows for greater fairness in the competition.



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