



# Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes

National Federation of State High School Associations

## 2010

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## Umpiring the Hurdles

All rules that apply to other lane races (starting and finishing in your lane, not running on inside lane line on a curve) apply to the hurdles. A few other specific rules also apply to hurdle events. Basically, the hurdler must attempt to clear each hurdle (Rule 5-13-2a). If a portion of the leg goes around the hurdle without attaining the height of the hurdle, it is a violation (5-13-2c).

This year there has been a change in the rule on clearing the hurdle. In the past, Rule 5-13-2b stated it was a violation if the hurdler "deliberately knocks down any hurdle by hand or foot." The rule now states "Knocks down the hurdle by hand."

If the hurdler knocks down a hurdle by hand, it is an obvious violation since he or she did not make any attempt to clear the hurdle. Knocking down the hurdle with the foot or leg happens all the time. Usually this is a simple technical change in the hurdling technique and not a viola-

tion of the rule requiring the hurdler to attempt to clear each hurdle. This rule will have the most effect in the short hurdle races. In the 300-meter hurdles, seldom does a competitor fail to attempt to clear a hurdle. The hurdler may run around a hurdle or push it over by hand, but that is covered in other parts of the rule. Assume a hurdler in the 110-meter hurdles has knocked down two hurdles during the race.

*(see Hurdles p.9)*

**Revised January 22, 2010.** See page 7, Consistent Starting Procedure Required for All Heats, 2nd to last paragraph

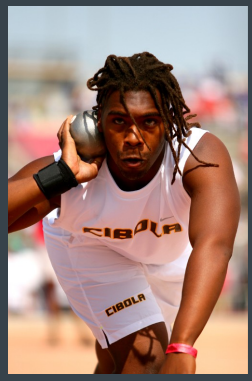


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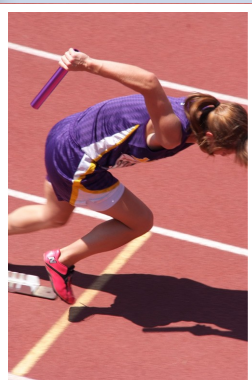
The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee and the USA Track & Field Officials Training Subcommittee are combining efforts and experience to provide the NFHS Pre-Meet Notes, an online track and field education publication. It is our goal to encourage more individuals to become track and field officials.

**High School** - Contact your state high school athletic/activities association at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) >State Association Listing >Member State Associations

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The term "design" refers to a pattern of colors used in the uniform. Style might be all team members are in black one piece uniforms but one team member wears black shorts over the one piece uniform. These uniforms would be legal.



## Relay and Cross Country Team Members Require Same Uniform Design

The sports of track and field and cross country have some of the most lenient rules for uniforms. However, with this leniency comes confusion from time to time when applying the basic rules of a legal uniform in the midst of all the permitted uniform creativity. One frequent rule question is the accurate application of "design" of the uniform for the members of a track relay team or a cross country team.

Both relay teams and cross country teams are competing as a team, similar to a volleyball or basketball team. The purpose of the uniform rule, in this instance, is so the uniforms worn by the school's teammates are clearly identifying the competitors at a glance of being a member of a certain team. This identification is essential to allow the meet officials to fairly and consistently identify

each runner and the team to which he/she belongs.

Rules 4-3 and 9-6 require the team members (relay team and cross country team) to be wearing uniforms of the same "design." The term "design" refers to a pattern of colors used in the uniform. For example, if three team members are wearing singlets with a white body and a red diagonal stripe four inches in width and the remaining team member(s) are wearing a white singlet with two red vertical stripes, the "design" would be different.

The vertical striped uniformed runner(s) would be in an illegal uniform and the competitor(s) would be disqualified from the event (Penalties 4-3, 9-6).



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Graphic Designer: Ashlee Ferguson

The use of the same colors, but arranged in a different pattern is also not considered the same "design" as required by rule. Design and style should not be confused. Style might be all team members are in black one piece uniforms but one team member wears black shorts over the one piece uniform. These uniforms would be legal. For the runner adding the shorts, the legs of the one piece then become a visible undergarment and subject to those rules (See page 2).

To avoid an unnecessary penalty, coaches should be certain in advance of the meet that their athletes have and are outfitted in legal uniforms for all competitors.

### Clearing Crossbar with Uprights Positioned Incorrectly

Pole vaulters rely upon the event officials, once the competition has commenced, to correctly set the uprights



and position of the crossbar. The competitors will make their attempts trusting that all equipment is properly placed as the competition progresses. The competitors are focused upon their performance and not the actions of the event officials.

If the officials have the uprights set incorrectly and the competitor suc-

cessfully clears the crossbar, he or she shall no longer be called for a foul—it will be recorded as a make. If, however, the athlete's attempt was unsuccessful, it will be considered "no jump" and the vaulter will receive a new trial.

Bottom line, the competitor should not receive a penalty for an error by the official on such an integral part of the jumping event.

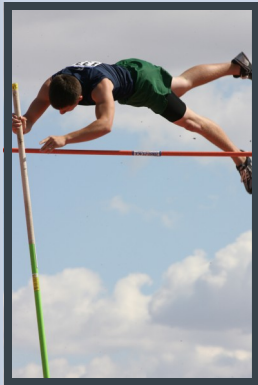
### Bungee Cord/Elastic Crossbar Now Permitted in Warm-ups



Beginning with the 2010 season, it will be permissible for competitors, in the pole vault and high jump, to use a bungee cord (sometimes called an "elastic crossbar") for warm-ups. The use of the bungee cord is permitted providing certain conditions are met.

- The bungee cord/elastic crossbar shall be manufactured for the specific intended purpose for use in the field event.
- The bungee cord/elastic crossbar shall be supplied by the host meet management. Should the hosting school elect not to secure and provide a bungee cord, it is not permissible for a competitor or another school to supply or use a bungee cord for warm-ups.
- The bungee cord/elastic crossbar shall never be used once competition begins.





## Pole Vault

The National Federation Track and Field Rules Committee places a high priority on risk minimization for pole vault competitors. The pole vault event can be conducted with minimal risk of injury if all parties do their part.

**Meet management** is responsible for providing a landing system, standards, crossbar and runway that meet the rule requirements. Each of these items and the venue for the event should be well maintained and inspected throughout the season.

**Coaches** are responsible to insure their competitors receive proper technique training and are knowledgeable of the event rules. Coaches also have the responsibility of making certain their vaulters have and are using legal vaulting poles, including verifying his/her vaulter's weight is at or below the manufacturer's pole rating.

**Officials** should check the venue to make sure all equipment is properly placed and in good order. The implement inspector has the

responsibility to inspect the poles and be certain all rules are met. The event judge should be certain the state association procedure is followed by coaches to verify their vaulters and their poles for the competition are legal under the rules.

To emphasize the importance of risk minimization in the pole vault, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee has reaffirmed the requirements of Rule 7-5-3 that etch-



A) the weight rating is within top handhold band; B) etchings on bottom end of pole listing characteristics and can't be used to satisfy Rule 7-5-3; C) weight rating in top handhold band and etchings at top of pole; D) weight rating in top handhold band. Manufacturer's placed weight rating shall be in a contrasting color,  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in height and located in or above top handhold band.

ings, serial numbers, etc. that may appear on poles shall not replace the requirement of the manufacturer's pole rating in the minimum  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch marking in a contrasting color on each pole either above or within the required 1-inch circular band marking the top handhold position. In order to preserve the integrity of the event and reduce the risk of injury to the pole vault competitor, no person involved in the event, including meet management, coach or officials, can disregard any requirements of the rules dealing

with the landing system, standards, runway, vaulting poles or vaulter.

## Circular Crossbars Mandatory January 1, 2013

With the availability of circular crossbars from track and field equipment manufacturers, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee adopted the rule to require only circular crossbars be used in competition beginning in 2013. The change updates equipment used for these events with current trends in the sport. The three-season delay allows schools to phase out the older square or triangular crossbars, which are rarely used in today's competition. Circular crossbars have been required at all other levels of competition for many years and have become the common crossbar used in the vertical jumps.



## Are They Contestants or Competitors?

Many times during the course of a track meet, the athletes entered in the meet are referred to as contestants or competitors interchangeably. However, a contestant is not the same as a competitor. It is important this distinction is made and the differences clearly understood.

A *contestant*, under Rule 4-1-1, is any athlete entered in the meet and he or she becomes an entry at the time the games committee has established as the deadline for accepting entries. The deadline for entries could be days before the actual meet or the day of the meet. A contestant becomes a *competitor*, under Rule 4-2-2, when he or she reports to the clerk of the course or field-event judge for an event in which the contestant is entered.

The status of athletes, as either a contestant or competitor, directly affects the application of some rules and the penalties for violations of those rules under Rule 4-5 "Disqualification." The "unsporting conduct" rule and penalty (disqualification from event and further competition) in Rule 4-5-1 applies to both contestants and competitors. On the other hand, the illegal uniform rule and penalty in Rule 4-5-7 only apply when an athlete becomes a competitor. Likewise, the restriction on viewing videotape of a performance (Rule 4-5-8g) only applies while the athlete is a competitor.

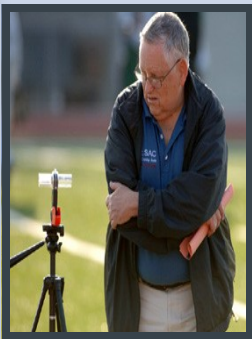
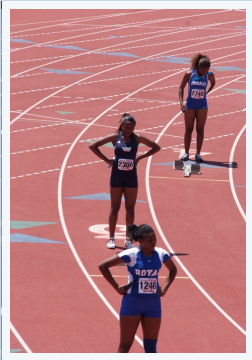
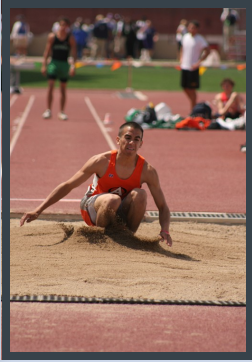
Understanding the proper application of Rule 4-5 prepares coaches and officials to assist competitors in complying with track and field rules and avoiding disqualification. Coaches and officials should be aware of their state association philosophy regarding "preventive officiating" and within the rules, inform and assist contestants and competitors in a manner that will minimize disqualifications.

## Let's Go to the Replay . . .

Rule 3-2-7 has permitted the use of games committee designated video replay and television monitoring equipment to aid officials in making decisions related to the meet. This year, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee has clarified that the designation of such equipment shall occur prior to the beginning of the meet. This avoids the possible problem of coaches and spectators offering their unofficial video to meet officials for viewing.

Part of the games committee's pre-meet designation includes the identification of any video equipment to be used, its placement and its intended purpose(s) for use to assist in the final decision of place finish. Properly placed, the use of video equipment can aid in the reduction of errors. For example, a camera on the finish line may assist meet officials in correctly placing runners.

Ultimately, the games committee's decision is limited to the equipment and personnel available and the priorities for use identified by the committee.



## Spotlight: Operating the Wind Gauge for Running and Horizontal Jumps

Wind gauge readings are necessary to validate that record performances were not assisted by wind in excess of the maximum

allowed. An assisting wind is one which blows at a runner's back, either directly or in a slanting direction. A record is not allowed when the average velocity of

an assisting wind exceeds 2.0 meters per second (or 4.474 miles per hour) (Rule 10-2-1). Wind readings are required for races up to and including 200 meters and the horizontal jumps (long jump and triple jump).

### Equipment (Rule 10-2-2):

There are two types of wind gauges (or anemometers): mechanical or ultrasonic. Mechanical anemometers have a mechanical wheel that rotates when pushed by the wind (an "impeller"). The impeller is housed inside a tube to reduce the impact of crosswinds. The length of the tube on either side of the impeller must be at least twice the diameter of the tube. Ultrasonic anemometers send a sonic wave from a tiny loudspeaker to a tiny microphone. By measuring the difference in speed between the sonic waves traveling along with the wind and the sonic waves traveling against the wind,



the anemometer determines the wind velocity. To compensate for temperature, humidity, and air pressure, ultrasonic anemometers measure the sonic wave travel time in two opposite directions. NFHS rules accept the use of either type of wind gauges.

### Placement (Rule 3-17-2):

The wind gauge for running events is placed parallel to the straightaway, about 50 meters from the finish line. It should be placed within 2 meters (6 feet 6¾ inches) of lane one of the track, and should be about 1.22 meters (4 feet) off the ground.

For the long jump and triple jump, the wind gauge is placed 20 meters from the takeoff board, parallel to and within 2 meters (6 feet 6¾ inches) of the runway, and should be about 1.22 meters (4 feet) off the ground.

### Operation of Wind Gauge (Rule 3-17):

On most wind gauges, the operator sets the time period needed and only needs to start the gauge at the appropriate time. Some wind gauges can be operated remotely or automatically at the start of the race with the wind readings sent directly to the results computer.



### Taking Wind Readings (Rule 10-2-3):

*100/110 meter hurdles:* The reading begins at the start of the race and shall be averaged for a period of 13 seconds.

*100 and 200 meter dash:* The reading begins when the first runner enters the straightaway and shall be averaged for a period of 10 seconds.

*Long Jump:* The reading begins when the competitor is 40 meters from the takeoff board (if less than 40 meters, when the competitor starts his/her approach) and averaged for a period of five seconds. The reading shall be recorded for each legal jump.

*Triple Jump:* The reading begins when the competitor is 35 meters from the takeoff board (if less than 35 meters, when the competitor starts his/her approach) and averaged for a period of five seconds. The reading shall be recorded for each legal jump.



### Consistent Starting Procedure Required for All Heats

This year, the rules expressly state that all varsity heats in an event shall use the same starting procedure. In practice, this only applies to races which are not run entirely in lanes (Rule 5-6-3).

There are three possible starting configurations:

- Lanes: each competitor starts in his or her own lane.
- Alleys: two or more competitors start in a grouping of more than one lane and less than all the lanes on the track.
- Waterfall: all competitors begin on a common curved line across all the lanes on the track.

So in varsity races, all heats for the specific event shall use the same starting configuration. For example, if the games committee decides to use alleys for the varsity boys 800 meter run, then alleys must be used for all varsity 800 meter run competition. Should the meet include both boys and girls, all boys races shall use the same starting configuration, and the girls could be a different starting configuration from the boys, but all the same for the girls races.

For subvarsity, a different starting configuration may be used, if needed, to accommodate expanded participation, but should likewise be consistent for all heats and for both boys and girls in the subvarsity competition.

(2nd to last paragraph revised January 22, 2010)

**For additional information on NFHS National Track and Field records, go to [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org), Publications, 2009 National High School Records Book, Track and Field National Record**

### SITUATION

The games committee is considering running some of the slower heats using a different starting procedure. When announced at the coaches' meeting, the coach of Team B opposes the different starts and states all heats for the same event shall be the same. With further review of the rule, the games committee establishes the same starting procedure for all heats in the same event.

**RULING:** Correct procedure.

## Games Committee Responsibilities

How many times have you been at a track meet as a coach, official or even meet director and wondered if anybody knew exactly “what was going on?” Are hats prohibited, what is the time limit to excuse competitors from events, when do field events terminate, etc.?

When you asked some of the officials, or as an official yourself, they didn’t seem to readily know the answer to these and other questions. Wouldn’t it be nice to have all this information in advance of the meet, rather than distributed at the meet in the registration materials packet? At the meet there is limited time to read a number of documents. The coach is busy trying to find answers to a multitude of other questions they or their athletes always have. Thus, the terms and conditions may not always be read on site.

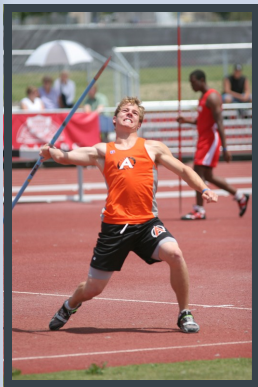
There are several critical factors to conducting a successful track meet and many start with the games committee. The committee should be comprised of individuals who know the sport well and have personal experience at meets – as spectators, coaches or officials. They should also be well versed in the track and field rules.

Rules 3-2-1 thru 8 outline the many responsibilities of the games committee. The committee in smaller meets could be the host management while larger invitationals and state association sponsored meets will have a games committee consisting of coaches and administrators. Regardless of the size or who serves on the committee, there is a considerable amount of work requiring games committee action prior to the start of the meet and prior to the officials completing their pre-meet responsi-

bilities.

In addition to the event rules, the games committee is responsible for many of the terms and conditions for the conduct of the meet and participation of the contestants. A good games committee should have the following established information provided to appropriate parties (officials and coaches) prior to the meet:

- Have a diagram or layout of the facility with the location of the clerking area, implement check-in, announcer, and restrooms.
- Will coaches be allowed on the infield and if so, where?
- Will there be any special restrictions on items being worn in excess of school uniform such as hats or sunglasses?
- Where will athletes, coaches, spectators and officials assemble during a suspension of the meet due to inclement weather?
- How many athletes from each competing school are allowed per event?
- What are the advancement procedures for successive heats for running events?
- Will finals be held? If yes, how many athletes advance to the finals in field events (horizontal jumps and throwing)?
- What are the opening heights and subsequent increments for pole vault and high jump?





- When will the decision on direction of running events be made?
- When will the decision on which field events venue will be used (if facilities allow that possibility)?
- What is the time limit for an excused competitor to return?
- Will the published time schedule be followed or will it be a rolling schedule?
- Will additional competitors (within maximum) be allowed entry on the day of competition?
- Will substitutions be allowed on the day of competition?
- Will the public address system be used to make "calls" for all events?

The games committee should never assume that one set of directives or details distributed at the preseason coaches meeting, will pertain to the entire season and for all venues. Each facility has its own unique characteristics and each meet/venue may have distinct requirements.

Make your meet one to remember by evaluating how well it was organized, not by how lucky you were to get away with "fly by the seat of the pants" decisions. The items mentioned in the rules book may never be inclusive of every detail to be covered before the meet. You need to develop your own list that covers the unique needs of the venue and the competition.

Your primary role should be to provide information to address the terms and conditions of this one meet and to get it out there to the participating schools prior to the day of the meet, when possible. Your success as a member of the games committee is based on how well you address the needs of the coaches, officials and athletes. If you do this, things will go a lot smoother – GUARANTEED!

## Hurdles

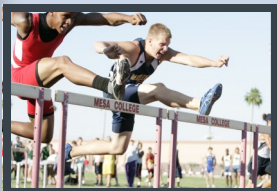
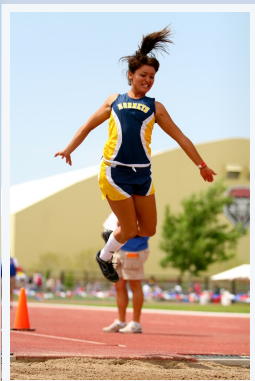
*(continued from p. 1)*

Is that going to be a violation? Not at all. This is fairly normal. What if that hurdler knocked over every hurdle? Now the umpire (or referee) has to observe if the hurdler made an attempt to clear each hurdle? This is critical to determining if there was a violation of 5-13-2a. If the hurdler knocked over most of the hurdles with his thigh, then there is probably reason to believe he attempted to clear the hurdle. If every hurdle was knocked over with the foot and contact was made with the ball of the foot, the umpire could decide the hurdler did not make an attempt to clear the hurdle and report his/her observations to the referee. If the referee determines the competitor violated Rule 5-13-2a, the penalty is disqualification.

However, keep in mind that if a hurdler's steps get off, he or she could contact a hurdle with the ball of the foot in a legitimate attempt to clear the hurdle. In order to rule that the hurdler did not attempt to clear the hurdle, that hurdler must have knocked down many of the hurdles in the same manner. An umpire assigned to watch the entire race from off the track where all ten hurdles and not just one or two can be observed, is in the best position to judge an attempt or lack thereof to clear the hurdles.

## SITUATION

A competitor is running the finals of the 110 hurdles. During the race, the competitor knocks over hurdles two, five and six with the foot of the lead leg. An umpire assigned to observe these hurdles raises a yellow flag and records the incident citing Rule 5-13-1. The report is provided to the meet referee. After review, the referee disqualifies the competitor. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Results stand. **COMMENT:** The knocking down of a hurdle by a foot is not a disqualification. If the hurdler were to knock over the hurdle by his hand or is clearly not attempting to clear the hurdles, then the competitor shall be disqualified.



## Coaching Boxes

Coaching boxes are established for a specific purpose: to assist competitors by way of better communication with their coaches. It is the games committee's decision whether to establish specific areas (coaching boxes) for coaches to observe and confer with their athletes during competition (Rule 3-2-4g). If coaching boxes are established, the games committee shall announce this fact and clearly mark the boxes using a fence, rope, banners, pennants or painted lines. The games committee should also develop and communicate guidelines for the coaching boxes, including the following: (1) who may occupy the coaching box, (2) when the coaching box may be occupied, (3) what equipment is allowed in the coaching box, (4) what activities, allowed by rule, may occur within a coaching box and (5) other information specific to the venue.

### Who May Occupy the Coaching Box:

In almost every situation, a simple "one coach per school with competitors in the event" would be appropriate for high school competition. The area is not meant to be an auxiliary bleacher, where parents, spectators, and teammates observe a field event from close range. Likewise, the competitors in that field event should not be allowed to remain in the coaching box. They have their own designated area for warm-up and competition. Those coaches authorized to be in

the coaching box should be issued some type of nontransferable credential to display which allows officials and meet management to easily determine the presence of unauthorized individuals in this restricted area.

### When the Coaching Box May Be Occupied:

To have maximum benefit, most coaching boxes should be available from the start of the warm-up period for that field event, until its conclusion. Before the event warm-up and after the event has concluded, the coaching box should

be vacated for reasons of risk minimization and to prevent possible illegal assistance.

### What Equipment is Allowed in the Coaching Box:

The meet management has the option to provide or not provide

seating, depending upon the location of the coaching box. By providing seating, meet management clearly defines the expectations for that area. Seating could consist of chairs or bleachers. Coaches must be mindful that the coaching box is in the competition

## SITUATION

The games committee establishes which events shall have a coaching box and works with host meet management to have the coaching boxes clearly identified with pennants. At the coaches meeting, the coaches are informed of the coaching boxes, how they are identified, who may occupy and issue credentials. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

area and any established rules of usage of electronics, video, etc. in the competition area remain in effect and shall be adhered to.

### **What Activity May Occur Within a Coaching**

**Box:** The intent is for the coach to better serve the competitor in maximizing his/her performance. The coach may observe and confer with the competitor to provide immediate event performance evaluations, by rule. The box allows coaches to be in the immediate proximity of the event.

**Location:** When determining appropriate locations for coaching boxes, the games committee should first and foremost consider risk minimization – an area not in a danger zone for that or another event. Other considerations include coaches' access to the box with minimal interruption of other events (including running) and a location that does not block the view of spectators if possible.

As field event locations vary from track to track, it is difficult to give absolute positions for coaching boxes. The locations will vary from site to site. However, some advice can be given regarding the different field events and common placement of coaching boxes when practical for a given venue.

*Horizontal Jumps:* Infield side of the runway, starting from the take off board and away from the pit. This provides spectators unobstructed visibility and coaches the opportunity to confer with the competitor as he/she walks back after the jump.

*Vertical Jumps:* As most high jump areas are on the curves of the track, a coaching box positioned in the end zone, perpendicular to the cross bar, provides coaches optimum visual observation and the opportunity to confer with the competitor as he/she walks back after the jump. In the pole vault, venues parallel to the runway should follow the horizontal jumps suggestion and venues perpendicular to the runway should follow the vertical jump suggestions.

*Throws:* Position the coaching box to one side of the throwing area, separate from the

competing athletes. The box should be behind the protective cages of the long throws and on the infield side of the shot put (just as the horizontal jumps).

Through proper location and identification as well as proper communication with the coaches prior to competition, coaching boxes can provide another important technique to enhance the performance of field event competitors. However, coaches need to fully understand that having the privilege of occupying the coaching box does not negate any rules that limit the assistance a coach may offer a competitor during the competition.

## **What to Remember about Coaching Boxes:**

- 1. Who may occupy the coaching box**
- 2. When the coaching box may be occupied**
- 3. What equipment is allowed in the coaching box**
- 4. What activity may occur within a coaching box**
- 5. Location of coaching box during:**
  - horizontal jumps**
  - vertical jumps**
  - throws**

## Basic Training: Clerk of the Course

The clerk of the course is the ring master of the three ring circus called a track and field meet. The clerk must know all, see all, and be ready to adjust at a moments notice.

In this article, we will examine the role, purpose, and function of the clerk of the course as well as the qualities that make an exceptional clerk. According to NFHS Rules 3-7-1 and 2, the clerk of the course has the following duties:

1. Recording the name and number of each competitor.
2. Assigning each runner to the proper heat and starting position.
3. Giving all necessary instructions concerning the rules governing the race and advancement to the next round (if applicable).
4. Being at the starting mark before each race.
5. Announcing the lane assignments.
6. Holding each competitor responsible for reporting promptly to the starting line when the race is announced.
7. Checking and enforcing uniform, visible apparel, jewelry, and shoe regulations.

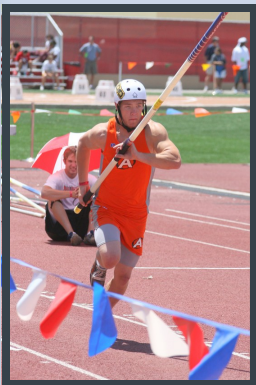
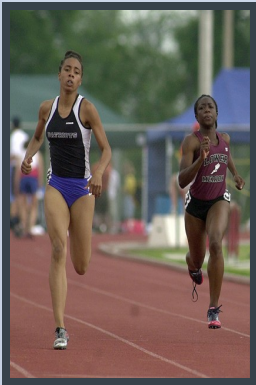
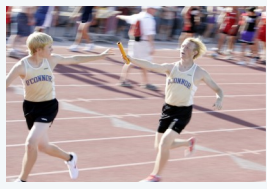
The clerk is often the first official to come in contact with all competing runners. The clerk, as a liaison between the many different functioning personnel of the track meet, must be both an effective communicator and effective facilitator. As an effective communicator, he/she must (1) be knowledgeable of the rules governing the competition, particularly running events; (2) be familiar with the location of start and finish lines and exchange zones; and (3) understand the order, timing, and natu-

ral flow of the running events. As an efficient facilitator he/she must also (1) coordinate calls with the announcer; (2) keep the meet on the time schedule; (3) coordinate the flow of the events and heats with the starters; and (4) know where to direct contestants and coaches to get their questions answered.

The specific duties of the clerk of the course can best be categorized into four specific areas based upon the timeline of the meet: pre-meet duties, pre-race duties, race duties, and post-meet duties. Each time period possesses unique roles and responsibilities and the effective clerk must be ready to respond and perform in each.

**Pre-Meet Duties:** An excellent clerk is comparable to an excellent classroom instructor. Just as the classroom instructor arrives at school early to prepare the day's activities and get the classroom in order, the clerk should arrive 60 minutes prior to the start of running events to prepare the clerking area for the runners. This preplanning phase is essential to proactively setting the tone for and being prepared for an effective, efficient, and successful meet. Essential materials required for the clerking area are:

- A table
- Meet time schedule, entries, and heat and lane assignments
- Clip boards (minimum of 2)
- Hip numbers (if being utilized)



- A watch/clock synchronized with the official meet time
- Various pens and pencils
- At least one highlighter
- Speaker system (to call missing contestants or schools)
- Walkie talkie or other wireless device to communicate with announcer and finish line personnel
- Guide cards for each running event to provide the specifics of each race (starting commands, lane staggers, etc.)

More than likely, meet management will have a predetermined spot selected as the check-in area for all running events. Especially at larger meets, some sort of tent is often set up as a visual point of reference for running athletes to report.

This pre-meet time also provides the clerk with an opportunity to introduce himself/herself to the referee, starters, and announcer; review the starting procedures for all races; and determine the location of the various starting lines and exchange zones for relays. Also, determine if any personal communication device is available for the clerk to communicate to the announcer, referee and finish line personnel. This can save time if questions or problems arise when contestants report to the clerk before their respective running events. Finally, determine if any assistants will be available to the clerk and if there is a defined time schedule and procedure for the contestants to utilize when reporting to the clerk to check in.

**Pre-Race Duties:** When the running events begin, the clerk moves to this next phase of operation. As the contestants report to the clerk before their race (and now become competitors), check them off on the heat sheets, inform them of their heat and lane assignment, and record their name and number. Make a notation for all competitors who have a conflict with a second event they are involved in and give those competitors specific instructions as to when and where to make himself/herself available. Define an area where the competitors are to remain for warm-up purposes.

When it is time for a given race, gather all competitors

in that race together:

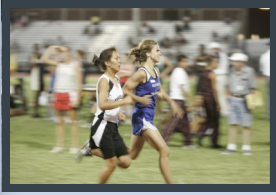
- Give all necessary instructions concerning the rules governing the race, including the type of stagger and exchange zone marking.
- Describe method of qualifying to the next round of competition or, if in the finals, the places to be scored.
- Check and enforce rules for visible uniform, apparel, shoe regulations, jewelry, religious articles, and medical alert medal restrictions.
- Arrange the competitors by heat and lane assignment.
- Remind competitors of prohibited items defined by the games committee and rules.

Be mindful of last minute changes or corrections. Remember those competitors who are in multiple events per the notations that you made when the contestants checked in. Adjustments in heat and lane assignments as well as the number of heat qualifiers can be made by the clerk with approval of the referee.

The clerk should remain with the competitors of that race and prepare for the next phase of responsibilities.

**Race Duties:** When the time schedule indicates it is time for their race, the clerk:

- Delivers the competitors to the starting line.
- Instructs competitors to remove their warm-ups.
- Ensures that competitors are in the correct heat, lane and wearing their given number.
- Visually inspects uniforms and apparel, jewelry, religious articles, and medical alert medals.
- Reminds competitors of their starting positions and starting commands.



- Informs competitors of the exchange zone markings.
- Reminds competitors to remain in their assigned lane at the conclusion of the race to aid finish line personnel in timing and placing.
- Inspects or distributes relay batons.
- Provides the head finish judge a list of competitors, their numbers, heat and lane assignments, number to qualify, and a listing of any competitor changes to the event.

When all this has been completed, signal the starter that all competitors are ready and awaiting his/her starting commands. A special notation should be recorded for any competitor not at his/her assigned starting position when the race starts. These “no shows” play a crucial role in the administrative chain of paper work in solving competition and qualification questions, should they arise. The clerk should then step back and remain ready to answer questions and visually assist the starters with the start of the race.

Remember, once the runners are in starting position and the starting commands commence, the clerk is responsible for preventing any “no show” from reporting and attempting to assume his/her starting position or holding up that particular race or heat. If the clerk has assistants, a schedule or rotation defining each person’s race and heat responsibilities and duties should be set up before the meet. This is a necessity in larger meets or invitationals.

**Post-Meet Duties:** Once all of the running events have concluded, the clerk moves into the final phase of his/her duties and responsibilities. A good rule of thumb as a track and field official is to leave your area, after the meet, just as it

was when you arrived for the meet. So, after the conclusion of the running events, tidy up and put all trash in its place.

The clerk’s heat sheets should be returned to the same place that they were picked up before the meet. Make sure that they are returned to the person who distributed them originally. This is especially important at larger meets as meet management is concerned as to not only who was entered in each running event but who actually competed in that event. If the referee is concerned about a situation involving any running event, the first thing he/she wants to know is “Who ran in that race/heat/lane?” The heat sheets provide invaluable assistance to the referee in sorting out incidents because they should indicate who actually ran in each race.

Once all of these duties have been completed and the clerk has returned all issued equipment to meet management, he/she has concluded the clerk’s role in the operation of the track and field meet.

So, as you can see, the clerk of the course plays a vital and pivotal role in the smooth and efficient operation of the track and field meet.

## Competitor's Responsibilities When Participating in Multiple Events

When contestants are participating in multiple events that have the same start time or have overlapping start times, it is important for coaches to cover the competitor's responsibilities when checking-in at the event sites with his/her athletes prior to the meet. Rule 3-2-3o states the games committee determines the period of time a competitor may be excused from an event. Many states have clearly spelled out by way of their state high school athletic/activities association a specified excused time limit for district/conference, regional and state championship competitions.

The competitor should go to each event site and check-in with the event judge or, in the case of a running event, with the clerk of course. It is the competitor's responsibility to notify the event judge at the time of check-in that he/she has a conflict with another event. The event judge should clearly explain to the competitor the rules covering leaving and returning to the event site.

Instructions provided to the competitor may include the following:

- The competitor shall notify the event judge before leaving to participate in another event and also as soon as he/she returns. (The event judge should record the time the competitor leaves the event venue.)
- The competitor shall return within the established time limit.
- If changing shoes is required, it must be completed within the time limit allowed for being away from the event.
- There will be no time allowed for warm-up once a competitor returns from another event, except as provided for by rule in vertical jumps.
- If the competitor does not return in the allowable time for his/her next attempt, it will be counted as a pass.
- If a competitor has not taken all of his/her throws or horizontal jumps when the last competitor in the preliminary flight completes his/her final at-

tempt or the competitor fails to return within the allowable time, the preliminaries will be declared complete.

- In the vertical jumps, if the bar has advanced while the competitor has been away to participate in another event, the competitor will have to re-enter at the current height.

Good communication between the competitors and officials when faced with overlapping event starting times for a competitor will minimize confusion and allow the meet to progress without problems.

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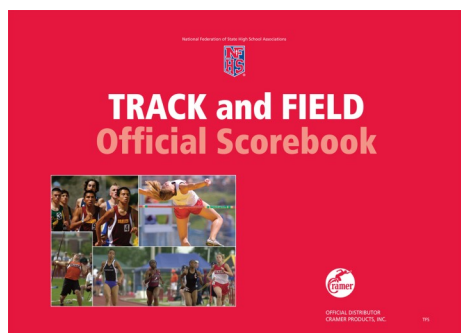
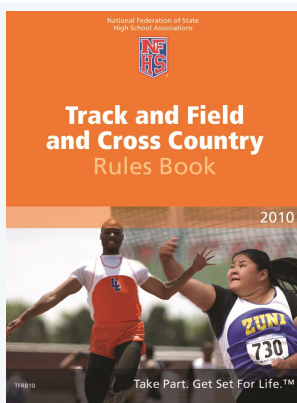
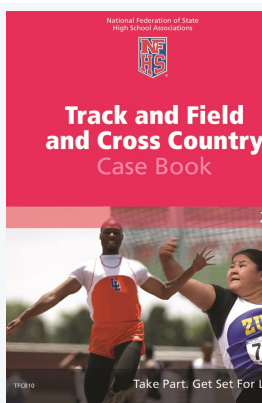
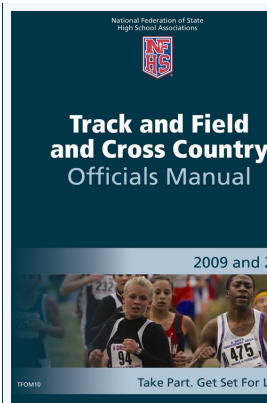
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