



2021

TRACK AND FIELD PRE-MEET NOTES



HIGHLIGHTS OF RULES CHANGES

01

Exchange Zones:

Exchange Zones will be 30 meters long for incoming competitors running 200 meters or less.

02

Assisting Other Competitors:

A competitor should not be penalized for helping another competitor who is distressed or injured when no advantage is gained by the competitor who is assisting.

03

Long & Triple Jump Pits:

For pits constructed after 2019, the length of the pit shall be at least 23 feet (7 meters).

04

Runways:

It is illegal to run backward or in the opposite direction (non-legal direction) on a horizontal jump, pole vault or javelin runway.

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2020 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Meet Administration

Providing a quality experience to track and field athletes, coaches, and spectators does not happen by accident. Many months of pre-planning and execution have occurred before the event is finalized and the first event begins.

Most standardized checklists include foundational topics such as: establishing entry limitations and substitution deadlines, securing meet personnel, developing a meet schedule, and preparing the facility to host the event. Quality meet administrators know and understand that while covering these essential items is certainly necessary and appropriate, the ability to drill down to the smallest details is equally important and critical for ensuring success.

While not included on most checklists, pay special attention to the following items as they can dictate the success or failure of your event:

NFHS Rule 3-1-1 gives authority to the meet director to establish a custodian of awards. Double check prior to your event that the appropriate awards have been ordered and are available. This critical step will save you embarrassment in the moments and time after the event.

NFHS Rule 3-4-7 allows the meet referee the authority to delegate the responsibility of counting laps for any race of two laps or more. Whomever is assigned to this duty must be confident and knowledgeable regarding counting laps and the likelihood of dealing with the potential for lapped runners. This is not a duty for a novice official or volunteer.

NFHS Rule 3-5-3 outlines the situations that are eligible to protest/appeal. It is imperative that coaches understand the appeal structure and its available options. Having a clear and concise protocol that is delineated to coaches prior to the start of the event will pay benefits.

NFHS Rule 3-18-3 designates the responsibility for ensuring that each flight of hurdles is set at proper height and prescribed point prior to each race. While moving hurdles on-and-off the track efficiently is essential, the system used to double check height and placement is also critical.

NFHS Rule 3-18-4 outlines the responsibilities of the block chief. Assigning an individual(s) responsibility for ensuring that starting blocks are in good working order, are located at the starting line of each race, and removed after the start is one less responsibility usually placed on the starter or assistant starter.

NFHS Rule 5-11-1 requires that in any relay race, a team must start and end

the race with the same baton. Meet administrators should consider a system (color, number, etc.) that, if necessary, can assist officials in determining that the correct baton has been used by any team finishing a race.

NFHS Rule 6-5-3 dictates that state associations determine their own procedures regarding verification that a pole vaulter participates on a legal pole. For those states that use some type of on-site weigh-in procedure for this verification process, it is important that the scale used to determine body weight is certified as accurate considering it will determine which pole(s) the athlete is eligible to use during the competition.

Putting on a quality track and field event is not easy. Do not let addressing the most obvious elements overshadow the less obvious during your planning.

2. Exchange Zones

Recent changes within multiple track and field rules codes regarding the definition of relay exchange zones prompted the rules committee to adjust

NFHS exchange zone rules.

The rule change does not require that tracks be repainted or resurfaced in order to be in compliance with NFHS rules. There is no immediate cost to schools as the current track markings can be utilized with minor modifications.

The acceleration zone is now incorporated into the exchange zone, thus creating a 30-meter exchange zone. Existing acceleration zone markings (triangles, squares) or colored tape placed at that location, may be used to denote the beginning of the exchange zones on a track.

In sprint relays such as the 4x100 meter and 4x200 meter, and other relays with legs of 200 meters or less, the outgoing runner, while waiting for the baton, must be positioned entirely inside the 30-meter exchange zone.

The exchange zones for relay races with legs more than 200 meters are not impacted by this rule change.



Photo provided by Mississippi High School Activities Association.

3. Assisting Injured Athletes

NFHS rules in track and field and cross country outline that it is an unfair act when a competitor receives any assistance.

Previous changes to NFHS cross country rules created the exception that allows a competitor to assist an injured or ill competitor without being disqualified when medical staff is not present at the event because, in a clear majority of these types of situations, the action is intended to be an act of

good sportsmanship and not an attempt to circumvent the rules. This same rule now applies to both sports and has been modified to include those situations in which medical assistance may be at the event but is not readily available to assist the injured or ill competitor.

The competitor who receives aid will be disqualified, but when no advantage is gained the competitor assisting should not be penalized for exhibiting good sportsmanship.

The final decision in these situations rests with the meet referee who has sole authority to rule on infractions, irregularities and disqualifications in a meet.



Photo provided by Pam Wagner, Colorado High School Activities Association.

EXPANDED SPRINT RELAY EXCHANGE ZONES

Let us examine the differences from what the exchange zone used to be and how to deal with the new exchange zone.

For relays in which the incoming runner is running 200 meters or less, the zone is now 30 meters instead of the 20 meters it used to be, Rule 5-3-3, page 31. The extra 10 meters now incorporates the old acceleration zone. If the incoming runner is running longer than 200 meters, the exchange zone will be 20 meters. **There is no longer an acceleration zone for any relay exchange.**

All exchanges for the 4 X 100m relay, the 4 X 200m relay and the 800m (100-100-200-400) medley relay are 30 meters in length. All exchanges for the 4 x 400m relay and the 4 X 800m relay are 20 meters in length. The first two exchanges for the 1600m (200-200-400-800) medley are 30 meters in length and the third exchange is 20 meters in length.

While most states utilize a 4-turn stagger for the 4 X 200m relay, some states use a 3-turn stagger. Some states use a 2-turn stagger for the medley relays, and some use a 3-turn stagger. Therefore, the specific start stagger that is used by a state will determine the exact location of the exchange zones and which exchange zones can be shared in different relay races. Most states will retain a 20-meter exchange zone at the

common finish, but some states will need a 30-meter common exchange zone as well.

The 30-meter exchange zones will not require that tracks need to be repainted or resurfaced in order to be in compliance with the NFHS rules. Schools are encouraged to utilize the acceleration zone marks for all exchange zones until the next time they update and/or re-paint their track. Some meet managers that currently have small triangles to mark their acceleration zones are planning to simply paint or tape a 2" wide line of the same color across the base of the small triangle, extending across the entire lane. This will make it easier for both the athletes and the officials to locate and identify the boundaries of the exchange zones.

Problems can be reduced and sometimes completely eliminated through use of standardized color markings on a track for alleys, start and finish lines, and exchange zones. All schools are encouraged to adhere to the NFHS Recommended Standardized color markings, found in Rule 5-2-4, of the 2020 NFHS Track & Field Rules Book, for their tracks.

PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO COMPETITORS DURING COMPETITION

What is the true meaning of sportsmanship? Sportsmanship can be defined as ethical, appropriate, polite, generous and fair behavior or treatment of others while participating in a sporting contest. When a competitor plays by the rules, is fair to opponents and is gracious during losses, that competitor exhibits good sportsmanship.

"The NFHS believes in and promotes good sportsmanship"

Providing assistance to competitors in a cross country race or track and field meet has, at times, created a degree of confusion relating to which competitors are to be penalized/disqualified. The revised language of Rule 4-6-5g, page 26 and 8-6-1e, page 70 provide clarification and demonstrate the importance of conveying that message to the competitors. *If an appropriate health-care professional is not readily available, a competitor who provides assistance to an injured or ill competitor should not be disqualified if neither the individual competitor providing the assistance, nor his/her team, gains an advantage, as a result of providing the assistance.*

In looking at the letter of the rule, any assistance to a competitor shall result in a disqualification of the competitor receiving aid. However, keeping the two most important concepts in mind, impedance to others and unfair advantage gained, it is clear that one runner helping another to their feet or even assisting them physically to continue and cross the finish line, that neither of these concepts are violated. In fact, stopping during the race to assist another athlete will only slow down the assisting runner resulting in a slower time and a higher finish place. The final decision rests with the meet referee who has sole authority to rule on infractions, irregularities and disqualifications in any meet.

The NFHS rules committee believes that helping a fellow competitor who has fallen or is unable to continue due to injury or illness is an act of good sportsmanship and should not result in a penalty to the competitor doing the assisting.

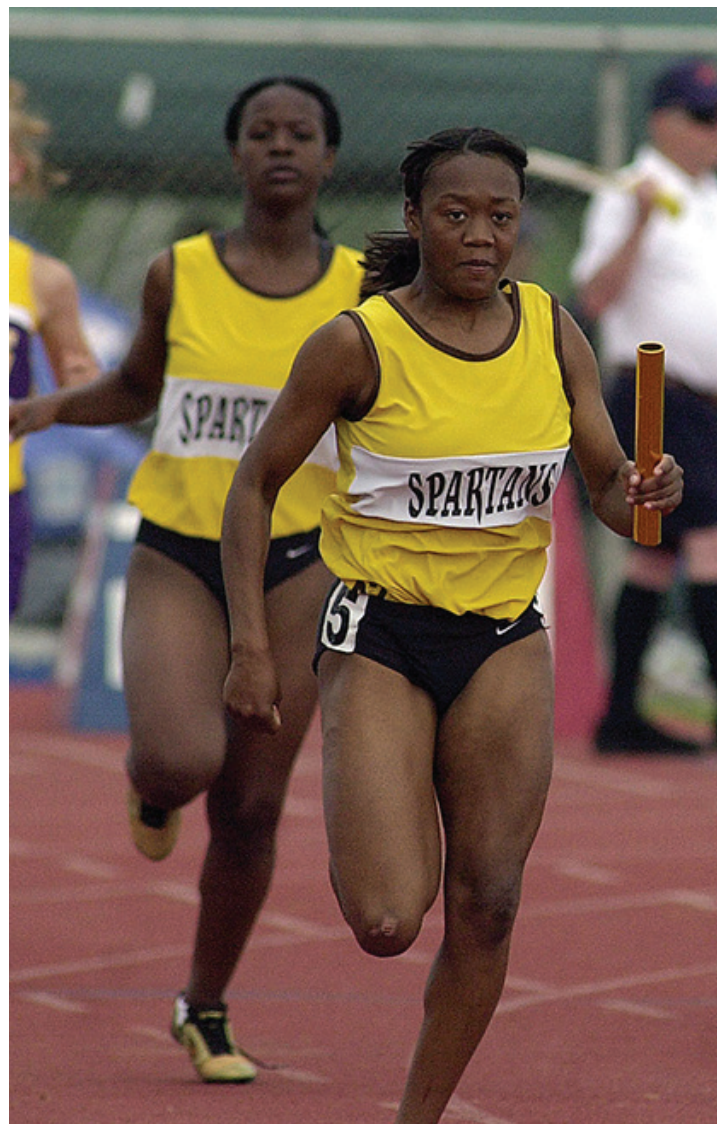


Photo provided by 20/20 Photographic, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

ESTABLISHING TAKE-OFF MARKS IN THE HORIZONTAL JUMPS, POLE VAULT AND JAVELIN

In the horizontal jumps, pole vault, and javelin, competitors are allowed a running start before they jump, vault or throw. The length of their running start is not legislated, rather it is determined by the athlete's age, size, speed and strength as determined by repetitions of the running start in practice.

While many athletes simply measure the distance between their "starting mark" and their "take-off mark" on the runway at practice and then transfer

that measurement to the runway at the meet, some do not. Some competitors are coached to utilize their practice regimen of running back their approach from the take-off mark away from the pit or throwing area and toward their starting mark. Having athletes running in both directions during warm-ups presents a safety concern at meets, interferes with the normal flow of warmups and creates a liability issue.

In 2020, the NFHS Rules Book rectifies these safety and liability issues with an

addition to Rule 6-2-6, page 42 – It is illegal to run backward or in the opposite direction (non-legal direction) on a horizontal jump, pole vault or javelin runway.

The change in routine will affect some athletes; however, the simple solution of laying out a tape measure in practice so that the athletes can get used to establishing their starting point or take-off mark on a measured number instead of a foot strike at the end of "run-back" will reduce that concern and lead to a more organized, safe and efficient warmup period during meets.

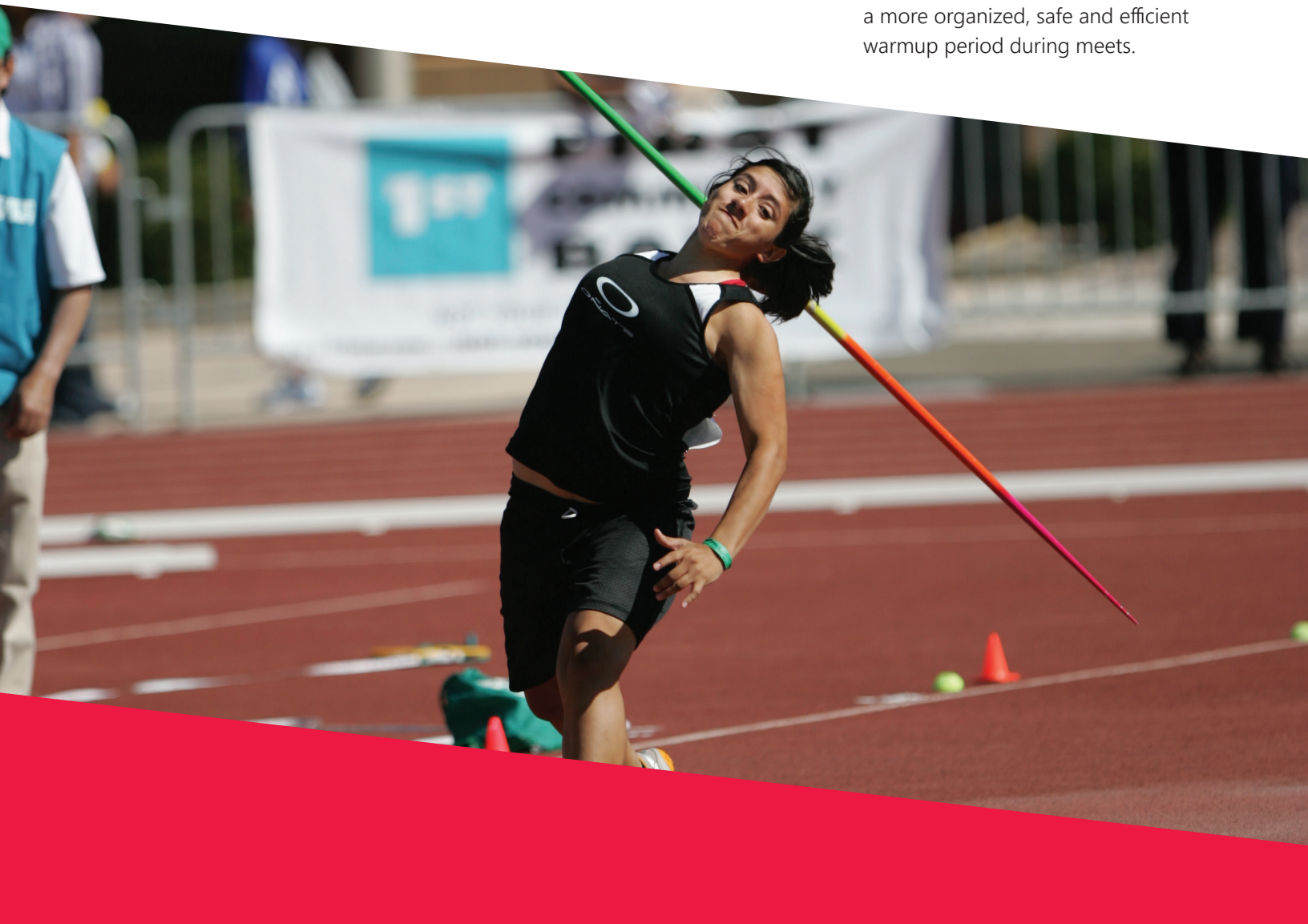


Photo provided by XL Sports Photography, New Mexico.

HOW TO CORRECTLY UTILIZE COURSE MARKINGS IN CROSS COUNTRY

As a competitor in a cross country race it is important to understand the course itself. In Track & Field, a 400-meter track is standard in elevation, distance and the direction of running. Cross country courses on the other hand can vary in all of these areas. The composition of the course is another factor to consider, as the type of ground cover can determine your style of running. Weather can also impact a course. Consider a large invitational: wet conditions can turn a grassy plain into a sloppy mess, especially if you are in the last group to run the course that day after every group also did walk-throughs.

QUESTION: What should be consistent in running cross country?

ANSWER: Your knowledge of the course markings available to the organizers and meet management, via the NFHS Rules Book, and using the information it provides.

Knowing these markings and what options are available allows you to plan how to run the course during your pre-race walk-through.

Rule 8-1-1 – Measurement shall be along the shortest possible route a runner may take on the prescribed course. The course shall be clearly marked using one of the following methods:

- A single-wide line or boundary line (Note: this may or may not be the shortest possible route);
- The use of natural or artificial boundary markers;
- Signposts with large directional arrows whenever the course turns, or flags about 1 foot square and mounted on stakes which hold them 6 feet or more above the ground.

The boundary lines can incorporate painted or chalk lines and natural or artificial boundary markers (including hedges and fences, etc.). The marking material should not be injurious to the eyes or skin. Small surveyor flags or cones at least 12 inches (30cm) high of an appropriate color may be used for marking the course are permitted where the use of painted or chalk lines are not.

A runner can move between lines as needed to run the shortest distance. You should consider terrain that may force you to slow down (e.g., an area that is slick/muddy) or is prone to congestion (such as a sharp turn combined with a change in grade). Note this information when performing the walk through. Information allows you to consider areas where defending a position may be easier and where attacks to pass may make more sense. Information such as this can help you prepare for the race and run to your strengths.



Photo provided by Northwest Sports Photography, Beaverton, Oregon.

Turns on the course can be designated by large directional arrows on the ground or signposts or flags. Signs and flags should be at least 6 feet above the ground and visible for 100 feet. Flag designations are as follows:

- **RED** – A turn to the Left, where the runner stays to the right of the flag.
- **YELLOW** – A turn to the Right, where the runner stays to the left of the flag.
- **BLUE** – Run Straight, where the runner may run on either side of the flag.

In case of a discrepancy in course markings, directional flag markings take precedence over any other course markings (Rule 8-1-2). If you notice a discrepancy in your pre-race walkthrough, bring it to the attention of the Meet Referee. The referee can address a possible improper mark or confirm it is correct.

Learning to read the course can make you a better cross country runner, increase your performance, and result in a higher place finish. You can also help your team by sharing information with them. Also consider information discovered during your actual race not apparent during the walk through. This information could assist a teammate in a later race that day.

CROSS COUNTRY COURSE LAYOUT – THE BASICS

A cross-country course is run through diverse landscapes and should be laid out both to ensure safety and fair competition for all athletes. It should be challenging but not unnecessarily difficult. The objective is to have a course that an athlete looks forward to running and is a good test. The course should have a well-defined route, proper carrying capacity, varied terrain, safe footing and adequate space to conduct both the start and finish.



Photo provided by Northwest Sports Photography, Beaverton, Oregon.

Components that should be taken into consideration when designing a cross-country course:

The Start

1. Should have fairly level ground;
2. A wide area, with boxes for each competing team, 6 feet in width;
3. Provides a straightaway of at least 100 meters (400m for large invitationals) before significant turns;
4. Funnels competitors to the actual course;
5. Contains an area where spectators can enjoy the race and cheer for their favorite runner or team.

The Course

1. Shall be 2500m-5000m measured along the shortest possible route;
2. A single-wide line or boundary lines both inside and outside, to indicate the measured route;
3. Should have room for runners to jockey for position and pass other runners even at its narrowest point;
4. The use of natural boundary markers may also be used,

and with directional flags and/or painted lines on the ground to indicate the measured route.

Competitive Aspects

1. Avoid lengthy and exceptionally steep slopes, with such inclines or declines interspersed throughout the course, but with limited inclines or declines near the start or finish;
2. Where there are inclines or declines, particularly if they must be steep ones, try to have a level segment afterwards so athletes can recover from the physical and mental strain which they just completed;
3. Where there are hills, the route should be up and down, rather than parallel to the contours of the hills where footing, stride and pace could be affected, and injury could potentially occur;
4. Have gradual and sweeping turns (no sharp turns) which will allow runners to run at an even pace and avoid congestion and contact with other runners;
5. Avoid long stretches of hard surfaces, such as roads, as most of the runners would likely be wearing spikes, and you would have to have extra volunteers to reduce risk of competitor injury;
6. Allow for open stretches along the course, where runners can jockey for positions and assess distances;
7. Avoid situations where the runners would cross paths with each other during the race;
8. Provide areas with good crowd control, where spectators can enjoy the race and cheer for their favorite runner or team without interfering with the runners.

The Finish

1. On fairly-level ground, with adequate space for finish chutes, timing equipment and judges, and for athletes to catch their breath, get water, receive medical aid, and to remove chips (if used);
2. Contains a long and straight approach to the finish, with a minimum length of 150 yards, with no turns;
3. Funnels to a finish line, with a minimum of 15 feet in width;
4. Provides an area where spectators can enjoy the race and cheer for their favorite runner or team.

Cross country is a sport where the competitor struggles and persists against, not only other competitors, but against nature as well. A well-designed course will provide all competitors the opportunity to compete, test themselves, and enjoy the cross country experience.

STANDARDIZED PIT SIZE IN THE HORIZONTAL JUMPS

In 2019, Rule 6-9-5 of the NFHS Rules Book was reorganized to provide direction in the standardization of the size of Horizontal Jumps Pits. The rule was well intended, but was confusing, including contradicting information, and did not adequately address relational distances regarding take-off boards.

New in the 2020 NFHS Rules Book, Rule 6-9-5 simplifies the requirements for all concerned. It is now presented in simple language and applies to all Horizontal Jump Pits currently in use and all installed after 2019.

Rule 6-9-5, page 61 – The landing pit shall have a minimum width of 9 feet (2.75 meters) and should meet a minimum length of 23 feet (7 meters).

NOTE: For long jump and triple jump pits constructed after 2019, the length of the pit shall be at least 23 feet (7 meters).

This note may seem repetitious, but is very definitive and vastly important, as it clearly defines the expectation for the legality of a Horizontal Jumps Pit. This will become crucial if injuries occur or if you are involved in a liability lawsuit. Also, state associations may require adherence to the legal

standard when assigning tournament series Track & Field Meets.

QUESTION: How do we determine where the Foul Line is located?

ANSWER: Rule 6-9-5a, page 61: instead of, In the long jump and triple jump, the foul line shall be located by measuring from the nearer edge of the landing pit to the front of the foul line.

Distance from the foul line or takeoff board may be adjusted to accommodate different levels of competition. Competitors may change which foul line or takeoff board they are using during competition, but only with the prior notification and confirmation of the event judge. In lower levels of competition, you may have painted lines instead of boards closer than the suggested distances, Rule 6-9-5 note in the NFHS rules book.

Suggested Distances Are:

	Boys	Girls
Long Jump	12 feet (3.7 m)	8 feet (2.5 m)
Triple Jump	32 feet (9.8 m)	24 feet (7.3 m)

These rules changes defining Horizontal Jumps Pit size align the NFHS Rules Book with the rules books of other governing bodies (IAAF, USATF, NCAA) for the sport of Track & Field.



Photo provided by Minnesota State High School League.

HOSTING A TRACK & FIELD MEET WITH COVID-19/SOCIAL DISTANCING

There are many moving parts, varied obstacles, rules and regulations, and event-specific protocols to implement when hosting a Track & Field Meet. Hosting in a COVID-19/Social Distancing environment adds a health and safety component which must be well-planned, carefully thought-out, and meticulously implemented to ensure the health and safety of the officials, coaches, competitors and spectators. Meet management must be up to date and aware of all public health and safety requirements and restrictions mandated by state, local and institutional guidelines. Finding this information will differ by location, but normally can be found through your county government webpage. Please keep up with the latest information from your state health officials in your state and from the CDC.

When hosting in a COVID-19/Social Distancing environment, flexibility and accommodations must be utilized.

Meet Management Competition Considerations/Decisions

Some questions Meet Management needs to predetermine:

1. Will team tents be allowed?
2. When and where will all masks and social distancing be required?
3. When and where will all masks and social distancing not be required?
4. Will the number of entries need to be limited?
5. How will individual event warmups be organized?
6. How will individual field events conduct competitions?
7. Who will be allowed in the infield?
8. Will there be a Coaching Box in the infield?
9. Will there be a Coaching Box at all Field Events?
10. How many officials and volunteers are needed in each field event to run it efficiently and properly with COVID-19/Social Distancing restrictions?
11. Are spectators permitted to attend the meet?

Officiating Crew/Volunteers Considerations

1. It's recommended that all officials/volunteers wear masks at all times.
2. All officials/volunteers should do their best to social distance themselves from each other and competitors.



Photo provided by Mississippi High School Activities Association.

3. It's recommended that the event coordinators have a voice amplification system.
4. Flags should be used to indicate readiness of the venue and the attempt performance.

General Considerations for Running Events

1. Anyone within the track oval should wear a face mask unless competing in an active race.
2. Meet Management should place volunteers at all access points to the track oval to monitor entry and exit.
3. Consider not permitting anyone who is a spectator or non-participant inside the track oval.
4. Competitors should only enter the track via the Clerking Area.
5. Consider establishing a "Safe Performance Zone" around the track where no one may sit or stand.
6. All running event competitors should exit the track at the Finish Line Area or at the next closest gate.
7. In Relay Races each school should provide its own baton, which must be sanitized after each race, and must provide chalk or a piece of tape to make exchange marks.
8. Running events run entirely in lanes may use every other lane to assist with distancing.
9. Blocks should be disinfected after each heat/race.
10. It is recommended that the 800-meter race be run in every other lane over a 4-turn stagger.
11. Consider running races of 800 meters or greater in multiple sections to reduce the number of competitors competing together.

Clerking Considerations

1. Area:
 - A. One-way entry and exit, with visible 6-foot distance markings and signage.
 - Mask may be worn by competitors here
 - Designating traffic flow
 - Indicating No Exit and No Re-entry
 - B. Only Clerks, competitors, medical personnel and Meet Administration allowed in clerking tent.
 - C. Consider using tables to separate the lines of competitors.
 - D. Provide an open area for competitors to warm up and social distance once they check in.
 - E. Voice amplification system is recommended for communication.
 - F. A table stationed at the entry controlling flow.
 - G. No tables or chairs for competitors.

- H. Mark sections for event and heat to stand to facilitate social distancing.
2. Pre Meet:
 - A. Post-heat sheets and estimated Time Schedule to report to Clerking Tent in several locations.
 - B. Prepare hip numbers separated by race and paperclip to heat sheets. This limits multiple people from handling materials.
 - C. Multiple Clerks or volunteers will be needed to better socially distance themselves and the competitors.
3. Event Clerking:
 - A. Call competitors into the Clerking Tent by heats, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd call. Competitors enter the tent on 3rd call.
 - B. No personal items are to be left in the Clerking Tent. Have garbage bags, marked with heat and lane, that competitors can use to store belongings. Bags to be placed beyond the finish line, exterior to the track, monitored by a volunteer.
 - C. For relays, each school must provide its own baton.
 - D. Call each heat/section one at a time for instructions. Call name, provide hip number and direct where they need to stand.
4. Line Clerk/Escorting:
 - A. Take one heat/section at a time to the Start Line. Use the curves and infield to space out multiple heats.
 - B. Provide all starting instructions, advancement instructions, prior to arriving at the start line.
 - C. Advise competitors to inform the block holders at the Start Line if they will need starting blocks.
 - D. Remind competitors to immediately exit the track, beyond the Finish Line at the conclusion of the race.
 - E. Allow a single runout. Turn over the heat to the starters.

Starters Considerations

1. Recommended that starters wear a face mask at all times.
2. Consider using an electronic whistle.
3. Utilize a voice amplification system.
4. Consider allowing the Clerk to provide all race instructions.

Starting Blocks Crew Considerations

1. Assign one block holder to each lane utilized. Number the blocks so the holder for that lane will only be handling one set of blocks for the entire meet.
2. Only the block holders should place blocks on the track and remove them.
3. Provide each block holder with protective wear – face mask, protective gloves and sanitary wipes.

- The footpads and the mainframe should be wiped down with the sanitary wipes after each race.

Hurdle Crew Considerations

- Assign one hurdle crew member to each flight of hurdles. That crew member is responsible for the entire meet to set, remove and adjust their flight of hurdles.
- Provide each block holder with protective wear – face mask, protective gloves and sanitary wipes.
- The hurdle gates should be wiped down after each heat.

General Suggestions/Considerations for Field Events

In general, the focus is setup and pre-event planning. The key is the separation of the competitors, teams and coaches in a manner similar to the creation of coach's boxes, but for teams and competing athletes.

- A Safe Performance Zone should be established, specific to each field event. This zone would provide 6 feet of spacing, marked by tape or cones, from the runway, circle, apron.
- Events should be run "Flight Specific." Warmups and competition one flight at a time. Only those competitors competing in a specific flight should be in the Safe Performance Zone.
- A dedicated Coaching Box should be defined that is a minimum of 12 feet from the venue to ensure the event crew is not within 6-feet of coaches when preparing the event or observing the attempt.
- Coaches should wear masks throughout the competition and when in the Coaching Box.
- Specific boxes should be created that have three 6-foot separations – Up, On Deck, On Hold.. Athletes should enter each box when called by the flight coordinator.
- Establish Team Flight Areas. Each competing team will have a designated area they must remain in during the competition. The Team Flight Areas should be restricted to competing athletes in that flight.
- Each competing team could compete as a unit in the same flight. This would require Flight Sheets to be constructed by teams.
- Masks may be worn by competitors.
- If possible, an official/volunteer should be assigned to manage social distancing, Team Flight Areas, the Competition Area and the Safe Performance Zone.
- Each competitor should provide a bag, to place all personal items when not being utilized.

General Field Event Considerations in Competition and Warmups:

- All warmups and competition should be flight-specific.
- During warmups athletes should maintain the 6-foot separation by using the taped marks of the Safe Performance Zone.
- Masks may be worn by competitors. They are not required when performing an attempt.
- Athletes may wear a mask all other times when in the Safe Performance Zone.
- During competition athletes should remain in their designated Team Flight Area or at a designated 6-foot separation mark.
- When the Flight Coordinator calls the athlete for his or her attempt, the competitor should stand in the corresponding box and enter the runway when the flight coordinator directs.
- Following the attempt, the athlete may converse with his or her coach, both wearing a mask, at the Coaching Box where there is a designated 6-foot area separating the coaches (in the box), return to their Team Flight Area or go to their designated runway mark.



Photo provided by Mississippi High School Activities Association.

Horizontal Jumps Considerations

- The Safe Performance Zone should be established running behind the board crew, extending parallel to the length of the runway, 6-feet on each side of the runway.

2. Tape markers or cones should be placed, extending from the Safe Performance Zone, 6 feet apart. These marks must be used by competitors when lining up for an attempt.

Throws Considerations

1. The Safe Performance Zone should be established running behind the ring crew, extending 12 feet behind the officials.
2. Tape markers or cones should be placed, extending from the Safe Performance Zone, 6-feet apart. These marks must be used by competitors when lining up for an attempt.
3. It is recommended the sharing of implements not be allowed. If the sharing of implements is allowed with a teammate or competitor, the implement must be sanitized before being shared with his/her teammate or competitor.
4. Each competitor will retrieve his or her implement after each attempt.
5. The next competitor should not be called up until the sector is cleared.

Pole Vault Considerations

1. The Safe Performance Zone should be established running behind the "Pit", extending parallel to the length of the runway, 6-feet on each side of the runway. Tape markers or cones should be placed, extending from the Safe Performance Zone, 6 feet apart. These marks must be used by competitors when lining up for an attempt.
2. The landing mat will have to be sanitized after each attempt. Suggested methods:
 - A. After each attempt during warmups and competition, a volunteer will jump on the mat and wipe down or spray with a disinfectant the part of the landing mat surface the competitor landed on;
 - B. Utilize several landing mat covers, replace after each attempt, and sanitize the removed cover after each attempt;
 - C. Utilize several landing mat covers, tarps, or cloth covers and replace and sanitize after each attempt;
 - D. Each competitor brings his or her own cover (16' x 20') to be utilized when competing;
 - E. Individual cover is put up and taken down by the competitor and his or her coach.
3. It is recommended the sharing of poles not be allowed. If the sharing of poles is allowed with a teammate or

- competitor, the pole must be sanitized before being shared with the teammate or competitor.
4. If a competitor knocks down the standards, the standards must be sanitized prior to the next attempt.
5. If a competitor displaces the crossbar, it must be sanitized prior to the next attempt.
6. Competitors will retrieve their own poles.
7. In large fields, consider running multiple flights. This could result in a tie for 1st place.

High Jump Considerations

1. The Safe Performance Zone should be established running from the back of the "Pit", extending 20 feet on each side of the pit and extending 60 feet onto the apron.
2. The landing mat will have to be sanitized after each attempt. Suggested methods:
 - A. After each attempt during warmups and competition, a volunteer will jump on the mat and wipe down or spray with a disinfectant the part of the landing mat surface the competitor landed on;
 - B. Utilize several landing mats covers, replace after each attempt, and sanitize the removed cover after each attempt;
 - C. Utilize several landing mats covers, tarps or cloth covers and replace and sanitize after each attempt;
 - D. Each competitor brings his or her own cover (8' x 16') to be utilized when competing;
 - E. Individual cover is put up and taken down by the competitor and his or her coach.
3. If a competitor knocks down the standards, the standards must be sanitized prior to the next attempt.
4. If a competitor displaces the crossbar, it must be sanitized prior to the next attempt.
5. In large fields, consider running multiple flights. This could result in a tie for 1st place.

Hosting a Track & Field Meet entails a multitude of tasks, people and guidelines. This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your state.

THE JURY OF APPEALS – WHAT IT IS & HOW IT FUNCTIONS?

While everyone involved in a Track & Field Meet wants the meet to run fairly and correctly, sometimes things do go wrong. Jury of Appeals can be appointed prior to the meet to serve as the final board of appeals (Rule 3-5). The rule empowers meet management to appoint a Jury of Appeals, to hear a coach's protest of a Referee's decision.

Appealable Situations

Situations that are appealable to the Jury, but not limited to, are:

- the misapplication of a rule;
- the failure to apply the rules;
- a violation of any of the meet's announced terms & conditions of competition.

Appeal Process

STEP 1 – After the referee renders a decision about an issue. If the coach believes the meet referee has misapplied the rule the coach must first protest to the referee. If the coach still believes the result is not supported by the NFHS rules book or the competition's terms and conditions, he or she may file a written appeal to the jury of appeals. Some states only require a verbal appeal to convene the jury of appeals. Check with your State Association to determine what is required in your state. That appeal must be made within 30 minutes of the results of the referee's decision, or the announcement of the results if those cannot be reviewed by the meet referee. In the written appeal the coach must cite the specific NFHS rule that was misapplied or not enforced or quote the meet policy that was not followed. Once completed, the appeal is submitted to the referee.

STEP 2 – The referee must collect all documentation related to the previous ruling, plus the written appeal and submits them to the jury of appeals. The referee provides a brief description of the situation being appealed and provides his/her rationale for the ruling. The coach is then allowed to explain why he or she is appealing the referee's decision. At that point the jury of appeals can ask questions of both the referee and the appealing head coach.

STEP 3 – Once all questions have been exhausted, the referee and coach are excused and the jury of appeals discusses the situation and votes to either uphold the referee's decision or change the referee's decision. Like the referee and all other officials, the jury of appeals does not have the authority to set aside any rule (Rule 3-1-2, page 11), but its members may consider extenuating circumstances. The jury of appeals issues its final decision to the referee and the referee then informs all parties involved, and results or scoring will be adjusted, as necessary. The decision of the jury of appeals is final and not subject to appeal.

Non-Appealable Situations

Situations not appealable to the Jury of Appeals are:

- Any judgment decisions pertaining to violations or alleged violations of the rules;
- Finish judges' and timers' decisions, that does not involve misapplication of a rule or the terms and conditions of competition;
- Whether a start is fair and legal.

A jury of appeals may not accept appeals which address the above (Rules 3-5-4, page 15). Issues related to clerical errors or corrections of team scoring errors typically occur after a meet's conclusions and do not necessarily involve the jury of appeals (Rule 3-5-3b, page 15). These clerical errors can be corrected up to 48 hours after the end of the meet, unless another time period is stipulated in advance by the games committee.

Selecting a Jury of Appeals

Careful composition of the members of the jury of appeals increases the likelihood that decisions are correct, but also seen as unbiased. When appointing a jury of appeals:

- Jury members should be familiar with all aspects of track and field events;
- The jury should contain an odd number of members, usually 3-5, to ensure a decision;
- Ideally, the jury of appeals members should not have any other positions at the meet (unless a previous announcement identified the games committee members as the jury of appeals);
- Jury of appeals members should recuse themselves (have alternates available) from any appeal or issue that that could be perceived as involving or affecting a friend, family member, or school representative with whom they have a relationship.

The meet referee must assemble the jury of appeals prior to the start of the meet to review responsibilities. Jury of appeals members also must be reminded that they must be available, for 30 minutes after the 4x400m Relay, in case there is a need for the Jury to convene.

Every major track & field competition should have a jury of appeals appointed. Its existence provides the competition with checks and balances, ensures that the competition is fair, applies the NFHS rules book correctly, and that all of the terms and conditions of the competition are adhered to.

ELECTRONIC DISTANCE MEASURE (EDM) – BEST PRACTICES

The use of “electronic distance measurement” has been used exclusively at higher levels of Track & Field competition (IAAF, USATF, NCAA). The availability and cost effectiveness of the various devices now makes it affordable to be utilized at the high school level.

Before one can discuss the usage of electronic distance measurement (EDM), it is essential to understand its purpose.



Photo provided by XL Sports Photography, New Mexico.

QUESTION: Why utilize electronic distance measurement (EDM) at a high school Track & Field meet?

ANSWER: To:

1. **Increase Accuracy** – Fiberglass tape is both temperature and tension sensitive. Therefore, it stretches irregularly. It is also inaccurately marked graphically. Steel tape is also vulnerable to the same effects, except to a lesser extent. Add the factors of uneven terrain and improbability of laying the tape in a true straight line, the length of measurement is irregular with every measurement.
2. **Increase Efficiency** – The time to humanly triangulate or directly mark a point of first touch/landing is consistent between tape and laser systems. The efficiency is realized with the time it takes to shoot a target through a laser viewer, versus the multi-mechanical process of manually aligning, adjusting, reading and then returning the tape to out of the sector or pit.
3. **Increase Transparency** – Digital readout of a measurement is instantly verifiable visually, stored and can be instantaneously transmitted to a computer or digital screens. This eliminates the chance of misreading a tape and then transposing the reading verbally to manual recorders.
4. **Increase Credibility** – The combination of increased accuracy, efficiency and transparency provide a level of exposure that has made the use of electronic measurement the most reliable method of competition measurement.

Best Practices

Have adequate power – Regardless of what type of device the EDM operator is using, it is critical that he or she has adequate power. If the unit uses rechargeable batteries, a second and perhaps a third battery should be readily available, especially if the competition will be a long one. If it's a multi-day meet, make sure to re-charge all batteries overnight. If the device is battery powered, an ample supply of batteries should be on hand, ready to be changed as necessary.

Arrive early – Most of the work that you will need to do should be done prior to the beginning of the warm-up period. Plan on spending at least 30-60 minutes in preparation and setup prior to the posted event start time. This will give you adequate time to accomplish the following best practices.

Verify the accuracy of the device – Before the competition begins, verify the accuracy of the device you will be using.



Photo provided by Pam Wagner, Colorado High School Activities Association.

The most efficient way is to use a steel tape to measure at least three points in the impact area that would represent the longest, shortest and a mid-range attempt. Positioning the device where it will be used for measurement, and then measuring these three points to verify the accuracy of the device against the tape is the prescribed process. This would be true for either a throwing event or a horizontal jumping event.

Create a check mark – The check mark is used before, during and after the competition to verify that the measurements taken are accurate. The check mark should be in an area where it cannot be disturbed or bumped. This allows you to recheck your device at any time.

Work with the crew chief – It is critical that the EDM official work in close cooperation with the event crew chief, especially during the selection of the EDM device setup location. Understanding the flow of the event, where the athlete bench/area will be, and where implements will be returned will substantially aid in the efficient use of electronic measurement. Movement into and out of the circle or runway should be as efficient and quick as possible. The judge should be positioned so he or she can make the measurement and be out of the way for the next attempt.

Track & Field as a sport is constantly evolving and adapting to meet the needs and demands of an ever-changing sport. Electronic Distance Measurement is just one of these adaptations. It is a change for the betterment of the competition and a change for the improvement of the sport.

Portions of the information are available at: <http://www.usatf.org/usatf/files/f2/f2c725de-2cf8-4cae-a209-85b3b6713101.pdf>

CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING SAFETY TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS & TEAMS

Training for Cross Country is unique in that there are so many options afforded to the runner(s) to accomplish their workouts. Not being limited to the track allows the runners access to parks, city streets, highways and country roads. However, each of these options creates some unique safety concerns that all runners should keep in mind. Workouts and runs should be fun, relaxing, carefree experiences. Sadly, the need for runner safety tips is evidenced by a 45% increase in pedestrian deaths between 2009 and 2017 in the United States, as well as seven reported running-related motor vehicle crashes resulting in eight deaths and two disabling injuries among middle school and high school cross country and track and field runners between 2011 and 2020.

Preparing to Run

These general guidelines will provide some parameters for distance runners to maintain a degree of safety.

1. **Don't Wear Headphones/ear buds** – Be aware and alert of your surroundings. Hearing is a crucial part of staying alert and anticipating potential danger. Additionally, runners should all practice like they race, and headphones and ear buds are not permitted in a cross country race.
2. **Run with a Partner(s)** – Whenever possible, run in a group or with a partner(s). The saying, "safety in numbers" definitely applies to running. Besides, running with others can be more fun and motivating.
3. **If You Run Alone** – Make sure that someone knows the course or route you will be running.
4. **Run During Daylight** – The time of day you run has a lot to do with safety. The ideal time from a visibility safety standpoint is during daylight hours.
5. **Carry Identification** – Runners should carry some form of ID, so that in the event of an emergency, responders

can identify the person and determine any medical conditions they have, as well as emergency contacts.

6. **Carry a Cell Phone** – Runners never know when they will need to call for help – for themselves or someone else.
7. **Wear Safety Gear** – Reflective material comes in many forms, is inexpensive and light weight. It is extremely important when running around sunrise and sunset.

Actual Running

Where athletes run is very critical to their safety. Rule No. 1 is to know the surroundings and if they are safe. Workouts should be conducted in locations that are familiar and which are runner-friendly and safe.

Once athletes are ready to run, here are some decisions to make during the workout to continue to maintain a degree of safety.

1. **Where to Run** – Avoid unpopulated areas, deserted streets, overgrown trails and unlit areas. Avoid roads if at all possible. Vehicular traffic is dangerous and unpredictable.
2. **Always Run Against the Traffic** – When running against traffic, runners may be able to react quicker than if the traffic is behind them and out of their line of vision.
3. **Running in the City** – Obey traffic signals and all safety rules and regulations pertaining to those signals.
 - A. Don't cross the street in the middle of a block.
 - B. Always yield to vehicles at intersections. Don't assume that cars will stop. Give vehicles the right of way.
 - C. Don't "run" through a red light thinking you have time before the next car comes.
 - D. Look both ways before crossing, even with a green light, stop sign or right-of-way in a crosswalk.
 - E. Assume drivers don't see you and will not stop.
 - F. When running on a sidewalk adjacent to a road, avoid running close to the road – if you trip and fall you don't want to end up in the road.

Cross Country running and training can be a wonderful experience. By following the safety tips outlined above, runners will be taking precautions to help avoid risks and maximize the probability of a fun, productive and safe workout.



Photo provided by Pam Wagner, Colorado High School Activities Association.

CORRECT PLACEMENT OF THE HURDLES

There is an art to the correct placement of the hurdles on the track for hurdle races. Correct placement involves a series of steps or actions.

1. Place the hurdles on the desired marks.
2. Align the hurdles properly on the marks.
3. Adjust the weights to correspond to the height of the hurdle.

On the track, there is a mark, and sometimes two marks, where the hurdles need to be placed. These markings can be found just inside the lane markings on the left and right of each lane. Most often the markings are either rectangular or triangular in shape. Placement of the hurdle can be either directly on top of the mark, behind the mark, or in front of the mark, depending upon the type/style of hurdle the school is utilizing. Rule 5-3-7 should be applied by meet management, of the home team, to determine what the correct placement of the hurdles is for their facility, based upon the type/style of hurdle they utilize.

Boys Competition

Distance of Race	No. of Hurdles	Hurdle Height	Starting Line to First Hurdle	Between Hurdles	Last Hurdle to Finish
55 m	5	39 in.	13.72 m (45 ft.)	9.14 m (30 ft.)	4.72 m (15 ft., 5 3/8 in.)
110 m	10	39 in.	13.72 m (45 ft.)	9.14 m (30 ft.)	14.02 m (45 ft., 10 5/8 in.)
300 m	8	36 in.	45 m (147 ft., 7 1/2 in.)	35 m (114 ft., 10 in.)	10 m (32 ft., 9 3/4 in.)

Girls Competition

Distance of Race	No. of Hurdles	Hurdle Height	Starting Line to First Hurdle	Between Hurdles	Last Hurdle to Finish
55 m	5	33 in.	13 m (42 ft. 8 in.)	8.5 m (27 ft. 10 ³ / ₄ in.)	8 m (26 ft., 3 in.)
100 m	10	33 in.	13 m (42 ft. 8 in.)	8.5 m (27 ft. 10 ³ / ₄ in.)	10.5 m (34 ft., 5 ¹ / ₂ in.)
300 m	8	30 in.	45 m (147 ft., 7 ¹ / ₂ in.)	35 m (114 ft., 10 in.)	10 m (32 ft., 9 ³ / ₄ in.)

NOTE: *State associations may adopt either the low (30-inch) or high (33-inch) height in the 100-meter hurdle race for girls, but national records are recognized only at the 33-inch height.

The hurdle should be placed on the track so the feet of the hurdles are on the side of the approach by the competitor and the crossbar is directly over the mark on the track. Each hurdle should also be entirely within its own lane. In the 100m and 110m hurdles, hurdles should be positioned so they form a straight line and there is a finger-wide gap between the crossbars of the hurdles in consecutive lanes. Remember, the crossbars of the hurdle cannot overlap.

Over time, the hurdles get bent and may not conform to a proper shape. Keep your focus on the crossbar alignment and not that of the feet of the hurdle. Replace and repair any hurdles which are badly bent or have crossbars which are splintered to ensure the safety of the competitors.

Most high school hurdles have manual weights that must be adjusted and repositioned for the height of the hurdle. Rule 5-4-6, page 33, states that – *the hurdles shall be of such weight and balance that it requires a steady pullover force of not less than the following weights at the specified heights as follows:*

30 in. = 8 lb. (3.629 kg)

33 in. = 7 lb. (3.175 kg)

36 in. = 6 lb. (2,722 kg)

39 in. = 6 lb. (2.722 kg)

There are four heights for the high school hurdles; 39", 36", 33", and 30". The manual weights on the feet of these adjustable hurdles should also be marked with these numbers. The weight should be positioned on the feet at the same number corresponding with the height of the hurdle. As the hurdle gets higher the weight should be moved to a position further away from the base of the hurdle.

Before a hurdle race as the hurdles are placed on the track the hurdle crew should set up the first two or three flights of hurdles closest to the athletes and starting line first. This will allow the competitors warm up opportunities, while the other flights are being positioned. The hurdle crew can then return to adjust the first two or three flights of hurdles prior to the start of a race. The track should be closed while setting up the first two or three flights to avoid any injury to the athletes and the hurdle crew. During this time, the competitors can be setting their starting blocks until the track is safe, for them to warm up going over the hurdles.

Once competition has begun, correct hurdle placement must be inspected prior to each and every race and/or heat of the hurdles. It is the responsibility of the meet referee or his/her designee to perform this inspection. This will ensure a safe, fair, and equitable race for all competitors.



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Photos provided by XL Sports Photography, New Mexico and Mississippi High School Activities Association.



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