

DATE: November 30, 2021
TO: All Track & Cross Country Officials
RE: 2021 End of Season Cross Country Notes



I hope everyone had a fun and safe 2021 Cross Country season. I wanted to take a second while the season is still fresh in our minds to address several topics that came up during this season. Please see details below on each topic.

Competitor Uniforms

Rule 4-3 of the 2020 NFHS rule book spells out the complete regulations related to competitors' uniforms. The topic I want to address is that of the entire team wearing uniforms that meet the requirement. While we always want to do what is in the athletes' best interest, we must ensure we properly enforce and educate coaches/athletes on these rules.

Situation I: A team of eleven (11) runners from school A is entered into a meet as one (1) team. Seven (7) runners have matching uniforms with a stripe down the side, and four (4) runners have matching uniforms without a stripe down the side.

Result I: As all eleven (11) athletes from school A are entered as one team, all athletes must have uniforms that comply with the rule.

- If noticed before the race begins, they should be given a warning and the opportunity to change into matching uniforms
- If noticed during the competition and the starter and/or referee has given the general uniform warning, disqualification for the four (4) non-matching competitors can be issued.

Situation II: A group of twenty-one (21) athletes from school B are entered into a race as two separate teams; B1 and B2. Team B1 has ten (10) competitors, and they have matching uniforms, team B2 has eleven (11) competitors, and all have matching uniforms; B1's uniforms do not match B2

Result II: All runners from school B are legal as dressed, as they have been entered into the race as two (2) separate teams; B1 and B2.

Additional Information II: Per the OHSAA rules on exhibition competition, both teams from school B/all of the athletes on both B1 and B2 must be eligible to score. School B cannot designate one (1) team as their scoring team and one (1) as a non-scoring team. Also, schools competing as two (2) teams MAY have eligibility implications for their athletes. It is not the responsibility of contest officials to make determinations/judgments on these eligibility issues. It is the schools' responsibility to work through the OHSAA office directly on eligibility-related topics.

Situation III: Two (2) competitors, both from team C, have qualified for the regional and show up at the check-in. Runner C1 has a uniform with pink shorts, and runner C2 has a uniform with blue shorts.

Result III: While both competitors have qualified as "individuals" and are not able to receive a team score, both C1 and C2 must have matching school-issued uniforms as they are competing for team C and need to be easily identified. Rule 1-1-2 states that "a team consists of coaches, contestants, managers, trainers, and other associated school personnel." It does not reference the number of contestants who then become competitors.

Officials Uniforms

Page 58 of the Officials Manual/Handbook outlines the approved Track & Cross-Country Officials Uniform (<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Officiating/OHSAAOfficialsHandbook.pdf>). While weather outdoors is always an issue, it is important to know and follow the officials' uniform at all competitions regardless of the level of competition or weather condition. This means that your approved officiating polo should be worn, regardless of how many outer layers you have on over it. Also, when outer garments/ jackets are worn, the outer layer should be black and follow the rules set out on page 59 of the manuals. Specifically, jackets, hats, etc., from other governing bodies should not be worn when officiating OHSAA tournaments. This is important as we must lead by example for the athletes/coaches while being easily identified as officials to those competing and coaching. Please Note: proper officiating attire is part of the evaluation process used to determine current and future assignments.

Continuing Education & Rules Meetings

No matter how many years we have under our belts as officials, it is important for us to commit ourselves to continual learning of rules, changes, and new best practices. This is more important now than ever as we move out of a time when continued learning took a back seat due to COVID. Local rules meetings will again be required this season.

This education takes many forms, including local rules meetings, state rules interpretations and officiating clinics. I am working with the OHSAA office to bring more educational opportunities to our sport utilizing the technology at hand. This winter two online/virtual meetings will be made available through MyOHSAA, these meeting will count towards your required local meeting credits. More information on these virtual meetings will be sent out when the meetings become available. The OT&F&CCOA Clinic held each January is a great opportunity for continuing education. Each year's clinic has a different agenda and focuses on new topics and situations. Additionally, participants can earn both local and state interpretation meeting credits. Information for the 2022 clinic was mailed to all registered officials just before Thanksgiving. I encourage you, if possible, to attend this clinic each year.

Sincerely,

BJ Duckworth

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& State Rules Interpreter

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