

DATE: October 3, 2022

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ (William) Duckworth  
Director of Officiating Development & State Rules Interpreter  
Track & Field and Cross Country



RE: October Bulletin

## Video Message

Click [HERE](#) to view a brief video message before reading below.

## New Contact Information

I am now using a new email for OHSAA related business: [bjduckworth@ohsaa.org](mailto:bjduckworth@ohsaa.org). Please make the needed changes to your address books. I will continue to use the Yahoo address for non-OHSAA/personal correspondence.

## “Water Crossings” & Obstacles on Cross Country Courses

Over the past few weeks, we have become aware of several meets that utilize courses that traverse “water crossings” such as creeks, streams and draining ditches as well as other obstructions such as hay/straw bales. After consulting with the NFHS, the assistant state rule interpreters and Dustin Ware, I can confirm that both of these are prohibited under NFHS Rule 8-1-3b as they pose a tripping hazard. Let me be very clear, this is **NOT** a new interpretation or a rule change; it has been illegal, however, it was never widely addressed until now.

While water crossings such as creeks, streams and draining ditches are prohibited, there is a big difference between a course that has standing water on it due to a recent rainfall and a course that intentionally includes “water crossings” or other obstacles. Dustin has sent a memo to all coaches, ADs and post season meet managers notifying them of what is prohibited under NFHS Rule 8-1-3b. If you are the referee at a meet that includes these crossings, it is your responsibility to notify the meet manager of the issue at hand; changes will need to be made for the meet to continue. Regardless of if they make the changes or are unable/unwilling to re-route the course, please file a game report for a safety issue. If they have changed the course this will allow us to reach out and thank them for complying with this safety related rule. If they have not made the needed changes, it will allow Dustin and I to make the appropriate notification to the school and seek the corrective action needed to ensure a safe and legal course.

<b>Standing water</b> <i>Not an issue or perceived as a violation</i>	<b>Water obstructions</b> <i>Would be interpreted as a violation</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Puddles</li><li>• Wet courses (from rain)</li><li>• Low lying area they may have some ponding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creeks</li><li>• Streams</li><li>• Draining ditches that have moving or murky water</li></ul>
These are examples and not an exhaustive list. However, it is meant to provide some guidance as to what IS & IS NOT likely to be considered a violation of the NFHS Rule.	

I fully understand that this rule clarification will create some controversy and many will disagree. However, as contest officials it is our job and responsibility to enforce all rules regardless of our personal opinions on them.

## Medical Device Updates & Reminders

I have received several calls the past few weeks regarding meet officials not asking for or collecting the required medical note needed for the use of a medical device. When officials ignore this process, especially this late in the season, we are creating issues for officials and athletes at future meets when an official properly enforces the regulations.

### Medical Device Instructions

Athletes are allowed to utilize medical devices in both track and cross country. The coach of the athlete affected must present a doctor's note to the meet referee, stating the need for the medical device before competition. The referee **must** collect these doctor's notes and keep them in their possession through the completion of the meet. An additional waiver from the OHSAA is **not** required for the use of a medical device. It is recommended that if there is medical staff at the event, the referee inform the medical staff what athletes are utilizing medical devices.

## Clarification On Uniforms – Teams **MUST** Match

Please see below to situations related to Cross Country Uniforms. Please note that there is no formal recognition of JV/Varsity in our sport, therefore, all athletes running on the same team must match regardless of if they will score or not. We need to ensure we are enforcing this now to avoid issues come the post season.

### Situation 1

A team of eleven (11) runners from school A is entered into a cross country meet. 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. Is this legal?

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, the four (4) who do not match the other seven (7) 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 2

Two (2) competitors, both from team C, have qualified for the regional cross country tournament and show up at the check-in. Runner C1 has a uniform with pink shorts, and runner C2 has a uniform with blue shorts. Is this legal?

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. All members of a cross country team must match regardless of how many members of the team are competing at the meet regardless of the level of competition or how they qualified for the meet.

- 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 or how they qualified.
- Rule 4-3-2 states "Additional restrictions for relay and cross country teams. All relay and cross country team members must wear uniforms clearly indicating through predominant color, school logo and color combination of all outer garments worn as a uniform, that members are from the same team."

## Runner Receiving Assistant Situation & Clarification

While in most instances, when assistance is given no advantage will be gained. When faced with a situation where assistance has been given, the referee **MUST** make certain no advantage was gained before making their ruling. Below is a situation where assistance has been given and an advantage was gained.

**Situation:** In the finish stretch of a cross country dual meet, runner 5B sees runner 4A fall with no medical staff around. Runner 5B helps runner 4A to their feet and both finish the race. The meet referee disqualifies A4 as they received assistance. A4's coach filed an appeal with the referee, stating that both athletes should be disqualified as team B gained an advantage. The coach from team A provided the below-scoring information as well as a proper rule reference.

Pre-DQ scoring:

Team A = 1,2,4,9,12,13, and 14 = 28. Team B = 3,5,6,7,8,10,11 = 29 Team A wins

Post-DQ scoring

Team A = 1,2,4,11,12,13 = 30. Team B = 3,5,6,7,8,9,10 = 29. Team B wins

**Ruling:** Runner 5B helping runner A4 does give their team an advantage, as with the disqualification of A4, team B wins the meet. Per NFHS Rule 4-6-5 (note) and Case Book 4-6-5 Situation P, the referee changes his ruling and now has disqualified both athletes as an advantage was gained.

## Finishlynx/Hy-Tek Training

Are you interested in learning more about Finishlynx & Hy-Tek? If you are, please click [HERE](#) and complete an interest form. By completing the form you are not agreeing to attend, only stating that you would be interested. If there is enough interest this training would be put on by a third party, not the OHSAA or the OT&F&CCOA. When completing the form, in the section where it asks for "school" please put that you are an official and what city you live in.

## FAQ Document

As a reminder, the FAQ document can be found [HERE](#). This document is a listing of many of the questions and answers that have come in to myself and the assistant state rules interpreters.

## Save The Date

The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual OT&F&CCOA Officials Clinic will be January 20 & 21 at a location TBD in greater Columbus. The Awards dinner will be held the evening of January 20. The state rules interpretation will be held on January 21; it will be the **only** in person track and field state rules interpretation for officials. You **must** be registered for the clinic to attend this state rules interpretation meeting.

## Meet Your State Rules Interpreters

I want to thank our three assistant state rules interpreters for the work they do for our sports. These three volunteer positions assist myself and officials around the state with rules related questions. Their advice and experience is invaluable to myself and the advisory committee in the work we do to better our sport.

### **Bob Meuleman** | Fifth District Track Officials Association | NW



Bob has been involved in track and field and cross country for 63 years. In addition to his 47 years of officiating, he coached for nine years and was an athlete in high school and college. A charter member of both the 5<sup>th</sup> District Track and Field Officials Association as well as the OTFCCOA, his impact on the sport can be felt across the state. Bob, who was a local rules interpreter for 34 years, succeeded Fred Dafler as tournament officials coordinator. Serving as coordinator for seven years, he handled assignments and evaluations of regional and state tournament officials. Bob attended Springfield South High School, graduated from Defiance College and received a masters degree from the

University of Toledo. He served the North Central Local School District for 38 years as a teacher, coach, basketball/wrestling timer, resource room teacher, EMIS technology coordinator and athletic director. Bob has worked 89 district tournaments, 72 regional tournaments and 67 state tournaments. He had the honor of being inducted into the OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame in 2019 alongside his friends Dale Gabor and Phil Horvath. Bob thanks his wife, Alice, for her support and patience during his many years of officiating. Track is in the water at the Meuleman household; Dave (son) is an active college and high school official in Defiance and Mindy (daughter) is an avid runner in the Cincinnati area.

### **John Daubenspeck** | Greater Youngstown Track Officials Association | NE



John has been involved in track and field for over 40 years. In 2018, John retired after a 31-year career teaching Chemistry and Physics at East Palestine High School, where he was also the Science Department chairman. In addition to his 36 years as an official, John was the head boys track coach at East Palestine for 17 years and the cross country coach for five. John has been a registered OHSAA track official, and a member of the Greater Youngstown Track Officials Association, since 1988. He has served as local rules interpreter for the GYTOA since 2009. John received the Contributor Award from the Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials association in 2017. He was honored with the Fred Dafler

Sportsmanship Award by the Greater Youngstown Track Officials Association in 2013. In 2001, John was presented the Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Award by the Ohio Association of Track & Cross Country Coaches.

### **Steve Hurley** | Southwestern Track and Cross Country Officials Association | SW



Steve Hurley is a retired Greene County Common Pleas Court Judge who has been a Track and Field official for 46 years. Steve attended Eastern Kentucky University and ran track for four years earning two varsity letters as an intermediate hurdler. Upon graduation from ECU, he attended the University of Dayton School of Law graduating in 1977. He returned to his hometown of Xenia, Ohio and opened a private practice and started his family. Steve and his wife of 45 years, Karen, raised three children and currently have three grandchildren. Steve was elected to the bench in 2002 and served 18 years as the Judge of the Domestic Relations Court. He retired in January of 2021. In addition to being a track

official, Steve has also been a high school soccer referee for 26 years. He has had the honor of serving as a starter, head field judge and referee for multiple District and Regional meets throughout the state. Steve has also enjoyed the honor of serving as a state rules interpreter and referee at the State Track meet for several years. Steve has been the recipient of the Contributor Award from the Ohio Track and Cross Country Officials Association and has been inducted into the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches Hall of Fame.

## **OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual**

The 2022 OHSAA Track & Field and Cross Country Officials & Coaches Manuals can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

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Sincerely,

**BJ (William) Duckworth**

[bjduckworth@ohsaa.org](mailto:bjduckworth@ohsaa.org) – **New Email Address**

Director of Officiating Development & State Rules Interpreter

OHSAA Track & Field and Cross Country