DATE: August 4, 2026

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth | Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development

RE: August Officials' Memo

Officials Uniform Survey – Feedback Needed

Recently we have received increased feedback that officials would like to change the polo shirt color. The feedback comes from how quickly the white shirt gets dirty and how over time they tend to yellow, leaving a very unprofessional appearance. In surveying track uniforms around the country, white is typically avoided due to these same reasons. Based on that feedback, we would like to cast a wider net and get additional feedback from all officials.

Please review the below information thoroughly before responding to the survey as having a good understanding of the suggested change is important before forming an opinion.

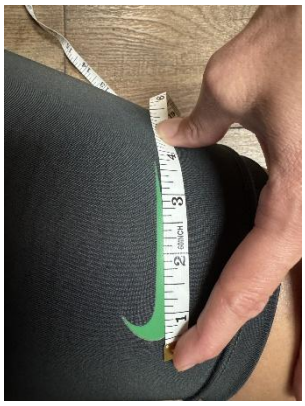
Based on the tentative plan:

- The change would ONLY apply to the polo shirt.
- No shirt color has yet been selected however it would not be black or navy to help keep officials cool during late track season and early cross country season.
- There would be NO change to pant color, black would continue to be the color for all bottoms.
- There would be NO change to the color of outer garments (jackets, pull overs, vests, etc.), black with the appropriate logo would continue to be the requirement as it is now.
- The change would be phased in over a 2–3 year period; it would not be mandatory right away.
- The average cost per new polo would be around $35-$40 and at least one uniform vendor has agreed to work with local associations and the OTFCCOA on group orders to reduce costs.
- A shirt color change would, after the initial change, result in a reduction of the frequency officials would need to replace their shirts.

Please take one minute to complete the survey by clicking HERE. The survey will stay open through August 15th.

Manufacturer Logo Stretching on Athlete Uniforms

I wanted to provide some clarity related to sizing discrepancies of manufacturer logos that are printed in a way that they stretch and can become enlarged when being worn depending on the fit of the uniform on each individual athlete. The size of the manufacture logo on the item at the time of manufacture/printing is what officials should be using for rule compliance. **If a logo stretches due to the fit on the athlete and becomes larger than allowed by NFHS rules, it is NOT a violation.** Sublimated uniforms are becoming more common, and with that type of printing, comes the ability for the logo to stretch. As long as the logo is of legal size during printing/manufacture it is legal.



Weekly Situations

Weekly situations will begin this week, they can be found at the bottom of this memo. The goal will be to send these out on the Tuesday of each week through the start of the tournaments.

Officials Role in Eligibility & Compliance Issues

Officials are responsible for the enforcement of contest rules as outlined in the NFHS Rule Book, Officials Manual, Sport Regulations and Tournament Regulations. Officials are NOT responsible for, nor do they have a role to play in ANY eligibility related items including gender, age, grade, etc. The same applies to any other administrative items contained in the OHSAA regulations. If officials suspect there is an eligibility or compliance issue, they can report that to me AFTER the meet takes place and I will ensure the appropriate staff in our office are made aware. The same applies to contracted FAT providers; contractors should not be involved in making any eligibility or compliance decisions.

If coaches approach you with eligibility related questions, please refer them to our office and we can address the issue/question with them after the meet. Student-athletes should never be prohibited from participating in a meet due to a suspected eligibility or compliance issue by an official, contractor, or coach. The rule of thumb is that if they are on a roster/entered in the meet, they compete, and our office will sort out any issues after the fact.

Permit Renewal

As a reminder, if you plan to officiate Cross Country, your officiating permit must be renewed in DragonFly for 2026/27 prior to the start of the season. However, if you did not renew by the fall sports deadline of June 30, you will not be able to officiate the post season, as you would not have received the questionnaire. **You cannot officiate cross country unless you have renewed your permit.**

Renewing officials now have the ability to choose whether they would like a digital copy of their rule book, a physical copy, or both. **Any choice that includes a physical copy will add a $7 charge per sport to your registration.** Digital copies will be sent out weekly, while physical copies will be mailed out on their traditional timeline through the US Postal Service. New and reinstating officials will not have the choice and will be receiving digital books.

If you are not officiating cross country, you have until December 31 to renew your permit for track.

State Rules Meeting for Cross Country

The mandatory state rules meeting went live on DragonFly on July 17. **This meeting is mandatory to renew your license, to officiate Cross Country during the regular season, and to officiate the postseason.**

Meeting Begins	Late Fee ($50) Begins	Meeting Closes
July 17	August 19	September 10

If you are a coach AND an official, you must complete both State Rules Meetings. While the content in both is similar, each is customized to its specific audience.

Officials Manual & Mechanics Guide

The 2026 Officials Manual & Mechanics Guide can be found by clicking HERE.

2026 Cross Country State Championship Clinic

We will be holding our Third Annual Cross Country State Championship Clinic this fall in conjunction with the 2026 OHSAA Cross Country State Championship at Fortress Obetz & Memorial Park on November 7, 2026.

The 2026 OHSAA Cross Country State Championship will serve as the backdrop for this opportunity, where veteran mentors instruct clinic participants on rules, mechanics, and best practices as they happen in real-time. The clinic is open to **ALL** officials who have **not** officiated the Cross Country State Championship. 24 participants will be paired with four mentors who will lead them on scheduled experiences. Two groups will start early morning during the first division competition around 8am. Two additional groups will start late morning/early afternoon during the second division competition around 11am.
Participants will experience sessions covering:

- Meet Management/How Assignments Work
- Clerking
- Starting
- Referee
- Umpiring
- Press Box/Announcing
- Awards
- Finish Line/Timing & Scoring

Registration for this clinic **IS NOW OPEN** and will run through August 15 or when full. Once full, a waiting list will be compiled. There are currently a few open spots in the clinic, if you're interested, I encourage you to act fast!

When: November 7, 2026
Where: Fortress Obetz & Memorial Park, Obetz Ohio
Who: The first 24 officials who have not worked the Cross Country State Championship who register.
Cost: $25, non-refundable.
What You Receive:
- Lunch
- All-access pass
- Parking
- Souvenir program
- Officiating guide
- OHSAA baseball hat
- 1 local meeting credit for the 2027 Cross Country season.
    - You must stay with your group for the entire schedule to receive credit.
- Valuable experience

Registration: Due to venue space limitations, registration is limited to **24 people.** Please do not register if you are not 100% committed to attending. To register, click **HERE**

Save The Date – 2027 Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association Clinic and Awards.

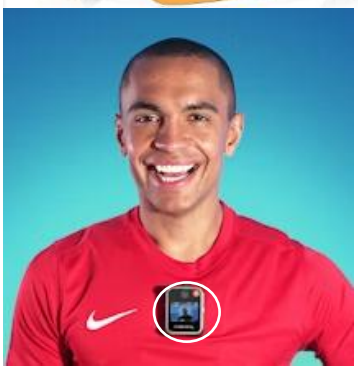
The 41st edition of the OTFCCOA Clinic will be held on **January 22-23, 2027,** at Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center in Lewis Center. Registrants will receive one local meeting credit for each day they attend and will be able to participate in and receive credit for the only in person state rules meeting that will be offered.

For more information, contact Dennis Sabo, densabo@gmail.com.

Weekly Situations

Situation 1: A2 shows up to the clerk wearing sunglasses while checking in for their race. As the clerk is double checking the readiness of the athletes before the firing of the starting device (as is required in the officiating mechanics) they notices that A2's glasses now have a light on the bridge of the glasses. The clerk signals the starter to hold the start and notifies the athletes they are not permitted to wear audio or visual recording devices during an event.
Ruling 1: Correct procedure.

The camera is circled in each photo.



Note 1: The clerk may also notify the meet referee and starters of the warning. If the athlete continues to wear the recording devices during a trial the athlete is disqualified from the event. [4-6-6]

Situation 2: A3 finishes the race and the meet referee notices that there is a recording device in their glasses. The meet referee notifies the athlete of their disqualification.

Ruling 2: Correct procedure.

Note 2: The athlete is not permitted to wear audio or video device during a race or trial or in restricted areas. [4-6-6]

Situation 3: D4 shows up to the clerk wearing sunglasses while checking in for their race. During the uniform inspection the clerk identifies that the glasses are capable of recording audio and video. When told to remove them by the clerk, D4 identifies that they are prescription glasses, and they cannot see without them. The clerk calls the Meet Referee who after confirming with the coach that the glasses are indeed prescription, instructs D4 that they must either wear a different pair of glasses or they must alter the glasses by covering the recording devices with tape before they may participate.

Ruling 2: Correct Procedure

Note 3: While NFHS Rule 4-6-6 prohibits their use, the Referee must act on the side of safety if they can confirm they are prescription glasses. Wrapping tape around the recording portion of the device will help ensure they cannot be used while also ensuring the safety of the student athlete. If the athlete were to then remove the tape, they could be penalized in line with NFHS Rule 6-1, resulting in the athlete being disqualified from the meet (ejected), and would then be subject to OHSAA ejection policy.

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