

DATE: August 5, 2024

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

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

RE: Pre-Season Notes & August Officials Memo



Where did summer go? It is hard to believe that practices are underway and the season starts in less than two weeks. Please take a few minutes to review the information in the memo to help prepare for the quickly approaching Cross Country season. Click [HERE](#) to view a brief 2min pre-season video.

State Rules Meeting

The annual, mandatory Cross Country State Rules Meeting will occur per the chart below. It will be online only. All officials working cross country, tournaments, and/or the postseason MUST complete the State Rules Meeting in addition to meeting requirements for local meetings.

To access the meeting, please visit your 2024-25 registration page on DragonFly, and click on the newly added requirement that is titled "2024 SRI Meeting (Cross Country): OHSAA Points of Emphasis". You will be able to watch the video on that screen. You will select "Fill out form Electronically", and it will take you to a screen where the video is available. After watching the video, you will select "Yes" to the question asking if you have watched the video, as well as signing your name at the bottom. **Please note:** You MUST sign your name and hit "done" on the screen to receive the credit. If you do not sign your name, your credit will not populate.

Meeting Starts	Late Fee Starts	Meeting Closes
July 25	August 19	September 23

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.

Tournament Questionnaire **NOW AVAILABLE**

Per the email sent by Keaton Jones on August 1, the 2024 Cross Country Tournament Questionnaire is now available through Sunday, August 18. Officials who wish to work the tournaments and have renewed their permit received the email and are eligible to complete the survey. If you feel like you should have received it and did not, first check your spam folder, and if it is not there, reach out.

Use of Bull Horns, Cow Bells, Whistle Blasts, Etc.

Per NFHS Rule 4-6-5d "communicating with a competitor through the use of any device" is considered an unfair act and is not allowed. While the use of bull horns, cowbells, whistle blasts, etc. by fans is NOT prohibited (if they do not interfere with the start of the race), their use to communicate with athletes, including bells or whistles in a rhythm to communicate pace to athletes, is a violation. As an official, you will have to make a judgment call on their use based on the situation at hand. If you cannot see who is using the device and it is someone yelling encouragement or randomly sounding the devices during a race, it is likely something not to worry about. However, if you can see it is a coach using the item or the sounding of the item is in a distinguishable rhythm, it is likely something to address. This is not an item with a one-size-fits-all answer.

Socks

As a reminder, socks are not part of the uniform and, therefore, not subject to uniform regulations. The wearing of superhero socks (like the ones found by clicking [HERE](#)) is NOT prohibited as the cape is securely attached (the same as head coverings). If the cape of these socks causes interference with another athlete, the athlete wearing them would be subject to disqualification.

Officials Manual & Sport Regulations

The 2024 OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual is now posted online and can be found at the link below. It is VERY similar to the track manual, and changes since the spring are highlighted in blue. The Track & Cross Country Sport Regulations that were discussed in the June Memo have now been posted and can be found at the links below. Keep in mind that only the items highlighted in the June Memo (Hammer Throw, Exhibition Competition, No Contests, Concurrent Competition of HS & MS, & Outdoor Events) are items officials should be concerned with as they are competition items. Other items are administrative and not the responsibility of officials to enforce. [Officials Manual](#) | [Track Regulations](#) | [Cross Country Regulations](#)

Game Reports

Game reports for the fall season will remain in MyOHSAA.

Assignment News

- **Congratulations to the officials selected to officiate the Early Season Invitational later this month at Fortress Obetz. Click [HERE](#) to view the list of those assigned.**
- In 2022, when the changes to the tournament assignment process were made, we committed to continual evaluation. Based on that evaluation, the decision was made to sunset the position of Assistant Head Umpire. Those who worked in those positions at the regional and state levels in 2023 will continue to serve in those positions through the end of their rotations. As they move up to be Head Umpire, the Assistant Head Umpire position will not be refilled at their sites.
- Rick Campbell, with the support of the officiating staff at the office, has completed a process to digitize all of the paper evaluations he has received. Since spring of 2022, we have collected around 2,900 evaluations. We continue to be the leader in the country in collecting evaluations on high school track officials.
- As we did at Regional Track this spring, we will have an official appointed to work as an evaluator at each of our Regional & State Meets this fall for cross country.
- To ensure our officials have the support they deserve at the five OHSAA events, Rick Campbell will serve as the Officials Coordinator for those meets. He will handle the “day of” support tasks I had been handling prior to my dual role.

NFHS Release of 2025 Rules

Below are links to the recent press release announcing the 2025 NFHS rule changes. **It is important to keep in mind that these changes take effect in 2025, and nothing changes for this fall.** Additionally, as the national rules interpretation meeting does not take place until January, I will not be able to answer any questions on the rules changes until then. [NFHS Press Release](#) | [NFHS Summary of Changes](#)

NFHS Educational Courses

As I have shared in the past, the NFHS provides free educational opportunities for officials. Both officiating courses offered lay a great foundation for newer officials but also serve as a refresher for veterans as well. I strongly recommend that if you have not taken these courses, you do so; each takes about an hour.

[Officiating Track & Field](#) | [Interscholastic Officiating](#)

Sportsmanship Educational Opportunities

As we know, sportsmanship is a big topic currently and we **ALL** have a role to play. The OHSAA provides resources through our Respect The Game initiative, and the NFHS has made it a point of emphasis. Additionally, the NFHS has a sportsmanship course that is a great tool for officials to help them better understand the role we play in sportsmanship. [Respect The Game](#) | [NFHSLearn.com Sportsmanship Course](#)

DragonFly Center for Officials Services App

In addition to the traditional web log in, officials can utilize DragonFly via the Center For Officials Services App for [iPhone](#) or [Android/Google Play](#).

NFHS All Access

The NFHS offers officials the ability to purchase digital rule & case books through the NFHS All Access APP for [iPhone](#) or [Android/Google Play](#). Digital books are \$6.99 and are good for one calendar year. Paper books will continue to be provided by the OHSAA.

SAVE THE DATE – Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association Clinic

The OTFCCOA Annual Winter Clinic will be held on January 24 & 25, 2025 at the Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio. Officials will have the opportunity to earn TWO local meeting credits, one for each day of the clinic, as well as their state rules interpretation credit. More information will be sent to all officials in the fall by the OHSAA on behalf of the OTFCCOA.

Important Dates & Resources

In an effort to keep our officiating community better informed, I will include the charts below detailing important dates and resources in each of my monthly updates. This will ensure this information remains at your fingertips all year long.

Important Dates		
	2024 Cross Country	2025 Track
OTF&CCOA Officials Clinic	January 24 & 25 2025	
First Day of State Meeting	July 25	February 10 <i>(tentative)</i>
First Day of Coaching	August 1	February 24
Early Season Invitational	August 17	
Season Begins	August 19	March 29
State Meeting Late Fee Begins (\$50)	August 19	March 29 <i>(tentative)</i>
Deadline To Declare for Tournament	September 23	April 21
State Meeting Ends	September 23	April 21 <i>(tentative)</i>
Non-Interscholastic Date	September 30	May 5
7 th & 8 th Grade State Championship		May 17
District Tournaments	October 19	May 19-24
7 th & 8 th Grade Post-Season Invitational	October 20	
Regional Tournaments	October 26	May 28-31
State Championships	November 2	June 6-7 (AT OSU)
OHSAA State Championship Officials Clinic	November 2	June 6-7
Season Ends	November 2	June 7

Important Documents/Resources		
	2024 Cross Country	2025 Track
OHSAA Sport Webpage	Click HERE	Click HERE
Sport Regulations	Click HERE	Click HERE
Tournament Regulations	TBD	TBD
Uniform Guidance Video	Click HERE	
Coaches Manual	Click HERE	TBD
Officials Manual	Click HERE	TBD
Seated Athlete Manual		TBD
Electronic Starting Guide		TBD
Verification Form	Click HERE	
Mixed Gender Relay Waiver		Click HERE
Medical Waiver	Click HERE	
Non-Bordering State Waiver	Click HERE	
NFHSLearn.com Fundamentals of Coaching	Click HERE	
NFHSLearn.com Sport-Specific Coaching	Click HERE	Click HERE
NFHSLearn.com Sportsmanship Course	Click HERE	
NFHSLearn.com Track & Field Officiating	Click HERE	
NFHSLearn.com Interscholastic Officiating	Click HERE	
Tournament information can be found by clicking the appropriate links on the sport-specific OHSAA Sport Webpage.		

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