

DATE: August 10, 2023

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth  
Assistant Sport Administrator &  
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OHSAA Track & Field and Cross Country



RE: 2023 Official Handbook Updates & August Memo

### Video Update

Click [HERE](#) to view a brief video update.

### 2023 OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual

The 2023 OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual is now available by clicking [HERE](#). Please make sure you review this document as you would the NFHS Rule Book and have the manual available in either paper or electronic form when officiating. If you have a smartphone, you can bookmark the link or save the document to your files/cloud.

### The Proper Cross Country Start Procedure

There has been some confusion related to the use of the "Walk Up Start" as it is being referred to. The correct starting procedures are outlined in NFHS Rule 8-4-4 and on NFHS Officials Manual Page 42. In the tournaments, we follow the audio/visual starting process in Ohio for tournaments, and it is **STRONGLY** recommended that this process be followed at all regular season meets for consistency.

This process will be reviewed on slides 8-12 of the virtual local meeting that will be available to officials soon.

### 2023 – 2024 Officials Handbook Updates

Each year, the OHSAA makes adjustments to the Officials Handbook. This handbook is the go-to for non-competitive officiating questions. It can be found by clicking [HERE](#) and then clicking on "Officials Handbook." Highlights of the changes are outlined below. Please review the full document linked above for full details.

#### Tournament Pay Increase

**For the third year in a row, officials will see an increase in tournament pay.** In 2021 and 2022, officials saw increases in pay for track regional tournaments. In 2021, the increase brought track regional pay in line with districts. In 2022, track regional pay moved to \$10 more than the district. **Effective with Cross Country this fall, each level of the tournament will see a \$10 increase per official per day\*.** While \$10 does not seem like a lot per person, this raise accounts for a \$30,000 investment into tournament officials' pay per year. In 2022, investments totaled approximately \$23,000 and included: 1) Pay raises for regional track 2) Additional officiating positions added at the regional and state level of both sports, the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Cross Country Invitational and 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Track Championship 3) The OHSAA adoption of the summer officials clinic 4) The addition of hotel rooms at the state meet. In 2021, we saw a \$5,000 investment with the increase of track regional officials' pay. **Since 2021 we have seen nearly \$60,000 in investments into officials in our sports.**

\*District cross country pay is set at \$130 per meet. This rate is based on the standard district that has six races. Districts that hold more than six races will see different pay for their day based on the number of races held.

### Official Uniforms

Officials' shirts now need to be tucked in unless the shirt has been manufactured not to be tucked in (i.e. women's cut shirts) or there is a medical reason why it cannot be tucked in.

People have reached out and asked about suspenders. They are not covered in the uniform rules and are looked at no differently than a belt; if you need them, wear them. Also, for clarification, if a hat is worn, it **MUST** meet the guidelines as outlined in the policy.

### Years of Service Needed for Tournament Assignments

The number of years need to be eligible for tournaments has been changed to reflect the reality of our current officiating numbers. Years of service for districts have been reduced to help fill the needs at that level, while the years of service for the state meets have been increased to reflect the higher level of skills needed in those positions. The new years of service are listed below:

District – 1 (one) year (*previously two*)

Regional – 4 (four) years (*no change*)

State – 8 (eight) years (*previously six*)

### Required Meeting Attendance for New Officials

New officials will now be required to attend the state rule meeting and one local meeting in the year they take their test. Previously, the only educational requirement that was needed for a first-year official was the test. This change, in addition to new online course structure, will help ensure our new officials have a better foundation as they start their career.

### State Rules Meeting.

The deadline to complete the meeting requirement without paying the \$50 penalty fee is below. **If you are a coach and an official you MUST take both state rules meetings.** While the content is similar there is information in the coaches meeting not contained in the officials meeting and vice versa. This was instituted in 2021 for our sports and brought us in line with all other sports.

Sport	Start	Deadline w/o Penalty
Cross Country	Mon., July 17 at 9 a.m.	Tue., Aug 15 at 11:59 p.m.

### OT&F&CCOA Officers Needed

The OT&F&CCOA will be holding elections for president-elect and trustee at the clinic in January. If you are interested in either position, please email Mariah Hohman at [hohmanmi@gmail.com](mailto:hohmanmi@gmail.com). For more information on the responsibilities of these positions, click [HERE](#) and then click on "Responsibilities."

### 2024 NFHS Rule Changes

Below please see links to the NFHS press release discussing the rule changes for 2024 as well as a link to more details of the changes. Please know that the national rules interpretation, where I will receive full details of the changes, will not occur until January 2024. While I have reviewed the rules, until that meeting occurs, neither I nor the assistant SRIs will answer any questions on the changes. Also, none of these changes will be in effect for this fall; nothing takes effect until the 2024 season.

Click [HERE](#) for NFHS Press Release. Click [HERE](#) for additional details on rule changes.

### DragonFly

Many people have been reaching out to me asking for technical support on using the platform. The best resource for technical help is the link below to their support page. This support page also has a link to contact them, as well as other self-paced help resources.

<https://www.dragonflymax.com/contact-us>

As a reminder, effective with this cross-country season, all assignments made by the OHSAA will be done through this system. Schools and leagues will each continue to have discretion in determining what system they use for assignments.

## Reminders From Previous Updates

### Cross Country Local Rules Meetings

Officials can attend local meetings starting on July 12 until October 9. During this timeframe, I will be posting a virtual meeting that will count as one local meeting credit. The OHSAA will notify you when this meeting has been posted, and you will have a set amount of time to view the video. *Please make every effort possible to attend as many meetings as possible, as our focus should be on continuing self-improvement, not meeting a minimum requirement.*

### Cross Country Tournament Assignment Selection Policy

The cross country tournament assignment and selection process was changed in June 2022 based on the feedback from the assignment task force. The full policy is posted [HERE](#). I encourage you to take a few minutes to view a video detailing the new policy by clicking [HERE](#).

### Officiating Dues at Work and Officials' Insurance Information

To learn more about how your state officiating dues work for you, click [HERE](#).

To learn about the insurance provided to you as an official, click [HERE](#).

### Save The Date 2024 OT&F&CCOA Clinic & Awards Dinner

Save the date for the 2024 Ohio Track and Field and Cross Country Officials Association Clinic and Awards Dinner. The 2024 clinic will be held on January 19 and 20 at the Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio. Cynthia Beacham is the clinic director. The awards dinner will be held on January 19, 2024, at the same location, with Gretchen Acker as the banquet director.

### Changes to New Officials Testing & Class Process

Effective in June, we have implemented a new process for the education and testing of new/prospective officials. Please see below for details of the new process.

- The new course went live in June, with a new one available monthly for prospective officials. This will allow us to continue to recruit new officials year-round.
- The course will ONLY be available online, and we will no longer be able to host in-person new officials classes. This brings a high level of consistency to our education process.
- The new process will provide the new officials with 7.5-8 hours of self-paced officiating education between two separate courses managed through one central process. The steps are below:
  - Create an account on MyOHSAA; access this through the OHSAA officiating page.
  - Pay the required fee.
  - Receive the rule book electronically.
  - Take the RefPrep course & upload the completion. Course includes narrated content and multiple quizzes.
  - Take the NFHS Officiating Track course & upload the completion.

- Take the concussion course & upload your certification number. I recommend they take the NFHS certification as they will have already created a free NFHS account through the previous step.
- Take and pass the test.
- Be connected with their local officials' association.
- In conjunction with RefPrep, I will make changes to their course yearly. The NFHS will make adjustments to their class as appropriate.
- Mariah Hohman has been selected as the instructor for our new virtual class offering; she will handle all new officials for our sport in the state. Once new officials start the process, she will ensure they progress through the process by completing each step, and at the end, she will make a direct connection of the new officials to me as well as their local association. Prospective officials who need support can contact Mariah at [hohmanmi@gmail.com](mailto:hohmanmi@gmail.com)
- Jeff Polhemus will continue to lead the recruitment, retention, and mentorship committee that was formed for our sport last year.

I am excited about this educational and testing process and its support for prospective officials. Our new officials will be better prepared when they step on the track, and for the first time, we will have a process that directly connects them to their local association secretary. We know that connection to local associations, especially the mentorship and socialization they provide, is critical to retaining new officials.

I ask that each association work to connect each new official with one of your veteran officials who can provide them with mentorship through their first few years. Our veteran officials have a wealth of knowledge and expertise they can (and should) share with our new officials.

I also want to dispel a rumor that is going around. Current officials will NOT be asked to take this course; this process is for new officials or officials who have had a lapse in their license.

Thank you for all you do for our student-athletes.

**BJ Duckworth**

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