

DATE: September 19, 2023

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth

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OHSAA Track & Field and Cross Country



RE: September In-Season Update

Video Update

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

Missing Doctors Notes for Medical Devices

As we do each season, it is inevitable that you will run across an athlete with a medical device (inhaler, EpiPen, heart monitor, etc.) that they do not have a physician's note for. In these instances, Referees have to make a judgement call about what is in the best interest of the athlete for that meet. However, **every time** you run into a situation where a medical device does not have a note, regardless of if you allow them to run with it, the meet referee **must** file a game report for improper equipment. This report notifies the OHSAA office and school of the issue with the note so it can be remedied. It also prompts Dustin and I to be notified so we can do an additional follow up with the coach and AD ensuring the issue gets resolved. Keep in mind, medical equipment only needs a doctor's note **not** a waiver. Anytime a rule would need to be adjusted to accommodate an athlete, a waiver is needed and someone missing a waiver also prompts a game report.

Click [HERE](#) to view the OHSAA and NFHS policies on medical equipment.

Referee's Review of the Course

We have had a handful of instances this fall that included improperly marked courses of one sort or another. In each instance the course was not walked or driven by the meet referee prior to competition. If you are the referee of a meet, please take the time needed to review the course and work with the meet manager on any needed changes, including the addition of better marking, barricades, flagging, etc. prior to the start of running. Please complete this pre event inspection even if you are familiar with the course.

Inconsistent Application of the Rules

So far this season I have had several incidents come across my desk that were the direct result of officials not enforcing rules consistently. In each of these incidents, athletes or teams were correctly penalized for violations that had occurred in previous meets without enforcement or any corrective conversations. While some may think they are helping by not enforcing rules they look at as petty, all it is doing is setting up those athletes and teams for issues down the line when they repeat the violation. The best thing we can do for our sport related to rule enforcement is consistent application of the rules paired with preventative officiating.

A great example of this comes from a meet referee who reached out after a large invitational involving 14 races. During the course of the meet, 13 of the 14 races had significant issues with uniforms at check in, each was addressed by the meet referee and was met with great resistance due to the uniform rules not being enforced in previous meets.

Blood on the Course

We had a unique situation arise related to an athlete with a medical condition that causes severe nose bleeds that sparked a lot of conversation. Based on the outcome of the conversation, I want to share with you the situation and the guidance provided to me.

Situation: An athlete has a medical condition that causes them to have severe nose bleeds, it is not just a few drops of blood. By the end of the race, the athlete's lower face is covered in blood and blood is actively dripping from his nose and chin and is on his uniform, arms, etc.

Guidance Provided by OHSAA: NFHS Rule 4-4-3 states that the athlete can complete their trial before seeking medical attention to stop the bleeding and clean everything before they resume, appendix F of the rule book gives similar guidance. In Cross Country, the athlete competes in one race and that is their trial, by that rule alone the runner would be allowed to complete the race and that works 99% of the time. However, in this instance with the bleeding being severe the concerns for the safety of the athlete, other runners, officials, volunteers, etc. comes into play. In an instance like this, the referee must make a decision based on the situation they see in front of them. They must consider - is it safe for everyone involved for the athlete to continue or is there too much of a risk presented by the larger amount of blood? If it is determined that there is too much risk, the referee would be supported in their decision to have the athlete removed from the race. Again, this situation is the 1%, the exception to the rule. While we all must follow the rules as they are given, in an instance like this where there is an extreme risk to others, we must use our best judgement. Anytime you find yourself making a decision like this, regardless of the outcome, it is always best to file a game report following the meet. This report notifies the school of the issue at hand so they can support the coach and athlete and gives Dustin and I the opportunity to follow up with the school to ensure the athlete is getting what they need to safely return to competition.

2023 Officials Education Survey - Ends Sept 30

If you have not done so already, please take five minutes to complete a brief survey to help me provide you with better educational material in 2024; I sincerely want to know what you think we need to focus on. The survey can be completely confidential if you choose. Click the below link to view and complete the survey. **Please keep in mind this is an education survey, not a survey on rules changes you want to see or other issues.** I will be asking the coaches association to help me distribute a similar survey to coaches later this fall/winter.

<https://forms.gle/XmNRCkooNiraq8Db7>

2023 OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual

The 2023 OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual is 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.

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. For more information on the responsibilities of these positions, click [HERE](#) and then click on "Responsibilities."

OHSAA 7th & 8th Grade Cross Country Invitational

Registration is open for the 2023 OHSAA 7th & 8th Grade Cross Country Invitational; this is the **ONLY** OHSAA-sponsored post-season event for 7th & 8th grade cross country. Registration is open until October 12 and can be completed via the link below. Please share this information with any 7th & 8th grade coaches you know.
<https://www.ohsaa.org/sports/cc>

DragonFly Updates

- 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>
- One common request is that Dragon Fly not send you an email each time someone accepts a contract for your event. There is no way to adjust this setting currently; however, I encourage you to reach out to DragonFly to let them know you want them to add the feature in the future. I have already passed along that request on my end.
- One of the things that people have been upset about is the \$5 charge you receive to withdraw money. This fee **ONLY** applies if you withdraw money more than four times in a calendar month. My recommendation is that you withdraw your money once a month or bi-weekly (twice a month) to avoid any charges. Each transfer will take 3-5 days to show in your designated account. This will not only save you from paying the fee for excessive transfers, but it also will save you time from going in after every meet to transfer your money
- 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. If you have not set up your account, you **WILL NOT** be able to be assigned to a tournament.
- As was the case with Arbiter, schools are **NOT** required to use DragonFly for assigning their regular season contests. A local school or assigner may use any means they wish to assign and pay officials, including the continued use of Arbiter.

Reminders From Previous Updates

Click [HERE](#) to view the 1st September Update

Click [HERE](#) to view the August Update.

Click [HERE](#) to view the July Update

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

BJ Duckworth

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