

DATE: October 7, 2024

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

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

RE: October Officials Memo



Cross Country Assignments

Congratulations to the officials assigned to the OHSAA Early Season Invitational, 7th & 8th Grade Postseason Invitational, Key Regional Tournament Positions, and State Championships. The assignments were made in accordance with the approved assignment processes and procedures, which can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Not Enforcing Rules

I continue to have issues reported weekly that are occurring because of inconsistent enforcement of the rules. The issues arise when an official enforces the rules correctly and they have not been week(s) prior. As I have stated numerous times, **the best thing we can do for our student-athletes is consistent application of the rules.**

As we move into the tournaments and conference week, I am asking that we all work together to ensure consistency in the application of the rules so athletes and coaches are not caught off guard when the rules are applied properly at the tournament.

Reminder on Team Uniforms

Per NFHS Rule 4-3-2 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; this rule applies even when a team has less than a full team in regards to scoring. **Regardless of how many athletes a team has, they all must comply with 4-3-2.** This rule applies to the regular season and post-season alike.

The only time a school would be allowed to have different uniform combinations would be when the school has split their team with the permission of the meet manager. For example, the competitors in the team race do not need to match the team in the open race. Another example would be when the school has been allowed to enter two teams in one race (i.e., A & B) teams. These separate teams would be in separate boxes, listed on the paperwork as two teams, etc.

At the regional and state meets, even when athletes have qualified as “individuals” and are not able to receive a team score, they all **must have matching school-issued uniforms** as they are competing for the same team.

Medical Device Paperwork

For clarification, **ANY paperwork that states a medical device is needed and has been completed by a physician or physician’s office is acceptable, including physical forms. We had an issue with a physical form earlier this season, and I had originally given the wrong guidance. I apologize for any confusion that error caused.**

Officials Role in Eligibility

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. If officials suspect, there is an

eligibility 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 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 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.

I understand that language in the Officials Manual has created some confusion. That same language has been in the manual for over 10 years as Dale and myself felt it important it be there for our officials who also function as meet managers. However, that information will be clarified in the 2025 manual.

2024 Cross Country Tournament Regulations & Information

The 2024 Cross Country Tournament Regulations were approved in late August, and a copy can be found at the link below. They include several new regulations intended to bring consistency across all of our sites and provide our student-athletes with predictable and consistent competition. The links below also provide information on our regional sites, schedule, and representation, as well as some of the information for the state championship.

[Tournament Regulations](#) | [District & Regional Information](#) | [State Meet Information](#)

NFHS National Rules Committee

I have been selected for the NFHS Track & Cross Country National Rules Committee with a term ending in July of 2028. I will be serving as the National (NFHS) Officials Association Representative. Ohio last had a representative on the committee when Dale Gabor served a term as a section representative, which ended when he passed in 2021.

The NFHS National Rules Committee for our sport consists of representatives from the eight NFHS sections, a coach's representative, an official's representative, and a chairperson. The committee makes recommendations that are then sent to the NFHS board for final approval.

Officials should continue to work through the Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association for any rule change proposals. Those reaching out directly with rule/policy change requests will be directed back to the state officials' association.

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 better inform our officiating community, 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&COA 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
7th & 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	Click HERE	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	
OHSAA Officials Handbook	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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