

DATE: November 14, 2023

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth

Assistant Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development
OHSAA Track & Field and Cross Country



RE: Cross Country Post Season Notes and Track Reminders

The Best Thing We Can Do to Help Our Student Athletes!

As I reflect on this past season, specifically the issues that came to my attention at League/Conference & District Tournaments, one big common theme emerges; inconsistent application of the rules during the regular season. I understand that many of you (and myself) do not agree with all of the rules we are responsible for enforcing; however, that does not change our duty to do so. Choosing to not enforce certain rules or “let things slide” during the regular season does nothing to help the sport or the student athletes we serve. We are actually hurting the students. There is a big difference between preventative officiating and ignoring items. The vast majority of the issues that came my way were directly related to rules not being enforced during a regular season. Some of the biggest items that came to light are:

- Starters not using the three-meter step up, putting athletes at a disadvantage when it is used during the post season.
- Uniform rules being ignored, causing athletes to arrive at the starting line of the tournament in an illegal uniform that they had worn during the regular season. One of the most serious issues we had was a conflict caused at a district meet when a referee properly enforced uniform rules on a team who had run illegally all season including at their conference meet the week prior.

No one is asking officials to hand out more disqualifications, however, we cannot choose to ignore rules we don't like. We are all humans, mistakes will be made, but ignoring things is not a mistake it is an intentional action. While we do have tournament regulations, the rules in the NFHS Rule Book and OHSAA Officials Manual apply to both the regular season and tournaments the same.

I understand the vast majority of the officials reading this update are doing what is asked of them or going above and beyond and the actions outlined above reflect the minority of officials. This is not a blanket statement, however, it is important that all officials are aware of the challenges we face so we can all work together to better our sports and better serve the student athletes.

2024 NFHS Rule Changes

In July, the NFHS announced several rule changes that will take effect with the 2024 Outdoor Track season. Information on these changes can be found [HERE](#), the press release from July can be found [HERE](#). The national rules interpretation meeting will not be held until mid-January, therefore we will not be able to provide any interpretations on the new rules until the OT&F&CCOA Clinic.

Additionally, I expect there to be several changes made to the OHSAA Tournament Regulations as well a possible new Ohio Modification; information on those will be shared when available.

Track State Rules Interpretation Meeting

The State Rules Meeting virtual meeting window will be open February 5, 2024 to March 22, 2024; completion between March 23, 2024 and April 13, 2024 will require a late fee. This meeting is required for all officials.

The **ONLY** in person State Rules Meeting will be given in conjunction with the OT&F&CCOA Clinic in January at Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center. The meeting will only be open to those who have registered for the Clinic.

Local Rules Meetings

Local rules meetings can be attended from January 29, 2024 through April 22, 2024. In addition to the meeting options made available to you through your local association, as in the past two seasons, I will produce and provide two virtual local meetings that will be available to all officials in the state.

Officials who wish to work a district, regional or the state tournament **MUST** attend at least four local meetings in the **spring**.

Officials who do not want to work the tournament but want to renew their permit must attend a total of four local meetings each year and can be any combination of fall and spring.

Tournament Questionnaire

The Tournament Questionnaire for the 2024 spring season will be posted in January. All officials who wish to work a district regional or state tournament **MUST** complete the questionnaire.

Q&A Sessions

I held virtual Q&A sessions for coaches and officials in 2022 and 2023, due to low attendance we will NOT be holding these in 2024.

Starter Shells

If you are looking for starting shells for the 2024 season, we have been made aware that BollandFX has a limited number of shells currently available. They can be ordered via the information below with a limit of five boxes. BollandFx does have substantial raw materials coming in soon and is taking pre-orders for delivery before the 2024 season, those can also be made at the information below.

Email: david@bolandfx.com Website: bolandfx.com

The OHSAA does not endorse or recommend BollandFx or their products; we are simply passing on this information to officials who may be eligible. BollandFX has donated starter shells to the OTFCCOA that will be raffled off at their clinic as a fundraiser for the scholarship fund.

DragonFly Issues

Please use the link below to contact DragonFly directly if you are experiencing any issues. After contacting them, if directed by them, you should reach out to me and I will connect you with the appropriate OHSAA staff. <https://www.dragonflymax.com/contact-us>

Save The Date – OTFCCOA Clinic

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.

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

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