

DATE: October 12, 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: Pre-Tournament Notes and Reminders

Video Update

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

Reminder On 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.

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. Rule 1-1-2 states that “a team consists of coaches, contestants, managers, trainers, and other associated school personnel.” It does not reference the number of contestants who then become competitors or how they qualified.

Reminder On Proper Start

I understand there may have been some confusion related to the instructions given in the virtual local meeting in regard to how far back from the line athletes must be before they move to the line at the sound of the long whistle blast. Athletes must be three meters behind the line and then move quickly to the starting line on the sound of the long whistle blast. In the absence of a painted three-meter line, the athletes should be instructed to take three large steps back. We have asked all district and regional sites to paint a dashed line in a different color than the starting line three meters behind the starting line to avoid confusion and ensure consistent application of the rule. This line will be in use for both the 7th & 8th Grade Invitational next weekend as well as the State Championship.

Clerks/assistant starters can walk the starting line to ensure all athletes are three meters behind the line, all runners are ready and the area is clear of coaches, parents and spectators. They then signal with a white flag that all runners are ready and the starter can start their commands; the starter must wait for the white flag from the clerks/assistant starters. Clerks/assistant starters should NOT walk the line after the long whistle blast.

The “walk-up start” **MUST** be used at all tournaments.

Religious Modifications

It was brought to my attention that there is some confusion related to religious modifications and how to handle them. Some officials are telling those who are modifying their uniforms for religious purposes that they won't be able to make those modifications come tournament time or that they need a waiver; this is **INCORRECT**. As a reminder, **ANY** modification made to a uniform for religious purposes **MUST** be approved without delay unless it poses a danger. **This change took place before the 2022 Cross Country season and is**

not only OHSAA policy; it is State Law. Below you will find the language that can be found in the officials manual related to this topic, the same information was included in the state rules meeting.

Religious Apparel Worn During Competition – NEW In Fall 2022

Any athlete who presents that they need to wear headgear, skirts, pants, etc. for religious purposes should be allowed to participate without delay. No waiver is needed for the wearing of any religious items regardless of if it complies with uniform rules in NFHS Rule 4. Garments worn for religious reasons (e.g. dark skirts or pants) do not need to match the color and design of uniforms worn by other relay/cross country team members.

Doctors Note Vs. Waiver

There have been a large number of reports coming in from schools and officials related to this topic, please see below an outline of when you need each.

- Medical Devices (insulin pumps, epi-pens, inhalers, glucose monitors, etc.) are allowed by both NFHS and OHSAA rules, they **ONLY** require a note from the prescribing physician to be shown to the meet referee at the time of check-in. This note can be in any form (digital or paper), as we no longer collect them. As no rule is being changed to allow these no waiver is needed or should be requested.
- A waiver from the OHSAA office is **ONLY** needed when a rule is being waived due to medical conditions, for instance, a runner who needs to wear a baseball hat because of condition or a runner who needs a guide. The use of medical devices does not require a waiver as no rule is being waived.

The best way to think of it is, is a rule being waived to allow this athlete to compete; if the answer is no, then no waiver is needed.

Angie Lawler

Some of you may have interacted with Angie over her 15+ years at the OHSAA supporting our technology needs; her last day at the OHSAA was September 28. Angie's work often went on behind-the-scenes but was critical to our success as officials; I would not have been able to do my job as effectively as I did without her. Until she is replaced, if you have any correspondence that would normally go to her, please send that to me and I can direct it appropriately.

2023 Cross Country Tournament Assignments

As we approach the tournaments, I wanted to again congratulate those selected by the office. This year's Cross Country Tournament Assignments can be found [HERE](#).

2023 Officials Education Survey

THANK YOU to those who took the time to complete the survey. The information gathered will be used to help me provide education on the topic our officials want and need. The results of the survey will be shared with local secretaries and interpreters at a later date to help them incorporate your feedback into local meetings.

For those who recommended rule changes, please see the information provided below on how to bring your proposal forward. Any rule change requests shared in the survey were not reviewed, they must follow the process below to ensure we are focusing on the most impactful changes.

Rule Change Requests

Due to the large number of rule change requests that come in, we follow a specific process to ensure we are focusing on the most important changes. Officials who have a rule change they would like to see take place must take their request to the state officials association leadership (OTFCCOA). If the state officials association executive committee supports the change, they will bring it to the advisory committee for discussion. The

advisory committee is made up of Dustin and myself as well as officials and coaches from the leadership of the respective associations and several at large members. From there, after conversation with that committee, if Dustin and I support the change, we would propose it to the NFHS, and they then would take it to the national committee for consideration. If it is a state modification or tournament regulation, we would take it to the OHSAA board for consideration. The coaches utilize the same process, working through the OATCCC. We do not take rule change requests directly from individual officials or coaches. Any requests that come in directly are sent back to the official or coach with a note related to this process. Also, please note that just because a change is supported by myself or Dustin, it does not guarantee it will be implemented, it must be approved by the appropriate state or national board.

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.

OHSAA 7th & 8th Grade Cross Country Invitational

Registration closes TODAY October 12 and can be completed via the link below.

<https://www.ohsaa.org/sports/cc>

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>

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."

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.

Reminders From Previous Updates

Click [HERE](#) to view the Mid-September Update

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

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

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

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