

DATE: April 26, 2024

TO: All Athletic Directors, Track & Field Coaches, and Officials

FROM: Beau Rugg | Director of Officiating  
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RE: Important Update on Hammer Throw Regulations

The hammer throw is an inherently dangerous event, with the potential for serious injury not only to athletes but those around the event. For this reason, USATF, the NFHS and the OHSAA impose certain requirements and restrictions whenever this event is practiced and/or competed in the high school setting. Among these extra safety precautions and restrictions is the certification of the hammer throw cage and the certification of officials who oversee and judge these events.

Neither the OHSAA nor the NFHS provide education, training or certification for officials with respect to this event and event requirement: certification is provided through USATF. Likewise, the OHSAA does not and cannot certify hammer throw cages: again, this can only be done through the USATF regulations.

It has come to our attention that of the few schools in Ohio who do include the alternative event of hammer throw within their track and field program, many of these same programs are not using certified hammer throw cages (rather simply adapting the discus throw cages for hammer throw purposes) and/or are not having these practices/events overseen by a properly certified hammer throw official.

The hammer throw will continue to be an alternative option event in Ohio for the remainder of this 2024 track and field season, HOWEVER, it is incumbent upon every school administrator and coach to assure compliance with the certifications required for conducting these practices and events. School administrators, coaches and meet directors should assume that the OHSAA registered official(s) they have hired for their events ARE NOT certified in the hammer throw. Likewise, school administrators, coaches and meet directors are solely responsible for assuring the throwing cages in which these events are practiced and conducted are certified within the parameters of safety established by the USATF.

Finally, if and when the hammer throw is being conducted during an interscholastic event, the OHSAA registered official(s) engaged for that event may request proof that the facility is legal. In the event such proof is not/cannot be provided to the contest official, one can expect the official(s) to decline further involvement in that meet. The risks of serious bodily injury, and the exposure to liability created is simply too great for any of these officials to assume.

We are currently evaluating the regulations related to the event for future season, that information will be shared with the track community once established.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to BJ Duckworth, Sports Administrator & Director of Officiating Development, at [bjduckworth@ohsaa.org](mailto:bjduckworth@ohsaa.org).