

DATE: April 2, 2024

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth
Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development
OHSAA Track & Field and Cross Country



RE: April Officials Update

Sport Administrator Update

As I previously shared, Dustin Ware left the OHSAA in February; he oversaw Track & Cross Country and several other sports. I recently accepted the position of Sports Administrator for Track & Cross Country, overseeing both sports with assistance from the office. I will continue my responsibilities as Director of Officiating Development. I will be working remotely for the OHSAA and will continue my work at the YMCA of Sandusky County.

Statewide Virtual Local Meetings

Attendance for the first local meeting will be delayed in being entered for a few days. If you viewed the video and do not see your attendance by April 3, 2024, please reach out.

The second virtual local meeting will be available this month; please be on the lookout for an email from the OHSAA when it is available.

Safety

Safety is the most important part of an official's job, including the safety of officials, athletes, coaches, and spectators. Please make sure you are taking the time needed to review the venues not only for issues related to fairness but to ensure all safety measures are in place. If you see something that you feel needs to be corrected, please work through your meet referee and meet manager to have the needed changes made. If changes cannot be made, suspending or canceling the event should be considered based on the situation at hand; NFHS and OHSAA regulations should be followed if an event is canceled due to a safety issue. Some safety items to consider are:

- Does the throwing cage meet the correct specifications?
- Does the pole vault or high jump landing pad meet the minimum requirements?
- Are spectators being kept far enough away from the landing area in the throws?
- Is the sand in the long jump turned over or tilled and free of rocks or other hard objects? Is the sand compacted?
- Can the athletes reach the landing pit in the long jump, or does the takeoff point need to be moved?
- Are all athletes vaulting on legal poles?
- Are restricted areas being enforced?

Discussing Officiating Decisions

As officials, it is important that we understand who we can and should be discussing potential violations with and who we should not.

- Officials should never discuss their opinions related to disqualifications and false starts with coaches or spectators. Doing so not only undermines the decision of the referee and starters, it is also unethical and a violation of the official's code of ethics.
- Umpires who have observed a possible violation should ensure they only discuss what they saw with the meet referee or head umpire when asked for information. There should be no discussions between

officials about what was seen and what was not. After the decision is made by the referee, coaches with questions should be directed to the referee. The umpire should only discuss the situation with coaches when asked to do so by the referee. As the referee is the only one who can disqualify, they are the only ones who should discuss the situation.

- The above also applies to the decision of the referee related to disqualification in field events. Field event officials should only discuss the issue with the head field judge or referee when asked for information.
 - o This should not be interpreted as field event officials being told not to discuss the fair or foul decisions they make with coaches or athletes. As those decisions are their responsibility, they can/should discuss those decisions with the coaches and athletes they impact.
- Parents with questions should be directed to their coach; if the coach would like to discuss the issue with the referee, they can; however, discussing issues with parents is not the responsibility of contest officials.

Allowable Events

In addition to events outlined in the approved OHSAA Order of Events, schools in Ohio may compete in additional events as outlined in NFHS Rules 1 & 9.

- All changes to the standard OHSAA order of events must be communicated.
- The Triple Jump may be competed, and when it is, must follow NFHS Rule 6, 7&9.
- Javelin is PROHIBITED in Ohio.
- “Special Events” must be competed under USATF Youth Rules as outlined in NFHS Rule 9 unless the OHSAA has stated otherwise.
- When Hammer is completed, the cage used **MUST** meet USATF Rules (rule 190). **Most Discus cages will not meet these standards.**
- Mixed Gender Relays must follow the rules as outlined in the officials and coaches manuals.
- **NEW IN 2024-** The 5,000M can be competed per the below regulations. This event was previously prohibited as it was not an approved event per the NFHS or OHSAA rules.
 - o All schools have been notified in advance of the change of order of events.
 - o USATF Youth Rules are followed.
 - o The 5,000M and 3,200M **cannot** be competed at the same meet regardless of the number of days the meet spans.
- Any event not found in NFHS Rule 1 & 7, with the exception of the 5,000M, **CANNOT** be competed in Ohio.
- Certified officials may not officiate non-approved events and should not allow events to take place in any manner not outlined in the rules (including safety cages).
- None of these additional events will be part of any tournament competition; only those events in the OHSAA Order of Events will be part of the tournament.

Resource List

Below is a list of documents available to assist officials and coaches.

- [OHSAA Track & Field Officials Manual](#)
- [OHSAA Track & Field Coaches Manual](#)
- [OHSAA Seated Athlete Competition Guide](#)
- [Uniform Guidance Video](#)
- [2024 Tournament Regulations](#)
- [OHSAA Tournament Managers Manual](#)
- [Electronic Starting Guide](#)
- [Regional Meet Sites & Schedules](#)

- District Meet Information: Click the district below
[NE](#) | [NW](#) | [SW](#) | [C](#) | [E](#) | [SE](#)
- [Electronic Starting Grant Applications](#)
- [2024 NFHS Pre-Meet Notes](#)
- [NFHS All Access \(Digital Rule and Case Books\)](#)
- [NFHS FREE Officiating Track & Field Course](#)

2024 Cross Country Dates

Coaching Begins: August 1

OHSAA Early Season Invitational: August 17

Season Begins: August 19

Non-Interscholastic: September 30

District: October 19

OHSAA Middle School Invite: October 20

Regional: October 26

State: November 2

Season Ends: November 2

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