

DATE: February 6, 2024

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth

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



RE: February Officials Update

2024 Tournament Regulation Changes

The items listed below are a summary of what was approved by the board in January. These regulations were approved a month early to ensure the information was available before the officials and coaches clinics based on the size and scope of the changes. The tournament regulations can be found by clicking [HERE](#). I strongly encourage you to review the full document.

More information on these changes will be part of the first virtual local meeting that will be provided by the OHSAA during the local meeting window.

State Meet: The 2024 State Championship will be a three-day event, May 30 – June 1, at Dayton’s Welcome Stadium. Much of the logistics are still being worked on; however, the approved meet schedule can be found by clicking [HERE](#). There has been some concern expressed by coaches and officials related to field events and running events going on at the same time and the cross-over issues. If we have athletes participating in running and field events at the same time, the four referees and two head field judges will work to develop a custom plan for each situation, as they have always done.

Advancement to the state meet will remain unchanged with 18 qualifiers, and advancement from the semi-finals to finals will be the top 2 from each heat and the next two fastest times. Only lanes 2-7 will be used for the semi-finals.

Games Committees: The makeup and process of the games committee has been simplified and clarified; the district and regional will now have the same makeup of the committee.

3 Meter Step Back Line: It is now required that all three levels of tournaments utilize a 3-meter step back line for the appropriate races. This line does not have to be painted on the track and can be added immediately before the meet by meet management or the head starter with chalk or tape. The addition of this line will ensure all athletes will have the same starting experience and should eliminate the confusion that arises when officials choose to inappropriately modify or ignore the rule. This was done as a “request” in cross country and went extremely well. It is strongly recommended that this process be used for the regular season.

Checking In & Out of Field Events: Based on the requests from both officials and coaches, we have introduced a mandatory process that must be followed at all district and regional tournaments related to how and when athletes will check in and out of field events. This previously was left to be a games committee decision at the tournaments; however, it was unaddressed in most instances. This unified process should help athletes better understand when to check in and out and also reduce confusion. Tournament games’ committees DO NOT have the ability to change these regulations without approval from the office. It is strongly recommended that this process be used for the regular season.

Starting Heights & Progressions (Regional Only): In an attempt to reduce gamesmanship and increase the fairness of the at-large qualifiers, specifically in the high jump and pole vault, new guidelines have been set. These guidelines DO NOT set a uniform starting height across the state but ensure consistency in the starting heights as compared to the entries for the site and standardize increments that can be used and when transitions to lesser increments can take place. This item was put together last season with the input of several regional and state head field judges and referees. It was a suggestion in 2023 and is mandatory in 2024.

Numbers Mandatory for Running Events: Starting this year, bib numbers will be provided to all running athletes by meet management and/or the contracted timing company. This addition is to help ensure the proper identification of athletes during running events to ensure the correct athlete is penalized for an infraction and ensure reruns can take place (if deemed necessary by the referee) when interference occurs. We have had multiple instances of the wrong athlete being penalized or no one being penalized, preventing a re-run. This new process was made with the input of several FAT operators who have experience at all levels of our tournaments. More information will be forthcoming on this, including a conference call later this spring for meet managers and timers.

Electronic Starting: In 2024, the use of electronic starting systems at the district level is optional and recommended; their use at the regional and state meet is prohibited. Starting in 2025, all three levels of the tournament will be electronic with shells being eliminated from all elements of the start including recalls and “gun” laps.

\$20,000 has been set aside to provide \$500 grants to member school and timing companies to help offset the initial costs of purchasing the systems. The grant information can be found by clicking [HERE](#). The responsibility to provide the electronic starting system is that of the timing company NOT the official.

Officiating: This year, we were approved to create an 11th OHSAA assigned position to the track regional meets. This new position, Officials Observer, will be an appointed position that will be hand-selected by Rick Campbell and me; it is not subject to rotation. This position will be responsible for evaluating officials per the guidance given and providing that feedback to the observed officials and the OHSAA via the evaluation form. This additional position represents a \$5,000+ investment into the continued education of our officials. It will allow us to receive multiple evaluations on officials from the same meet, giving diverse perspectives and helping identify the next-up officials for assignments. Evaluations are not meant to be punitive; they are meant to help us identify how to be better officials and help identify the best for future assignments. This position will be duplicated for cross country and complement the observer positions already in place at the state championships, cross country invitationals, and observations made by leadership officials.

2024 Regional Sites

The 2024 Regional Sites have been finalized; most were included in the tournament questionnaire, however, some were not finalized until just recently.

Division 1

Region 1: Austintown, Region 2: Port Clinton, Region 3: Pickerington, Region 4: Huber Heights

Division 2

Region 5: Austintown, Region 6: Lexington, Region 7: Muskingum, Region 8: Piqua

Division 3

Region 9: Norwayne, Region 10: Fostoria, Region 11: Heath, Region 12: Troy

2024 Updated Documents

The OHSAA Track Officials Manual, Seated Athlete Competition Guide, Tournament Regulations & Mixed Gender Relay Waiver have been updated for 2024 and can be found by clicking [HERE](#). The 2024 OHSAA Track Coaches Manual & Tournament Managers Manual have not yet been completed but will be available later this month. The 2024 NFHS Rule Books have been mailed, digital versions of the NFHS documents are available for purchase by clicking [HERE](#).

2024 OTFCCOA Clinic Follow Up

Presentations from this year's OTFCCOA clinic can be found [HERE](#).

Name Badges

The OHSAA DOES NOT require the wearing of name badges and they are an optional part of the uniform. When worn, they MUST meet the guidelines as outlined in the OHSAA Handbook For Officials that can be found [HERE](#). The OHSAA also does not provide name badges to officials for free or for sale.

The OTFCCOA will again be selling name badges to all officials state-wide. Badges will be two-sided this year, and proceeds benefit the Fred Dafler & Rick Haddix Scholarship Fund. Information for the name badges will be sent out to all officials later this month by the OHSAA on behalf of the OTFCCOA.

2024 Meeting Information

State Rules Meeting

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

If you are a coach and an official, you need to take **BOTH** state rules meetings as they cover topics specific to each audience.

Local Rules Meetings

Local rules meetings can be attended from January 29 through April 22, 2024. In addition to the meeting options made available 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 track tournament **MUST** attend at least four local meetings in the **spring**.

Officials who do not want to work the track 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.

Fred Dafler & Rick Haddix Scholarship Fund

The Fred Dafler & Rick Haddix Scholarship Fund has been established with the Sandusky County Communities Foundation (SCCF) by the Ohio Track and Field and Cross-County Officials Association (OTF&CCOA).

The OTF&CCOA was founded in 1985 by a group of 41 OHSAA Registered Track and Field Officials to educate fellow officials to better serve the student athletes of Ohio and recognize their peers for the work they do to better the sport. With over 900 OHSAA Registered Track & Field Officials, the work the Association does to support their peers remains at the forefront of their organization.

The OTF&CCOA scholarship fund, now named for Hall of Fame officials Fred Dafler and Rick Haddix, honors their legacies while helping officials offset the financial burdens of higher education. The association awarded its first scholarships in 1987 and, in years since, has provided nearly \$30,000 to 59 family members of officials. While the scholarship has been awarded since 1987, it is now endowed, meaning the legacy associated with the scholarships is secure for generations to come.

The full press release/announcement can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

Donations can be made to the fund by clicking [HERE](#).

Awards Given by The State Coaches & Officials Association

The below awards were given by the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches and the Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country officials Association in January.

OATCCC 2024 Awards

Dale Gabor Distinguished Service Award

Robert Trapp (District 2), Chuck Larsuel (District 4), Eric & Denise Gillett (District 6), Tracy Fox (District 8), Dwayne Marshall (District 10), Kurt Snyder (District 12), Jim Engel (District 14), Mick Harris (District 16)

Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity Award

Emily Young (Geneva), Jeff Koksall (Lancaster), Glen Mabry (Eaton), Kenneth Kellner (Sidney)

Fred Dafler Career Coach of The Year

Susan Savage (Indian Hill), Byron Kimmel (Tippecanoe), Richard Neizelt Sr. (Massilon Jackson), Robert Dagenhardt

Hall of Fame

Larry Top, Matt Somerlot, Carime Reinhart, Roger Whittaker, Brenda Webb, Darrell Hughes, Sandor "Alex" Ferenczy, Vincent Fries,

Ed Barker Award

David Kirk

OTFCCOA 2024 Awards

Contributor Award

Central District - Lester Barnhart, Southwest District - Charlie Gase, Southeast District - Mick Harris, Coach- NE District - Diane Krumpak, Northwest District - Kent Lamberson, OHSAA - Angie Lawler, Southeast District - Tony Mollica, Northeast District - Deb Molnar, Northwest District - Char Sharp, Southwest District - Elizabeth Van Tine

Cope Award

Herb Hartman (*posthumously*) – Southwest District

Lenge Service Award

Harold Grice – Southwest District

OHSAA Contributions to The Officiating Community Award

Congratulations to Terry Armstead who received an award from the OHSAA for his contributions to the officiating community. Terry was selected for this award based on his tremendous efforts to mentor other officials. Terry was surprised with this award at the OTFCCOA Clinic last month.

As always, please reach out if you need anything; by email is always best.

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