

DATE: March 7, 2022

TO: All Track & Field Officials

FROM: BJ (William) Duckworth
Director of Officiating Development & State Rules Interpreter
Track & Field and Cross Country



RE: 2022 Pre-Season Bulletin

It's hard to believe that it is already time for track season to start. Included in this pre-season bulletin is information that is important for you to review and incorporate into your routines as you get ready for the season. It also contains some updates from the OT&F&CCOA that I have agreed to pass along.

Note On Assignments For 2022

Please take a few moments to view a video updated about the 2022 tournament assignments & the work of the assignment taskforce. Click [HERE](#) to view the video.

NFHS Pre Meet Notes

The NFHS, together with the USATF, publishes pre-meet notes each season. The 2022 version can be found by clicking [HERE](#). This year's publication covers 2022 rules changes, umpiring essentials, field event warm-ups, religious headwear and more. Please take some time to review this helpful document.

Game Reports

Game reports are an important and useful tool for meet referees that extend beyond the typical use of reporting ejections. Not many officials in our sports are using them, and I am asking that everyone start incorporating them into their routines when serving as a meet referee. Below are details on when you can/must be using game reports and the benefits of use.

Mandatory Uses

Ejections – While ejections are rare in our sport, they do happen and when one occurs the meet referee must send a game report with the needed details. Sending the report starts the automated process of notifying the OHSAA and school administration about the issue. It also starts the process for the mandatory suspensions for the effected coaches or athlete, as well as the applicable fines related to coaches ejections.

Concussions – Also not common in our sport, they do happen and the meet referee must make a game report anytime someone is removed from competition for a possible concussion. This ensures the OHSAA and school administration are aware of the possible concussion and that the proper protocol is started by the school.

Cancellation of Event due to Safety – Anytime a meet referee suspends or cancels an event that was schedule to take place for a venue safety reason, not only do the appropriate point penalties take place but the meet referee must make a game report. This report ensures that school administration is aware of the issue and that competition will not be allowed until it is addressed. In addition to other instances some examples include: cancelation of the high jump or pole vault due to landing mats not meeting NFHS standards or a discus cage not being used or not meeting specification.

Recommended Uses

Poor Sportsmanship not Resulting in an Ejection – At times, a meet referee may be aware of an instance of poor sportsmanship with a coach that did not result in an ejection. Utilizing a game report in this instance helps ensure the school is aware of the issue and can take appropriate steps to correct it.

Great Sportsmanship – We all know that complaints always get voiced more than compliments. If you as a meet referee are aware of a coach or athlete that has gone above and beyond or is expressing exceptional sportsmanship, I ask that you report that positive experience. Doing this helps ensure the administration is aware of the exceptional work of their coach or student athlete. I know some people are already doing this by calling or sending an email to the school AD, I ask that you use a game report. This makes sure all appropriate administrators are made aware.

Uniform Issues - I am not suggesting a referee send a game report for every uniform issue. When a meet referee has experienced multiple uniform issues at multiple meets from the same school, a game report can be helpful in getting the issue corrected.

OHSAA Weather Policy

Weather is always an issue with track in Ohio. It is important that everyone take the time before the meet to review the weather forecasts and know what to expect. Is there a chance of lightning that could cause a delay and need evacuation? Is it going to rain and special attention will need to be focused on safety due to the wet conditions? Upon arriving at a meet, officials should speak with the meet manager and the referee to find out the plan for weather at their location. Every site is different and every location should have a plan in the instance of severe weather. The OHSAA weather policy can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

COVID, Mask Wearing & Vaccination Status

While cases are declining, COVID is not going anywhere and I hope that everyone is taking the steps they feel appropriate to ensure they and their families stay safe and healthy. While the OHSAA has no regulations related to the wearing of masks for contest officials, it is expected that you comply with any governmental or school system-imposed requirements for the meets that you work. Regulations related to masks are evolving so it is likely they will not be included in your contract. Officials should communicate with the meet manager or other host representative to ensure they know the regulations at their site and come to the meet prepared to comply. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion on the effectiveness of and the use of masks as well as the vaccine, however, these personal opinions do not give anyone the right to treat others unfairly. It is expected that everyone is treated with the upmost respect and in line with the Officials Code of Ethics.

One Rule - One Interpretation & Preventative Officiating

As we move into another season, our goal should be consistent application of all rules regardless of the level of competition. Preventative officiating should be practiced to mitigate violations when possible but this does not mean we ignore or turn a blind eye to violations early in the season. Ignoring small violations early leads to an increased number of violations when the tournaments start. In addition to preventative officiating, we should be ensuring athletes and coaches understand the rules and what needs corrected when violations occur. We must strike the correct balance of rule enforcement and education especially early in the season to avoid issues down the road.

Recruitment, Mentorship & Retention of Officials

Over the past 10 years, we have seen a 20% decline in the number of registered officials. We lose more officials each year than we gain. Recruitment, mentorship and retention falls on each of us and we all should be focused on this increasingly important work. New track officials can sign up and test at any time, so we have the opportunity to recruit all season long. Take time at each meet to talk with the volunteers about the benefits of getting registered. Also, talk with the coaches and ask to make presentations to the parents and students on becoming officials. High school students can test, become class 3 officials and work middle school meets until they graduate high school. Veteran officials should be taking the time needed to mentor younger officials. Anything we can do to recruit new officials, mentor less experienced ones and retain them after they sign up will pay dividends in the future for the strength of our sport.

Introduction of New Sport Administrator

The OHSAA recently announced that Dustin Ware has been hired and will serve as sports administrator for Track & Field and Cross Country as well as several other sports. I will continue to handle rules and officiating-related items while Dustin will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the sport, including eligibility, tournaments and other administrative issues. Dustin can be reached at dware@ohsaa.org.

A Little About Dustin:

Dustin is originally from Charleston, WV and attended Marshall University where he received a degree in Criminal Justice and Sports Management. Dustin and his wife of 20 years moved to Columbus in 2004. Together they have a 14-year-old daughter who will be shot putting and throwing the disc for the first time this season. She also plays soccer and basketball and is a member of the National Honor Society. Dustin has 19 years of athletic administration experience most recently as AD at Walnut Ridge High School. He is the owner and founder of the Ohio Combat Sports Academy, American Grappling Challenge and ARC Training Solutions. In 2020, he served as a member of Governor DeWine's COVID-19 Group Advisory Committee for the reopening of recreational & athletic facilities.

A Note to Starters on Starter Shells

As you are aware, the supply of starter shells has become more inconsistent over the past few seasons. Myself and the staff at the OHSAA office continue to work to secure supplies of shells for future use but as with many things during and after COVID the status is not for certain. I encourage those who start meets to "save their brass" and find local companies or individuals that can repack them. This reuse will help reduce our need of new supplies and will ensure you have what you need.

OT&F&CCOA Summer Rookie Clinic

The OT&F&CCOA is excited to introduce a new educational opportunity in 2022 focused on giving younger officials the ability to learn from live action. "Rookies" who sign up for this opportunity will be paired with veteran officials who will take them through each event and officiating position. The state meet will serve as the backdrop for this new opportunity with the veterans instructing on rules, mechanics and best practice as they happen in real time. The clinic will be available for any official with 10 years or less of experience and will be limited to the first 30 rookies who register, there will be a waiting list. You must be a member of the OT&F&CCOA to participate. If you are not currently, you can pay your membership dues at the time of registration. The cost is \$50 and includes lunch, parking and an all-access pass. All participants will receive one local meeting credit that will be applied for the 2023 spring season. For more information, please see the email sent out previously or click [HERE](#). Questions can be directed to OT&F&CCOA Secretary Dennis Sabo at densabo@gmail.com. Please note this is NOT an OHSAA event, it is an educational opportunity sponsored by the OT&F&CCOA. At the time of the writing of this bulletin only a handful of spots remain for this opportunity.

OT&F&CCOA Scholarship Applications

Each year, the Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association awards the Fred Dafler Scholarship to a family member of one of its members. Starting in 2022, the OT&F&CCOA will award the Fred Dafler Scholarship and begin awarding the Rick Haddix Scholarship.

The Haddix & Dafler Scholarships will be awarded yearly to family members of OT&F&CCOA members. If you are not a member, you can contact Dennis Sabo (densabo@gmail.com) to join. Selection criteria for the scholarships include leadership qualities, athletic participation, reliability, sportsmanship, academic achievement, and extracurricular activities. For complete requirements and to download the applications, please click [HERE](#) and then click on the photo next to the scholarship description. All applications must be submitted by May 1, 2022.

Facebook Page

To help keep everyone connected and to foster collaboration and conversation, I created a Facebook group. All officials, coaches, meet managers, meet volunteers as well as anyone interested in becoming an official or coach are invited to join. Visit and join by clicking [HERE](#).

Note On Officials Uniforms

Many people have reached out with questions related to the November bulletin that included a reminder about official's uniforms. To clarify, rain gear is not part of the uniform and does not need to have an OHSAA logo on it.

General Reminders

Virtual Meetings for Local Credit

Two local rules meetings will be offered by the OHSAA. Information about these meetings was shared with everyone in January and that bulletin can be found by clicking [HERE](#). You will receive an email from the OHSAA when each is posted that will include the deadline to complete each one.

Manual for Coaches & Officials

Please make sure you review the 2022 manual. I recommend you keep a digital or hard copy with you at all meets in addition to the NFHS books. The manual can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

State Rules Interpretation

If you have not already completed the state rules interpretation, the deadline is fast approaching.

Online Meeting Available: February 9, 2022 at 9am – March 26, 2022 at 11:59pm

Online Meeting Available WITH \$50 LATE FEE: March 27, 2022 – April 25, 2022 at 11:59pm

Q & A Session – NEW in 2022!

Q&A sessions for those who have viewed a state meeting are quickly approaching, the schedule is below

Northeast District

March 15, 2022 6 – 6:45pm

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/yys-zovv-xzt>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 252-699-0135 and enter this PIN: 202 967 002#

Northwest District

March 15, 2022 7 – 7:45pm

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/jjj-zqdo-kqc>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 219-250-1846 and enter this PIN: 870 392 505#

Central

March 16, 2022 6 – 6:45pm

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/agv-bmdn-brg>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 585-491-8832 and enter this PIN: 144 313 241#

Southwest

March 16, 2022 7 – 7:45pm

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/rks-auhs-xxp>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 573-375-5130 and enter this PIN: 404 406 866#

East/Southeast

March 17, 2022 6 – 7:45pm

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/mar-qggn-oho>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 920-550-6927 and enter this PIN: 564 049 612#

I hope everyone has a safe and fun season. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or the other state interpreters.

Sincerely,

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Director of Officiating Development & State Rules Interpreter

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