

DATE: November 14, 2024

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

FROM: BJ Duckworth | Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development

RE: November Officials Memo



### Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association Clinic

The OTFCCOA Annual Winter Clinic will be held on January 24 & 25, 2025 at the Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio. Please see below for some important notes on the clinic.

- Officials will have the opportunity to earn TWO local meeting credits, one for each day of the clinic.
- The ONLY in-person state rules meeting will be part of the clinic; you must be registered to attend.
- In addition to the clinic gift for all attendees, backpacks, ponchos & highlighter sets will be available for sale.
- A starter shell raffle will be held, and three sets (5 boxes) of shells will be available as part of the raffle. The proceeds from the raffle will go towards the scholarship fund.
- Split the Pot tickets will be available at the clinic. The proceeds from this raffle will go towards the scholarship fund.
- Later this month, all officials will receive registration information from the OHSAA on behalf of the OTFCCOA.
- First-year officials will have their clinic fee waived and will only need to pay their annual dues.
- The OTFCCOA Awards Dinner will be held on January 24, more information will be included in the mailing from the OTFCCOA
- Questions related to the clinic should be directed to Dennis Sabo at [densabo@gmail.com](mailto:densabo@gmail.com)

### Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association Officer Elections

The OTFCCOA will be holding elections for President-Elect at the January clinic. Anyone interested in running for this position should contact John Daubenspeck, OTFCCOA President, at [jdaubenspeck@gytoa.com](mailto:jdaubenspeck@gytoa.com) to discuss the responsibilities of the position.

### The Best Thing We Can Do for Our Student Athletes

As I reflect on this past season, specifically the issues that came to my attention at League/Conference & District Tournaments, one big common theme emerges, and it is the same as my post-season note from last fall... **inconsistent application of the rules during the regular season.** I understand that many of you (and myself) do not agree with all of the rules we are responsible for enforcing; however, that does not change our duty to do so. Choosing not to enforce certain rules or “let things slide” during the regular season does nothing to help the sport or the student-athletes we serve. We are actually hurting the students. There is a big difference between preventative officiating and ignoring items. The vast majority of the issues that came my way were directly related to rules not being enforced during a regular season.

The biggest item that came to light was uniform rules being ignored, causing athletes to arrive at the starting line of the tournament in an illegal uniform that they had worn during the regular season. In one instance, a team had to choose who would run based on only half of the team having legal uniforms.

No one is asking officials to hand out more disqualifications; however, we cannot choose to ignore rules we don't like. We are all humans, and mistakes will be made, but ignoring things is not a mistake. It is an intentional action. The rules in the NFHS Rule Book and OHSAA Officials Manual apply to both the regular season and tournaments the same.

I understand the vast majority of the officials reading this update are doing what is asked of them or going above and beyond, and the actions outlined above reflect the minority of officials. This is not a blanket statement; however, it is important that all officials are aware of the challenges we face so we can all work together to better our sports and better serve the student-athletes.

### NFHS 2025 Rule Changes

Below are links to the 2025 NFHS rule change announcements. As the national rules interpretation meeting does not take place until January, I will not be able to answer any questions on the rule changes until then.

[NFHS Press Release](#) | [NFHS Summary of Changes](#)

Detailed information on these rule changes will be reviewed in the mandatory state rules meeting and will also be reviewed in future memos.

### State Rules Meeting for Track & Field

The mandatory state rules meeting will be available online via DragonFly per the cart below. **This meeting is mandatory to renew your license and to officiate the sport.** This is a separate meeting than Cross Country state rules meeting that was completed previously this year.

Meeting Begins	Late Fee (\$50) Begins	Meeting Closes
February 4, 2025	March, 25, 2025	April 15, 2025

An in-person state rules meeting will take place as part of the OTFCCOA Clinic; this will be the ONLY in-person opportunity to complete the meeting. Registration for the Clinic is required to attend.

If you are a coach AND an official, you must complete both State Rules Meetings. While the content in both is similar, each is customized to its specific audience.

### Local Rules Meetings

Local rules meetings are required to be attended each year and are primarily offered by your local association. Local associations may provide in-person and virtual options, they will be listed on the calendar within DragonFly.

The OHSAA will again offer two statewide virtual local meetings. The topics and dates are TBD. Keep an eye out for future emails on the topic.

### Dues Renewal

If you have not yet renewed your permit for the 2024/25 season, the deadline to do so without a late fee is December 31, 2024. Renewal in January of 2025 will be allowed but will require a \$50 late fee.

### Tournament Questionnaire

The Tournament Questionnaire is no longer in MyOHSAA, it is sent to all eligible officials via email and is done through a Google Form. Please be on the lookout for the questionnaire email, as completing it is required to work track district, regional, and state tournaments. It will be sent out in January.

## Annual Meeting Requirements

Please see below for a breakdown of meeting requirements for annual permit renewal and tournament eligibility.

### Permit Renewal

- Four (4) local meetings (spring & fall combined)
- State rules meetings

### Cross Country Tournament Eligibility

- One (1) fall local meeting
- Cross Country state rules meeting

### Track Tournament Eligibility

- Four (4) spring local meetings
- Track & Field state rules meeting

## Your Officiating Dues at Work & Insurance Coverage

- Please click [HERE](#) for details on how your annual dues are put to work.
- Please click [HERE](#) for details on the insurance you receive as an official.

## 2025 Track & Field Sport Regulations

On June 7, 2024, the OHSAA Board of Directors approved several changes to the Track & Field Sport Regulations. While some of the regulations are new items/changes, the majority of what was added is clarifying language meant to help coaches and administrators understand the regulations more clearly. The regulations can be found by clicking [HERE](#); I recommend you read the document in its entirety, however, some highlights are below:

### Track & Field

- The regulations now clearly state that the 16 meet limit is per individual competitor, not per team.
- In line with the guidance provided during this past season, the regulations now clarify that a double dual counts as two meets for the individual and a triple dual counts as three.
- Clarifying language related to girls competing on boys' teams has been added; the language is similar to that used in swimming.
- Indoor track is now listed as a separate sport when all events take place indoors and the track is 300m or less. This clarification should reduce confusion related to the crossover of the indoor season and the start of outdoor practice/competition.
- All outdoor track events must take place outdoors.
- Exhibition/scratch competition remains prohibited. New language clarifies the prohibition and the penalties for schools that host and/or participate in it.
- Clarification was added on how 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade and high school competitions can take place concurrently at the same meet.
- Previously, our sport had no specific no-contest regulations. Therefore, we had to fall back on the general sports regulations stating that if 100% of the event/meet was not completed, it was a no-contest. No one followed that, leading to inconsistencies and uncertainty. We now have a regulation that outlines when each event or meet would be a no-contest.
- Hammer throw is now a prohibited event in Ohio. Language related to fines and post-season ineligibility has been added as possible penalties for schools who compete in the hammer or javelin.

Important Dates		
	2025 Cross Country <small>All 2025 dates are subject to change</small>	2025 Track
OTF&CCOA Officials Clinic	January 24 & 25 2025	
OATCCC Coaches Clinic	January 23 – 25 2025	
First Day of State Meeting <u>for Officials</u>	TBD	February 4, 2025
First Day of State Meeting <u>for Coaches</u>	TBD	February 10, 2025
First Day of Coaching	August 1, 2025	February 24, 2025
Early Season Invitational	August 16, 2025	
Season Begins	August 18, 2025	March 29, 2025
State Meeting Late Fee Begins <u>for Officials</u>	TBD	March 25, 2025
State Meeting Late Fee Begins <u>for Coaches</u>	TBD	March 30, 2025
Deadline To Declare for Tournament	TBD	April 21, 2025
State Meeting Ends <u>for Officials</u>	TBD	April 15, 2025
State Meeting Ends for Coaches	TBD	April 21, 2025
Non-Interscholastic Date	September 29, 2025	May 5, 2025
7th & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade State Championship		May 17, 2025
District Tournaments	October 18, 2025	May 19-24, 2025
7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Post-Season Invitational	October 19, 2025	
Regional Tournaments	October 25, 2025	May 28-31, 2025
State Championships	November 1, 2025 <small>@ Fortress Obetz</small>	June 6-7, 2025 <small>@ Ohio State</small>
OHSAA State Championship Officials Clinic	November 1, 2025	June 6-7, 2025
Season Ends	November 1, 2025	June 7, 2025
OATCCC Cross Country Clinic	Nov 14, 2024	

Important Documents/Resources		
	2024 Cross Country	2025 Track
OHSAA Sport Webpage	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>
Sport Regulations	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>
Tournament Regulations	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	TBD
Uniform Guidance Video	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
Coaches Manual	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	TBD
Officials Manual	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	TBD
Seated Athlete Manual		TBD
Electronic Starting Guide		TBD
Verification Form	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
Mixed Gender Relay Waiver		<a href="#">Click HERE</a>
Medical Waiver	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
Non-Bordering State Waiver	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
OHSAA Officials Handbook	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
NFHSLearn.com   Fundamentals of Coaching	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
NFHSLearn.com   Sport-Specific Coaching	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>
NFHSLearn.com   Sportsmanship Course	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
NFHSLearn.com   Track & Field Officiating	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
NFHSLearn.com   Interscholastic Officiating	<a href="#">Click HERE</a>	
Tournament information can be found by clicking the appropriate links on the sport-specific OHSAA Sport Webpage.		

