

DATE: August 5, 2024

TO: All Track & Field / Cross Country Officials

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

RE: September Officials Memo



This is a jam-packed memo with a lot of new information as well as some reminders based on the most asked questions and top issues received. Please take time to review it in its entirety.

Change To OHSAA Medical Device Policy

There has been a slight change in the OHSAA Medical Device Policy per General Sports Regulation 20.3, which is outlined in full below. In summary, doctor’s notes must still be provided to the meet referee prior to the event; however, the new regulation takes into consideration that most medical devices cannot be worn under the uniform or need to be carried. This policy applies to all sports, not only Track & Cross Country, and is effective immediately.

General Sports Regulation 20.3 Uniforms/Medical Devices

Unless the specific rules code stipulates otherwise, athletes in sports of a collision/contact nature should not be permitted to wear devices such as insulin pumps, heart monitoring equipment and/or other diagnostic or therapeutic appliances while participating in interscholastic contests. In the event that a physician requires a student-athlete to wear or carry a medical device during competition in a non-contact sport, such medical necessity shall be specified in writing and signed by the prescribing physician. The device shall be attached to the body in a manner fitting with the device that is safe for the athlete and does not cause danger to other athletes. Items may be carried by hand or in a pouch/fanny pack if they cannot be safely attached to the body in another manner. The medical statement shall be shown to the head contest official prior to the athlete’s being permitted to participate; this statement can be shown on paper or electronically. Examples of approved medical devices include but are not limited to EpiPens, inhalers, insulin pumps, glucose monitors and heart monitors. Athletes participating with these devices are still subject to NFHS Rules if their medical device is dropped or becomes dislodged from the body and interferes with other athletes.

Please remember that the use of medical devices does NOT require a waiver, only a doctor’s note. Waivers are ONLY needed when a rule such as needing to wear a hat with a bill, using a cell phone, etc. is being waived.

Virtual Local Meeting

The OHSAA-produced virtual local meeting will go live later this month and be available for about two weeks. Information will be sent out to all officials from the office once it is available.

Reminder On Course Obstacles

As a reminder, NFHS Rule 8-2-c1 prohibits obstacles such as hay/stray bales, hurdles, etc., and water obstacles such as creeks, streams, and drainage ditches.

Prohibited	Allowed
Water Obstacles/Crossings	Standing Water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers • Creeks • Streams • Drainage Ditches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puddles • Wet/Soggy Courses • Low-lying course areas that are not listed to the left.
This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of what is allowed and not allowed per NFHS Rule 8-2-c1.	

Reminder On Step Up Start

I continue to get reports of officials who are not properly following the starting procedures for a Cross Country race as outlined previously. It is critically important that all officials follow the correct mechanics related to the

starting procedure. A start in cross country mirrors that of distance races, with the whistle replacing the “on your mark” command and a flag being added for the hearing impaired. Specifically, the most common issues related to me are:

- Not using a 3M step back and instead using a single-step or three steps.
- Not dropping the red flag when the starting device is fired or not using a flag at all.
- Not utilizing a single whistle blast and instead using a series of whistles.

Information on the correct process can be found in the 2021/22 & 2023/24 NFHS Officials Manuals on pages 41 & 42, in the [2024 OHSAA Cross Country Officials Manual](#) on page 19, and was included in the 2024 Cross Country State Rules Meeting. I have created a short video on the topic that can be viewed by clicking [HERE](#).

It is imperative that we provide our student-athletes with a consistent starting mechanics at every meet, all season long.

Officials Handbook Changes

The [OHSAA Officials Handbook](#) is reviewed and updated each summer. The 2024/25 handbook, including the board-approved changes, can be found by clicking the link above. This year's changes center around increased pay for tournament officials and a small adjustment to officials' uniforms. **The new handbook goes into effect immediately.**

Officials Tournament Pay

For the 4th straight year Track & Cross Country Officials will see pay increases in the tournaments. Dale was able to secure pay raises for 2021-22 before he got sick and we have been able to secure them for 2022-23, 2023-24, & again for 2024-25. In addition to the pay changes this year, the pay scale is more structured based on the level of position for both sports.

All officials in the track tournaments will see a \$10 pay increase. While that does not seem like a lot per person but spread across all officials at the tournaments, it is an estimated \$19,200 total yearly increase (District \$10,400, Regionals \$7,200 & State \$1,500). For cross country, some of the positions will see increases while others do not. Click [HERE](#) for a breakdown of the changes.

In total, since the 2021-22 school year, we have seen around \$80,000-\$90,000 in annual investments in our track and cross country officials through increases in tournament pay each of the past four seasons, creation of additional regional and state tournament officiating positions, pay for hotel rooms (and breakfast for those who stay) for state track, and covering 100% of the costs for the state meet clinics.

Officials Uniform

Track and Cross Country officials are now required to wear close-toed shoes. They may not wear sandals, flip-flops, Crock-style shoes, etc. This change was made to increase the safety and mobility of our officials.

Recording Devices

The OHSAA policy prohibiting officials from using body cameras, GoPro cameras, etc., was added to the handbook. This policy was first shared during the spring and can be found on page 22.

2024 Cross Country Tournament Regulations & Information

The 2024 Cross Country Tournament Regulations were approved in late August, and a copy can be found at the link below. They include several new regulations intended to bring consistency across all of our sites and provide our student-athletes with predictable and consistent competition. I will send out a note later this

month with an in-depth review of the changes. Also available through the links below is information on our regional sites, schedule, and representation, as well as some of the information for the state championship.

[Tournament Regulations](#) | [District & Regional Information](#) | [State Meet Information](#)

NFHS National Rules Committee

As some of you may be aware, the OHSAA now has a representative on the NFHS Track & Cross Country National Rules Committee through July of 2028. Ohio last had a representative on the committee when Dale Gabor served a term that ended when he passed in 2021. Officials should continue to work through the Ohio Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association for any rule change proposals.

Divisional Expansion

I wanted to share an update on the ongoing conversations related to divisional expansion in both sports with you all. The OATCCC presented a proposal for the expansion of both sports to the board and staff earlier this year. Since then, the board has had ongoing conversations related to the proposal. Contrary to any rumors you have heard, no decisions related to divisional expansion for Track & Cross Country have been made. There is no additional information to share at this time.

DragonFly Updates

Please see below for several DragonFly updates.

DragonFly Number

With the transition to DragonFly, OHSAA permit numbers are no longer being issued to new officials, all officials receive a DragonFly number. Traditionally, we have asked for permit numbers on relay cards, field event sheets, appeals forms, etc. I will **not** be asking you to memorize your DragonFly number; therefore, I am asking you to print your name clearly and legibly and then sign your name when you would have normally listed your permit number; as long as we can read your name, it will be ok. Some items, like relay cards, are printed in mass, so the permit number line will still be on them for several years, but you will not need to list the DragonFly number unless you want to.

Officials ID Card

An Officials ID Card is available for officials who wish to have one through DragonFly. It is called an Officials Pass and can be found in the "Today" section. If your Officials Pass says "Not Yet Submitted", you can click on that pass and fill out your information to submit it. Once submitted, your pass should populate the next time you log into your account. The pass can be printed by right-clicking on the pass, saving it as an image, and then printing the image. There is no requirement to obtain or print this ID Card. However, it is there if you want it.

No Separate Cross Country Permit

Just as was the case in MyOHSAA, there is no separate permit to obtain for Cross Country, everything is done through one Track & Field permit that is good for both sports.

Game Reports

As a reminder, going forward, all Game Reports should be filed through DragonFly. Please see the email you received from donotreply@ohsaa.org on August 12 for step-by-step directions. I have personally tested this and it is 100% easier to do than the process in MyOHSAA.

2025 7th & 8th Grade Track & Field State Championship Qualifying.

Last week, our office announced a series of changes to the qualifier process in order to provide student-athletes more opportunities to participate in meets where their performances will count towards

advancement to the championship. These changes were made as a direct result of the feedback from our coaches & officials. Please click [HERE](#) to view the information related to the process for a meet to become a qualifier and information related to the championship meet. Additionally, please see the email sent on August 29 for more detailed information.

State Rules Meeting

The annual, mandatory Cross Country State Rules Meeting was due August 18th. If you have not completed it, you may still do so; however, your completion will be subject to a \$50 late fee. All officials working cross country, regular and postseasons MUST complete the State Rules Meeting in addition to meeting requirements for local meetings.

Meeting Starts	Late Fee Starts	Meeting Closes
July 25	August 19	September 23

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.

*This is a general reminder and not a reflection of completion status.

SAVE THE DATE – 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. Officials will have the opportunity to earn TWO local meeting credits, one for each day of the clinic, as well as their state rules interpretation credit. More information will be sent to all officials in the fall by the OHSAA on behalf of the OTFCCOA.

Important Dates & Resources

In an effort to keep our officiating community better informed, I will include the charts below detailing important dates and resources in each of my monthly updates. This will ensure this information remains at your fingertips all year long.

Important Dates		
	2024 Cross Country	2025 Track
OTF&CCOA Officials Clinic	January 24 & 25 2025	
First Day of State Meeting	July 25	February 10 <i>(tentative)</i>
First Day of Coaching	August 1	February 24
Early Season Invitational	August 17	
Season Begins	August 19	March 29
State Meeting Late Fee Begins (\$50)	August 19	March 29 <i>(tentative)</i>
Deadline To Declare for Tournament	September 23	April 21
State Meeting Ends	September 23	April 21 <i>(tentative)</i>
Non-Interscholastic Date	September 30	May 5
7 th & 8 th Grade State Championship		May 17
District Tournaments	October 19	May 19-24
7 th & 8 th Grade Post-Season Invitational	October 20	
Regional Tournaments	October 26	May 28-31
State Championships	November 2	June 6-7 (AT OSU)
OHSAA State Championship Officials Clinic	November 2	June 6-7
Season Ends	November 2	June 7

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

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