

2023



**CROSS COUNTRY
COACHES MANUAL**

A Message from OHSAA Sport Administrator, Dustin Ware



Coaches,

Please take time to review the information within this manual, as it was created in hopes of providing you information that will allow for you to navigate your upcoming season. Throughout the season, we will continue to try to keep you informed of changes and current information emailed directly to you, as well as various informative documents on our website.

As you know, communication is key in the successful administration of any of our sport, and we encourage you to ask questions or seek assistance from the OHSAA sport management or compliance teams when needed.

Here are some additional points you should note as you begin to look over this manual:

- The Online Rules Interpretation Meetings are **mandatory** for any Varsity Head Coach. The purpose of the Rules Interpretation Meetings is to give you a thorough understanding of the OHSAA Sport Regulations, additional “points of emphasis”, as well as any changes to the national playing rules written by the NFHS. We hope you’ll encourage your assistant and junior high coaches to view this also.
- The rules the OHSAA use to regulate Cross-Country stem from the National Federation (NFHS). NFHS Rules govern all playing rules, while OHSAA Sport Regulations govern specific rules to Ohio, as well as the various administrative regulations and interpretations. Our elected Board of Directors approve these regulations annually and serve as the basis for ALL schools playing by the same rules. This guide should serve to provide all coaches with clear answers and interpretations to the many regulations governing grades 7-12 track & field in Ohio.

We wish each of you a successful season and many thanks for the great work you do with the student-athletes at your school.

Sincerely,

Dustin Ware

*Sport Administrator
Cross Country Sport Administrator*

OHSAA Mission Statement

The Ohio High School Athletic Association's mission is to serve our member schools and enrich interscholastic opportunities for students.



The Ohio Association of Track & Cross Country Coaches

OFFICERS

OATCCC Officers

President

Andy Cox, Thomas Worthington HS
acox@wscloud.org
614-450-6225

Vice President

Anjanette Whitman, Lutheran West HS
awhitman@lutheranwest.com
440-655-0209

Secretary

Julie Cole, Chardon HS
jmcole013@gmail.com
440-223-4636

Treasurer

James Dingus, Olentangy Liberty HS
james_dingus@olsd.us
614-301-7761

The Ohio Association of Track & Cross Coaches (then named the Ohio Association of Track Coaches) was formed in 1941 as the brainchild of Ed Barker. During the late 70's, the name was changed to the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches. The goals and purpose of the OATCCC are as follows:

- Promote track, field and cross country in all of the junior and senior high schools of Ohio. We also extend support to those programs in the state's colleges and universities.
- Cooperate with and assist the OHSAA and Ohio's colleges and universities in all the matters pertaining to maintenance, promotion and improvement of track, field and cross country.
- Recognize and award outstanding achievement and/or contribution by athletes, coaches, officials or supporters

DISTRICT REPS

OATCCC District Contact Information Can be Found at:
<https://www.oatccc.com/Contact-Us/>

District Leaders

District 1 – Steve Hill, Ashtabula Edgewood	District 9 – Jack Lintz, Northmont/Tippecanoe HS's
District 2 – Jennifer Dahley, Fairview HS	District 10 – Ryan Beck, Gahanna Lincoln HS
District 3 – Steve Lias, Firelands HS	District 11 – John Jarvis, Watkins Memorial
District 4 – Michael Laubacher, Massillon Perry HS	District 12 – Matt Paxton, Unioto HS
District 5 – Ed Lidderdale, Sandy Valley HS	District 13 – Randy McKinney, Eaton HS
District 6 – Matt Schock, Seneca East HS	District 14 – James Vanatsky, Loveland HS
District 7 – Jim Epperly, Waynesfield-Goshen HS	District 15 – Paul Barney, Toledo Notre Dame Acad
District 8 – Dugan Hill, Caldwell HS	District 16 – Al Riffey, Warren HS



Important Cross Country Dates

July 31	First Day of Coaching and Instruction
August 21	First Contest
October 2	Non-Interscholastic Competition No Longer Permitted
October 8	Draw/Seeding Meeting Date
October 21	District Tournaments
October 28	Regional Tournaments
November 4	State Tournaments – Fortress Obetz

OHSAA Cross Country Contact Information

Dustin Ware, Sport Administrator
Administrates the sport of Cross Country and oversees the postseason tournament.
dware@ohsaa.org

BJ Duckworth
Assistant Sport Administrator & Director of Officiating Development
Oversees training, meet assignments & evaluations of officials; primary contact for rules inquiries. bjduckworth@ohsaa.org

State Rules Meeting

All **State Rules Meetings for coaches will be required online**. This is explained on the following page. Rules meetings go live on **Friday, July 21st, at 9:00 am** on the myOHSAA State Rules Meeting page. The deadline to view the rules meeting without penalty is **Monday, August 21st at 11:59 pm**. **On Tuesday, August 22nd at 12:00 am**, there will be a \$50 late fee to view the rules meeting. The final deadline will be **Monday, September 25th, at 11:59 pm**. **On Tuesday, September 26th at 12:00 am, the Cross-Country Rules Meeting will no longer be available, and penalties will be assessed if not viewed by this date.**

Cross Country Web Resources

- OHSAA Cross Country Webpage [CLICK HERE](#)
- OHSAA Cross Country Regulations [CLICK HERE](#)
- NFHS Rules Books [CLICK HERE](#)
- NFHS Coaches Education [CLICK HERE](#)
- OATCCC Website [CLICK HERE](#)

Important Non-Interscholastic Note

General Sports Regulation 7 prohibits a member of the school team from participating (i.e., trying out, practicing, training, or competing) with any non-interscholastic program while a member of the school team. Please remind your student-athletes of this rule, as penalties shall apply if this Regulation is violated. Anything outside of high school season—practice, workouts or contests (including college tryouts/workouts) are considered **non-interscholastic**.

Out of State Travel for Competition

OHSAA bylaw 9-2-1 permits out of state competition beyond the contiguous states and the one Canadian province **ONLY** under these conditions:

- One time only during the sports season
- You must receive approval from our office (2021 Bylaw change) using this form:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Eligibility/forms/NonBorderingStateApproval.pdf>

The Non-Interscholastic Date

Though participation in any form of non-interscholastic Cross Country while a member of a school team is prohibited, any participation in a non-interscholastic contest **on or after this date** for a student who has not yet joined your interscholastic program results in the individual being ineligible for the OHSAA tournament in addition to any other suspensions issued.

For the **2023** Cross Country season, this date is: **October 2nd, 2023**

Please put this date on your calendar and remind the players on your team!

Communicating with the OHSAA

It is understandable with over 800 high schools in Ohio and the number of teams in Ohio from grades 7-12, communication to our office is in large volume. Most questions can and should be answered by the athletic administrator at your school. To make our communication as efficient as possible, we ask school administrators to communicate directly with us.

Additionally, every effort is being made to provide useful information on our website. We encourage you to check the website (both the main page and Cross-Country specific page).

RULES INTERPRETATION MEETING INFORMATION

State Rules Meetings are **mandatory** for all head coaches.

To Access Online Rules Meetings

All coaches will access the State Rules Meeting through their myOHSAA account. Once you have logged in (*full directions below*) and have accessed the Rules Meeting, please follow the prompts to complete the meeting to receive meeting credit.

Coaches should login to their myOHSAA account and use the Rules Meeting icon to access the list of meetings. *Coaches should contact their athletic administrator if they do not have an account**. Please see further directions below if you are a coach and do not have a myOHSAA account. Please note that all screens of the presentation must be viewed for attendance credit to be provided.

TO ACCESS ONLINE RULES MEETINGS

1. Login to your myOHSAA account (<http://officials.myohsaa.org/Logon>)
2. Click on the "Rules Meeting" icon
3. Click on "Find a State Rules Meeting"
4. Search for the **Cross-Country** meeting using the 'Sports' and 'Meeting Type' drop-down menus
5. Click on the 'View Meeting' button once the State Rules Meeting has gone live
6. Once directed to the Rules Meeting, please follow all prompts to complete the meeting and receive credit.

*IF YOU ARE A COACH AND DO NOT HAVE A MYOHSAA ACCOUNT

1. Contact your athletic administrator immediately to add you to the school's Staff Management in myOHSAA
2. This will generate an email invitation from info@myohsaa.org to the coach—*please look for this email in your inbox, junk or spam folders*
3. Once the email is received, click on the link in the email and follow the prompts to create an account and clear any dashboard items. (verify email address and complete your contact information)

Please **DO NOT** use a Chromebook device to view the Rules Meetings—this device does not support the capabilities of our presentations. Please know that this is not the same as the Chrome web browser.

Deadlines & Dates

All **State Rules Meetings for coaches will be required online**. This is explained on the following page. Rules meetings go live on **Friday, July 21st, at 9:00 am** on the myOHSAA State Rules Meeting page. The deadline to view the rules meeting without penalty is **Monday, August 21st at 11:59 pm**. On **Tuesday, August 22nd at 12:00 am**, there will be a \$50 late fee to view the rules meeting. The final deadline will be **Monday, September 25th, at 11:59 pm**. On **Tuesday, September 26th at 12:00 am**, the **Cross-Country Rules Meeting will no longer be available and penalties will be assessed if not viewed by this date**.

PENALTY

*If coaches do not complete the Rules Meeting by **September 25th at 11:59 pm**, your school will be **REMOVED** from the **post-season tournament!***

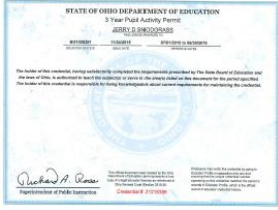
AFTER COMPLETION:

1. Your myOHSAA profile will be updated to reflect your attendance.
2. Please do not call the OHSAA office for verification. Attendance will be reflected in your profile.



Pupil Activity Permits & Concussion Legislation

As outlined in Ohio Administrative Code, all Coaches of Middle School/Jr. High and High School teams must possess a “Pupil Activity Validation Certificate” to coach in Ohio. **This includes paid coaches AND volunteer coaches.** School administrators are responsible for maintaining records on compliance and most schools provide opportunities for their coaches to obtain the necessary coursework. The actual regulations AND the certificate can be downloaded from the OHSAA’s Sports’ Medicine page or directly at: <http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine> . To obtain the required certificate through the ODE, one must:



- **Have completed a Sports’ First Aid Course**
- **Possess a valid CPR Card**
- **Have been approved by their local Board of Education or similar governing body**
- **Complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course**
- **Complete one of two approved Concussion Recognition courses**
- **Complete the Sudden Cardiac Arrest video & information bulletin**
 - **Lindsay’s Law** <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/landing/Lindsays-Law.aspx>

You can look up all requirements in detail on the ODE’s website at:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=1328>

Schools are required to submit coaches’ names along with valid permit numbers on the Official OHSAA Tournament Entry Form. Entry forms are audited on a random basis at the conclusion of each season.

Coaches’ Tool Chest

The OHSAA has partnered with **Coaches’ Toolchest** as a one stop shop for coaches to obtain certifications. The program helps ensure that coaches have the knowledge they need to best serve their student athletes and to position those athletes for success in sport, and in life. For administrators, it provides an efficient, simple method of ensuring all of the school coaches are compliant with their PAP requirements. More than just meeting the legally mandated minimum requirements, the program adds in a professional development piece as well. For more information, please check out the link [HERE](#).



Lindsay’s Law – Sudden Cardiac Arrest

ODE Website: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/landing/Lindsays-Law.aspx>

Lindsay’s Law, Ohio Revised Code [3313.5310](#), [3707.58](#) and [3707.59](#) became effective on August 1, 2017. In accordance with this law, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Cardiology and other stakeholders jointly developed guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students and youth athletes participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity, their parents, and their coaches about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest.

The following resources were developed to implement Lindsay’s Law:

*For **parents/guardians and student- athletes** in grades 7-12 in Ohio schools:*

- [Required video](#)
- [Required SCA Informational Handout](#)
- [Required Signature Form](#)

*For **coaches**:*

If you are a coach for an interscholastic sport and are licensed by the Ohio Department of Education (all paid and volunteer coaches in Ohio), please visit their [website](#) for information about their training requirements around Lindsay’s Law <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/landing/Lindsays-Law.aspx>. The required video, informational handout and a post assessment test will be available shortly through the ODE’s website. We will inform you when that component is available. If, however, you want to have your coaches view the video and review the information immediately, you may access those items below. Please be advised that as a school district, your superintendent must be able to verify that coaches have seen this video and read the informational handout if you choose to implement this requirement before it is available through ODE’s LMS.

- [Required video](#)
- [Required SCA Informational Handout](#)

These educational materials are all free of charge and are the only materials authorized for compliance with this state law. No other course or training material is acceptable.



OHSAA REGULATIONS

OHSAA GENERAL SPORTS REGULATIONS

General Sports Regulations are available at www.ohsaa.org. Under *Sports & Tournaments* select Cross Country. The General Sports Regulations are listed under *Regulations, Policies & Manuals* on the left side of the webpage.

CROSS-COUNTRYSPORT REGULATIONS

Cross-Country Regulations are specific to the sport of Cross-Country and are available at www.ohsaa.org. Under *Sports & Tournaments* select Cross Country. The **OHSAA Cross-Country egulation** tab can be found in the left-hand column on the Cross-Country page. They can also be found under *Regulations, Policies & Manuals* on the left side of the OHSAA webpage.

TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

Tournament Regulations and the State Tournament Draw will be available at www.ohsaa.org. On the website, under *Sports & Tournaments* select Cross Country. They will be listed under *Tournament Information* on the left side of the Cross-Country page.

OHSAA General Sport Regulations

General Sport Regulations apply to all sports governed by the OHSAA. Most areas of concern can be addressed simply by reading through these Regulations or contacting your Athletic Administrator. We **strongly encourage** you to take the time to read these to familiarize yourself and your staff with the various rules approved by our Board of Directors that govern all sports.

Though there are far too many to list in this manual, a few of the more common ones that affect Cross-Country teams are:

Pre-Season Parent Meetings | Bylaw 3-1-4

Pre-season meetings with parents are mandated by OHSAA Bylaws and will most likely occur at your school along with other sport teams. This is determined by each school's athletic administrator **and must be held no later than 2 weeks after the start of the season**. This is the time to cover topics like eligibility requirements, individual school policies, individual sport polices, sportsmanship issues and expectations, travel plans for away contests, etc. We encourage coaches to use this time to their advantage and provide as much education as possible to parents. There are great resources available for coaches to use at these meetings at the *Locker Room*, an NFHS online education center. You can access this directly at: <http://www.nfhslearn.com/LockerRoom.aspx>

What is Coaching? | GSR 7.1.5

The definition of coaching is providing instruction or being present with a team or individual during contests, tryouts, training and practices—*this applies to any school coach, volunteer or paid*. Specific activities include, but are not limited to, practice or other instructional situations in which the coach conducts specific drills, teaches skills, supervises competition-like activities or in any other way supports the instructional environment; competition situations in which the coach sits on the team bench, is in the direct vicinity of the competition in areas reserved for coaches and/or delivers instruction to athletes while they are competing.

Receiving Outside Private Instruction | GSR 7.11.1

While it is not the position of the OHSAA to encourage outside instruction during the school Cross-Country season, Individual skill/coaching instruction may be received by a member of an interscholastic team at any time from either school or non-interscholastic coaches or instructors, provided that these individual skill instructions do not violate any Board of Education, school administrators' or coaches' policies.

Player Participation with Non-Interscholastic Teams/Programs | GSR 7

A member of an interscholastic Cross-Country squad (*grades 7-12*) sponsored by the Board of Education **cannot participate in a non-interscholastic Cross-Country program** (such as club or travel), which includes tryouts, practice and contests, as an individual or a member of a team in the sport of Cross Country, at any time **during** the school team's season. This is detailed in *General Sport Regulation 7.2.2*.

A student-athlete becomes a member of the school team when he/she participates in a preview or regular season contest. With that being said, OHSAA Regulation would permit a student athlete to participate with a non-interscholastic program up until that student participates in their first contest for the school. As soon as they participate in a contest for the school team, they may no longer participate with a non-school program.

A member of an interscholastic team in Cross-Country may participate with a non-interscholastic program or team in contests, tryouts, training and/or practices prior to and after the school's season with no restriction when coached by either a school coach or a non-interscholastic coach. This is detailed in *General Sport Regulation 7.3.2*.

School Transfers | Bylaw 3-6-1

Each school is required to complete an eligibility certificate (*Bylaw 3-6-1*) outlining the eligible athletes for each sports roster. Please ensure you get clearance from your school's athletic administrator before your first contest clarifying which athletes are eligible to participate. Please note that transfer students may be subject to a period of ineligibility at the 50% mark of the season. Your school's athletic administrator will work with the OHSAA Office in order to determine if any exception can be met for a transfer student to participate for the entire season.



UNIFORM CHECKLIST

Coaches Checklist – Competitor Uniform

It is the responsibility of the coach and competitor to be sure that the competitor is dressed in the proper uniform for competition. This checklist is provided to remind coaches of the proper uniform. If further clarification is needed, ask the Tournament Referee. **Do not ask other officials.**

NOTE: If there is any question that cannot be answered affirmatively, then the problem must be resolved before the competitor can compete.

A – Uniform

1. Is the top (full length) and bottom or one-piece uniform school issued or school approved?
2. Does the top have the tournament number securely fastened on the top or one-piece uniform?
3. Are all team members wearing the same color and design school uniform?
4. Are all competitors wearing shoes securely fastened to the foot?

B - Visual Apparel Worn Under the Jersey or Shorts

1. Is there is a manufacturer's logo on the top and/or bottom of the uniform? If so, is it no larger than 2 1/4 square inches?

N.B. Visible garments worn under the uniform top and/or bottom are considered foundation garments. Foundation garments are not subject to logo/trademark/reference or color restrictions.

C - Other Apparel

1. If any runner wears a cap, is it the Navy Watch Style knit cap with no bill and is securely fashioned to the head. cap?
2. If any runner wears a headband, is it securely fashioned to the head?



Different Stripes, **Illegal**

Different Color Bottoms, **Illegal**



Different Stripes, **Illegal**

Different Stripes, **Illegal**

Illegal
due to stripes & bottoms color

Illegal
due to stripes



Different Stripes, **Illegal**



Illegal

Legal

es not make them illegal



UNIFORM EXCEPTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

Senate Bill 181

(Revised Code regarding religious expression in interscholastic athletics)

This revised code states that no public or nonpublic school, school district, interscholastic conference, or organization that regulates interscholastic athletics shall adopt a rule or regulation that prohibits or creates any obstruction to wearing religious apparel when competing or participating in interscholastic athletics or extracurricular activities, including requirements that participants obtain advanced approval, written waivers, or any other permission.

*PLEASE NOTE...*A school or district, interscholastic conference, or organization that regulates interscholastic athletics may limit wearing religious apparel while competing or participating in interscholastic athletics or extracurricular activities if a legitimate danger to participants is identified due to wearing religious apparel. If such a danger is identified, the administrator or official of the event or activity shall offer all reasonable accommodations to the participant wearing religious apparel.

Just Remember...

No restriction can be placed on the wearing of headgear or other apparel for religious purposes!

ADDITIONAL UNIFORM INTERPRETATIONS

The uniform rule stipulates that any school-issued or approved apparel that is worn as an outer garment (e.g., sweatpants, t-shirt, tights) BECOMES the uniform and thus required by ALL TEAM members. Any garments worn under the uniform are now considered foundation garments and are not subject to logo/trademark/reference or color restrictions.

1. Apparel

Apparel of one form or another has traditionally been accepted as a supplement to the school uniform, especially in inclement weather. They sometimes cause problems with identifying members of a Cross Country team. When apparel is worn under the top or bottom or one-piece uniform, these are now considered to be foundation garments and are not subject to logo/trademark/reference or color restrictions. Items forbidden include – but are not limited to – that advertising alcohol, or tobacco, and those referencing racial slurs. One manufacturer's logo is permitted on the top and bottom or one piece uniform but may not exceed 2 1/4" square.

- The requirements regarding the uniform and visible apparel apply whether the competitor is participating as an individual, or as a member of the school team.
- Shoes are required to help protect the athlete from injury. If a shoe is lost by the competitor during competition, there is no violation. However, if the competitor deliberately removes a shoe or shoes during the competition or fastens the shoes so that they may come off the foot during competition, the competitor has committed a foul and is subject to disqualification.
- During inclement weather, Cross Country runners may wear the Navy Watch Style knit cap. The cap may have no bill, and must be secured to the head.
- Headbands may be worn provided it is securely fashioned to the head and poses no risk to other athletes. Rolled up bandannas or other articles are legal, if they are securely fashioned to the head
- Headgear – In the event that a head coach informs the referee in advance of the start of competition that a competitor wishes NOT to expose his/her uncovered head, **the referee shall allow and permit a covering or wrap** which shall not:
 - 1) Fundamentally alter the sport;
 - 2) Be abrasive, hard, or dangerous to any other participant;
 - 3) Be attached in such a way that it is likely to come off during competition; and
 - 4) Be deemed to be unsporting or offensive.

2. Uniform numbers

Cross Country uniforms **DO NOT** need to include a permanent number. **Team members MAY or MAY NOT have numbers on the back of the uniform.** There is **NO VIOLATION** if some team members have uniform numbers while others do not. **NO SIGNED WAIVER IS REQUIRED.**

3. Jewelry

Rule 4-3-3 and 9-6-3 formerly stipulated that competitors shall not wear jewelry with the exception of religious or medical medals. **THIS IS NO LONGER IN EFFECT.** The prohibition of wearing jewelry has been removed from the rules for track and field AND cross country competition. Rings or bands of any type of material, earrings, necklaces, navel jewelry, any type of body piercing adornment, bracelets of any type of material including rubber commemorative bands are now legal. As in previous years, the wearing of a medical alert that is visible continues and, in fact, is encouraged for purpose of risk minimization. Religious and medical alert medals are now legal and are no longer required to be taped to the body. Religious medals may now be worn over the uniform and in full view of officials and other competitors.

4. Wristwatch

A wristwatch, secured to the person, **may be worn** in competition, including GPS and smart watched The use of GPS or electronic communication is prohibited.

All questions regarding uniforms should be asked of the Referee. Although other officials may answer such questions, only the Referee has final authority regarding the interpretation of the rules. It is strongly recommended that officials answer questions regarding uniforms only if the competitor is present and the uniform can be observed on the competitor.

For other exceptions not addressed above, school administrators and/or head coaches shall contact sport administrator, Dustin Ware (dware@ohsaa.org) OR BJ Duckworth (bjduckworth@ohsaa.org) **PRIOR** to competition.



Looking Ahead to Tournament Time

The OHSAA sponsors the Regional & State Cross-Country Meets in 3 divisions. Each of the state's District Athletic Boards are empowered by the OHSAA Constitution to organize and conduct Cross-Country meets at the district levels. OHSAA tournament divisions were approved by the OHSAA Board of Directors and announced on June 9, 2022. These tournament divisions were determined by the number of schools that participated in the 2022 tournament and will be used for the 2022-23 tournaments.

BOYS CROSS-COUNTRY

<u>Division</u>	<u>Boys Enrolled</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
I	301 and more	188
II	158 – 300	188
III	157 and less	187

GIRLS CROSS-COUNTRY

<u>Division</u>	<u>Girls Enrolled</u>	<u>Total Schools</u>
I	305 and more	157
II	163 – 304	157
III	162 and less	158

Tournament Draw Dates

The draw date for tournaments is established by the Board of Directors. The official date for 2023 is Sunday, October 8 at 2:00 pm.

Regional & State Tournament Dates & Order of Competition

Regional Meets / October 28, 2023 III Boys, III Girls II Boys, II Girls, I Boys, I Girls	State Meet / November 4, 2023 III Boys, III Girls II Boys, II Girls, I Boys, I Girls
Check the OHSAA Cross-Country page (Tournament Information) for Tournament Locations & Schedule!	

Athletic Districts

Representation to the Regional tournament from District winners is determined by a formula based upon the number of teams participating in the previous year's tournament. The complete tournament regulations that were adopted by the Board of Directors at its December meeting will be able to be read in their entirety by logging on to www.ohsaa.org and navigating to the Cross-Country webpage under the *Sports & Tournaments* drop-down menu. With a few exceptions, most schools in the counties listed below are assigned sites from the respective District Athletic Boards. You are encouraged to visit their websites for additional information.

Northwest District: ohsaa.org/NWDAB-Home

Central District: ohsaa.org/CDAB-Home

Southwest District: ohsaa.org/SWDAB-Home

Northeast District: ohsaa.org/NEDAB-Home

East District: ohsaa.org/EDAB-Home

Southeast District: ohsaa.org/SEDAB-Home



Coaches' Code of Ethics



From the NFHS Cross-Country Rules Book

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Accordingly, the following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The Coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

The Coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. IN all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

The Coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.

The Coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct the program in harmony with the total school program.

The Coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

The Coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.

The Coach shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.

The Coach should meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.

The Coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give students special consideration.

The Coach shall not scout opponents by any means other than those adopted by the league and/or state high school athletic association.



NFHS State Adoptions in Ohio



The NFHS Rules carefully permit each state the right to adopt certain rules that are specific to that state and are known as **State Adoptions**. These State Adoptions do not cause any fundamental change in the game from state to state. These permitted State Adoptions and Ohio’s decision on the adoption are as follows:

NOTE

THERE ARE NO NFHS CHANGES FOR CROSS COUNTRY IN 2023



Message From OHSAA Sportsmanship

As we prepare for the upcoming seasons, the OHSAA wishes to emphasize to each of you the importance of your leadership role in the promotion of sportsmanship, ethics and integrity. The professional manner in which coaches conduct themselves prior to, during and following a contest unquestionably impacts the behavior of others who may be involved.

ADMINISTRATORS

Athletic departments are comprehensive, pre-eminent teaching departments with a subject matter all their own: self-confidence, leadership, teamwork, discipline, perseverance, respect for others, strategic thinking, dedication, the importance of rules, and sportsmanship. These are true life lessons and participation in athletics provides another forum for learning. Administrators, we need your continued assistance in promoting sportsmanship and controlling fan behavior in the stands! Let the parents and fans know what you expect!

COACHES

Coaches are responsible for promoting sportsmanship and positive behavior on & off the field. Your athletes will demonstrate the attitudes and behaviors they have learned from you, either through direct instruction or through observation of your actions. **Never underestimate the influence you have on your players!** You must:

- Abide by and teach the rules of the game in letter and in spirit.
- Set a good example for players and spectators to follow.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will serve to create a positive impression of you and your team.
- Display modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat.
- Develop a program that rewards participants and spectators for displaying proper sportsmanship and enforces penalties on those who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

STUDENT-ATHLETES

You serve as a role model for your younger siblings, young fans in the stands, your teammates, and your classmates. Set high expectations for everyone and help them follow-through! You must:

- Accept and understand the seriousness of your responsibility, and the privilege of representing your school and the community.
- Live up to the standards of sportsmanship established by the school administration and the coaching staff.
- Learn the rules of the game thoroughly and discuss them with others. This will assist everyone in the achievement of a better understanding and appreciation of the game.
- Treat opponents as you would like to be treated—with respect.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of game officials. Treating them with respect, even if you disagree with their judgment, will serve to create a positive impression of you and your team.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Though this is not inclusive, a few guidelines are listed below to assist you and your middle school and sub-varsity coaches. Please go through your Athletic Administrator for questions related to the OHSAA's Bylaws and Sports' Regulations. All are contained within the OHSAA's Handbook, pictured to the right and are also available online at www.ohsaa.org.

Q: Can middle school/junior high players practice or play with high school players?

A: No. OHSAA Bylaws prohibit student-athletes in grades 7 & 8 from practicing *or* competing with high school student-athletes (grades 9-12) during the season of play in all sports.

Q: Who can volunteer to be a member of the coaching staff?

A: To work with student-athletes in any school program, an individual must receive his/her Pupil Activity Permit through the Ohio Department of Education *and* be approved by the school's Board of Education. Once achieving these requirements, a volunteer falls under all Bylaws and Sports Regulations of the OHSAA which limits them to the same out of season coaching limitations as paid staff members.

Q: Can a school coach provide instruction to players from the school team during off-season Cross-Country?

A: Yes. Individual skill/coaching instruction may be received by a member of an interscholastic team at any time from either school or non-interscholastic coaches or instructors.

Q: Can a player on my team participate in a non-interscholastic program during the school season?

A: No. *General Sport Regulation 7* prohibits student-athletes from participating in any non-interscholastic programs (i.e., travel, club) during the season of play. Coaches should go to great lengths to explain this to players on their teams and remind them periodically throughout the season.

Q: When can a player on my team participate in non-interscholastic Cross Country?

A: As soon as their school season is complete. This means a player may participate as soon as their last meet (including tournament) is played.

USE OF VIDEO

Use of Video for "Decision Making"

- Per NFHS Rule 3-2-7 & 3-2-8b, using video to aid in making officiating decisions is prohibited.
 - Use of video (FAT) to determine the order of finish is allowed per NFHS 3-2 (games committee decision).
- Video that has been approved per NFHS Rule 3-2 to determine the order of finish (FAT) cannot be used in officiating decisions outside of the order of finish.

Penalty For Showing the Official a Video

- Per NFHS Rule 3-2-8b, coaches and participants are **prohibited** from showing an official video as part of a formal or informal protest of a ruling.
- Violation of NFHS Rule 3-2-8b:
 - Athlete = Disqualification from the event.
 - If, in the referee's decision, the athlete has violated NFHS Rule 4-6-1 (disrespectfully addressing an official), they may disqualify the athlete from the meet per 4-6-1.
 - If 4-6-1 is used, that rule should be noted in the ejection report.
- Coach = Disqualification from the meet (**ejection**). The OHSAA will then also administer additional penalties of suspension from future competition as an administrative penalty.
- Consequences for parents/spectators who show officials video:
 - An official should never engage with a parent or spectator and should refer them to their head coach " Please take your questions to your head coach; he/she will address your concerns. If the coach has additional questions they can ask them of me".
 - If the parent/spectator is unruly, call the meet manager immediately and request that the individual(s) be removed. The meet manager, host AD, and/or any security on site are responsible for handling unruly spectators. Safety is our #1 concern in this instance.
 - File a game report for the unsportsmanlike behavior of the spectator/parent.

Concussion Management

Implementation of State Law and NFHS Playing Rules Related to Concussion and Concussed Athletes and Return to Play Protocol

It is important for all individuals involved in interscholastic athletics to recognize the potential for catastrophic injury and even death from concussions. Thus, it is extremely important that each coach, administrator, contest official and medical support personnel review their responsibilities in protecting students. Further both students and parents have responsibilities in this area as well.

Note: It has always been the ultimate responsibility of the coaching staff, in all sports, to ensure that students are only put into practice or contests if they are physically capable of performing. However, all individuals involved in the conduct of interscholastic competition have responsibilities in this endeavor.

In January 2011, the OHSAA Board of Directors adopted a sports regulation which incorporated the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) playing rules related to concussion recognition and management. On April 26, 2013, legislation adopted by Ohio's General Assembly on concussion and head injuries in youth sports became effective. On February 14, 2013, the OHSAA Board of Directors mandated that these regulations become effective on April 26, 2013, for the remainder of the spring sports season and thereafter. This OHSAA regulation, as amended to incorporate this recent legislation, now reads:

Any student, while practicing for or competing in an interscholastic contest, who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest by either of the following:

- 1) The individual who is serving as the student's coach during that practice or competition.
- 2) An individual who is serving as a contest official or referee during that practice or competition.

OHSAA CONCUSSION REPORT FORM

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports-Medicine/OHSAAConcussionReport.pdf>

(If an athlete has been removed from practice or a contact due to concussion-like symptoms, please complete & submit this form to the OHSAA within 48 hours.)

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

If a student is removed from practice or competition due to a suspected concussion or head injury, the coach or referee who removes the student shall not permit the student, **ON THE SAME DAY THE STUDENT IS REMOVED**, to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition for which the coach or contest official is responsible. Thereafter, which means no earlier than the next day, the coach or contest officials shall not permit the student to return to practice or competition until both of the following conditions are satisfied:

- 1) The student's condition is assessed by either of the following:
 - a. A physician, who is a person authorized under Chapter 4731 of the Ohio Revised Code (OCR) to practice medicine and surgery or osteopathic medicine or surgery (M.D. or D.O.)
 - b. Any other licensed health care provider that the school district board of education or other governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school, authorizes to assess the student who has been removed from practice or competition.
- 2) The student receives **written authorization** that it is safe for the student to return to practice or competition from a physician or other licensed health care provider authorized to grant the clearance. Click here <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports-Medicine/OHSAAConcussionReport.pdf> to retrieve the OHSAA's Medical Authorization to Return To Play (RTP) form.

A school district board of education or governing authority of a chartered or non-chartered nonpublic school may authorize a licensed health care provider who is NOT a PHYSICIAN to make an assessment and grant authorization for a student to return to participation ONLY if the provider is acting in accordance with one of the following as applicable to the provider's authority to practice in Ohio:

- 1) In consultation with a physician;
- 2) Pursuant to the referral of a physician;
- 3) In collaboration with a physician, or
- 4) Under the supervision of a physician.

Note: A physician or other licensed health care provider who makes an assessment or grants clearance for a student to return to participation may be a volunteer.

COACHES REQUIREMENTS

All coaches, paid and volunteer, must possess a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit. When renewing this permit, the coach will be required to complete an online concussion education course as stipulated in the section entitled **Approved Online Concussion Education Course**. This course is valid for **three years** and expires at the time the Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit expires.

STUDENT AND PARENT REQUIREMENTS

All students and their parents or legal guardians shall review and sign the "Concussion Information Sheet" which has been developed by the Ohio Department of Health and which shall be distributed by OHSAA member schools to all students and their parents prior to each sports season. Students and parents shall review and sign this form each year and should keep a copy of the form. In addition, parents and students are encouraged to complete an approved concussion education course. The Concussion Information Sheet can be found here: <http://www.healthyohioprogram.org/~media/HealthyOhio/ASSETS/Files/injury%20prevention/concussion/Interscholastic%20Concussion%20Form%20-%20ODH%20Revised%202.ashx>

NFHS SUGGESTED MEDICAL CLEARANCE RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic.
2. When the athlete appears clear, begin low-impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc.
3. Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as running or skating, and may also begin progressive strength training activities.
4. Begin non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, fielding, batting, etc.
5. Full contact in practice setting.
6. Game play/competition.
 - Athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next level. (It is often suggested that an athlete not be allowed to progress more than one level per day.)
 - If symptoms recur, athlete must return to previous level and should be reevaluated by an appropriate health care professional.
 - Medical check should occur before contact. (Final written clearance from the medical professional shall be obtained before the athlete engages in any unrestricted or full contact activity.)

Use of Service Dogs

It is the position of the Ohio High School Athletic Association that all individuals, including those with disabilities, shall have access to OHSAA tournaments and regular season contests conducted by the member schools. This statement is designed to apprise all OHSAA member schools and tournament managers of the law relating to these accommodations for persons with disabilities and to remind the membership of obligations as it relates to this law.

According to the federal law known as the Americans with Disabilities Act, see complete reference here

https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010 , **only dogs** are recognized as service animals and are defined as "*dogs which are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.*" Under this law, as an organization which serves the public, the OHSAA and its member schools, shall allow these service animals to accompany people with disabilities in all areas of facilities where the public is normally allowed to go.

The service dog must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the individual's disability prevents using these devices. In that case, the individual must maintain control of the animal.

When it is not obvious what service the dog provides, only limited inquiries are allowed. Staff members may ask two questions:

- 1) **Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?**
- 2) **What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?**

Staff shall not ask about the person's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or training documentation for the dog to demonstrate its ability to perform the work or task.

If you have questions, as always, please contact a representative of your District Athletic Board for a sectional or district tournament, or the sport administrator on our staff for all other inquiries.

Acclimatization & Exertional Heat Illness Precautions

All coaching and medical staff personnel shall observe the following precautions for all sports competed outdoors and/or in a hot, humid environment.

- **Stress to participants the importance of properly hydrating** during the day leading up to the contest/training, and to drink 8-to-12 ounces of water or sport drinks 20 minutes prior to the contest or any training session. This procedure can help prevent problems during practice and contests.
- **Schools shall have unlimited amounts of water** and sport drinks on hand during practices and contests, and coaches in team sports should be prepared to play a lot of players rather than just the starters.
- **Contest managers are advised to monitor conditions** for others affiliated with the contest, like cheerleaders, band members, coaches, officials and especially spectators.
- **Please review the OHSAA policy on inclement weather and lightning.** In short, upon the first indication that thunderstorm development is within 15 miles of the match site, the activity shall be suspended until 30 minutes after the storm has left this 15-mile zone. Individuals should move to a safe area until the storm has moved away.
- **Know both the Temperature and Humidity.** The greater the humidity the more difficult it is for the body to cool itself. **Test the air prior to practice or a match using a wet bulb, globe, temperature index (WBGT index) which is based on the combined effects of air temperature, relative humidity, radiant heat, and air movement and is the recommended standard of care for assessing risk of exertional heat illness.** The following precautions are recommended when using the WBGT Index: (ACSM's Guidelines for the Team Physician, 1991)

Below 64F	Unlimited activities
65-72F	Moderate risk
74-82F	High Risk
82F+	Very high risk

The OHSAA advises careful monitoring of the weather and plans to modify training and competition including:

- 1) Modification of equipment, if applicable to the sport
- 2) Allowance for more frequent rest breaks and the use of shaded areas for those breaks
- 3) Modification of practice time
- 4) Availability of water always
- 5) Availability of cold water immersion tubs for onsite cooling
- 6) If exertional heat stroke is suspected, immediate onsite cooling using cold water immersion before transport by EMS
- 7) Review and practice of the OHSAA's recommended Emergency Action Plan, "*Anyone Can a Save A Life,*" or similar plan for all sports teams with special emphasis on the heat illness section.

One other method of measuring the relative humidity is the use of a sling psychrometer, which measures wet bulb temperature. The wet bulb temperature should be measured prior to practice and the intensity and duration of practice adjusted accordingly. Recommendations are as follows:

Under 60 F	Safe but always observe athletes
61-65 F	Observe players carefully
66-70 F	Caution
71-75 F	Shorter practice sessions and more frequent water and rest breaks
75+ F	Danger level and extreme caution



Communicable Disease Procedures

Though most schools have a Certified Athletic Trainer present at Varsity contests **and** all coaches are required to maintain a valid Pupil Activity Certificate through the Ohio Department of Education that includes a Sports' First Aid component, it is important to keep up to date on the remote risk that blood borne infectious diseases can be transmitted during Cross-Country practice and contests. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in blood as well as other bodily fluids. Procedures for reducing the potential transmission of these infectious diseases should include, but should not be limited to the following:

1. The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound covered and if there is an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, it must be changed before the athlete may participate.
2. Routine use of gloves or other precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood and other body fluids is anticipated.
3. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces if contaminated (in contact) with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
4. Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with an appropriate disinfectant before competition resumes.
5. Practice proper disposal procedures to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments or devices.
6. Although saliva has not been implicated in HIV transmission, to minimize the need for emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices should be available for use.
7. Athletic trainers/coaches with bleeding or oozing skin conditions should refrain from all direct athletic care until the condition resolves.
8. Contaminated towels should be properly disposed of/disinfected.
9. Follow acceptable guidelines in the immediate control of bleeding and when handling dressings, mouthguards and other articles containing body fluids.

You are encouraged to log on to the OHSAA's website at www.ohsaa.org and refer to the Sports' Medicine dropdown menu for additional information.

MEDICAL INHALERS

The use of an inhaler during competition containing a prescription drug designed to alleviate the asthmatic condition is not considered to be an illegal aid.

The label on the inhaler alone does not meet the requirement to allow for the use of a medical inhaler.

The physician's statement documenting the need of the athlete to use the inhaler should be presented to the meet director or referee before the start of each competition.



Lightning and Inclement Weather

Emphasis on Lightning and Inclement Weather is addressed as an OHSAA Sports Regulation (pg 82). Though all officials received these procedures in pre-season communication, it would be wise to review with them prior to the game. The Lightning and Inclement Weather Policy is relative to ALL OHSAA Sports.

RECOGNITION

Coaches, athletic trainers, athletes, administrators and contest officials should be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately two to three miles anytime that lightning can be seen or heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:

Monitor Weather Patterns – Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity.

National Weather Service – Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area, and everyone should take proper precautions. Any thunderstorm poses a risk of injury or death even if it does not meet the criteria for severe weather. Therefore, anytime thunderstorms are in the forecast (even if it is only a 20 percent chance), event organizers should be at a heightened level of awareness to the potential danger of lightning.

MANAGEMENT

Evacuation: If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators shall evacuate to available safe structures or shelters. A list of the closest safe structures should be announced and displayed on placards at all athletic venues.

Thirty-minute rule: Competition or practice shall be suspended once lightning has been recognized or thunder is heard. It is required to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard prior to resuming practice or competition. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes.

Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count shall reset the clock, and another count shall begin.

