

**Ohio High School Athletic Association**

# **2024 Track & Field**



## **Coaches Manual**

**Updated February 11, 2024**

## A Note From The OHSAA

Coaches and Administrators,

Thank you for the work you do for our student-athletes in your role as coach or administrator. Without our coaches, administrators, and officials we would not be able to give our student-athletes the fantastic experiences they receive.

This manual is designed to be a guide and first stop for information; **changes for 2024 are reflected in red text in this document.** In addition to this manual, regular communication will be sent to coaches and school administrators addressing the most frequently asked questions and important updates.

Please utilize the below steps for finding information before reaching out to the OHSAA; this helps ensure a timely response to inquiries.

1. Coaches should review this document for answers. For competition rule-related questions, coaches should also review the NFHS Rule Book that was provided to your school or the [OHSAA Officials Manual](#).
2. Reach out to your schools' athletic administrator.
3. Review the [Track & Field Webpage](#); this page has additional information including tournament regulations, sport regulations, uniform guidance, and seated event information.
4. Contact the sport administrator via email after exhausting the above options.

All rules governing OHSAA Track & Field come from the National Federation (NFHS) and the OHSAA. The NFHS governs the majority of the competition rules, with OHSAA Sports Regulations and GSRs managing the sport's administration. Additionally, the OHSAA has made some adoptions to competition rules as approved by the NFHS; those can be found in this document. No coach, administrator, league/conference, games committee, DAB, or contest official has the authority to modify or set aside these rules.

Thank you for the important role you play in our sport and in the experiences of our student-athletes.

Sincerely,

*Bj Duckworth*

Director of Officiating Development & Assistant Sport Administrator  
Track & Field and Cross Country  
[bjduckworth@ohsaa.org](mailto:bjduckworth@ohsaa.org)

# Important Dates and OHSA A Contact Information

## Important Dates

Online Meeting Posted: February 9, 2024  
First Day of Coaching: February 19, 2024  
FINAL Day for Completion of Rules Meeting before LATE Fee: March 23, 2024  
Regular Season Contests May Begin: March 23, 2024  
Non-Interscholastic Date: April 29, 2024  
FINAL DAY for Completion of Rules Meeting with LATE Fee: April 15, 2024  
*(Teams will be withdrawn from the OHSA A tournament if the meeting has not been completed by this time)*  
Tournament entry/withdrawal date: April 15, 2024  
Middle School State Meet: May 11, 2024  
[Middle School State Meet Information...CLICK HERE](#)  
District Tournaments: May 13 – May 18, 2024  
Regional Tournaments: May 22 – May 25, 2024  
State Tournament: May 30 – June 1, 2024

## OHSA A Staff Contacts for 2024

**Beau Rugg** | [brugg@ohsaa.org](mailto:brugg@ohsaa.org) | 614-267-2502, ext. 111  
Director of Officiating & Sports Management  
• Oversees officiating program and officials meet assignments.

**BJ (William) Duckworth** | [bjduckworth@ohsaa.org](mailto:bjduckworth@ohsaa.org)  
Director of Officiating Development, State Rules Interpreter & Assistant Sport Administrator  
• Oversees training, officials assignments & evaluations of officials; primary contact for rules inquiries. Assists with regional & state tournaments.

Assistant State Rules Interpreters		
<b>Bob Meuleman (NW)</b> <a href="mailto:bob@meuleman.us">bob@meuleman.us</a>	<b>Steve Hurley (SW)</b> <a href="mailto:stevenhurley@hotmail.com">stevenhurley@hotmail.com</a>	<b>John Daubenspeck (NE)</b> <a href="mailto:jdaubenspeck@gytoa.com">jdaubenspeck@gytoa.com</a>

## Track & Field Informational Links

OHSA A Track & Field Webpage: <https://www.ohsaa.org/sports/track>  
NFHS Track & Field Webpage: <https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/track-fieldcross-country/>  
OHSA A Track & Field Sports Regulations: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/Track-Field/Track&FieldRegs.pdf>  
Coaches Education: [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)  
Ohio Association of Track & Cross-Country Coaches: <https://www.oatccc.com>  
Ohio Officials/Rules Manual: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/Track-Field/TrackandCrossCountryOfficialsManual.pdf>  
2024 Tournament Regulation: <https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/Track-Field/TFTournamentRegulations.pdf>

# Ohio Association of Track & Cross Country Coaches

## **President**

Anjanette Whitman, Beaumont  
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440-655-0209

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## **Secretary**

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## **Treasurer**

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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 OHSA and Ohio's colleges and universities in all the matters pertaining to maintenance, promotion and improvement of track and—field and cross country.
- Recognize and award outstanding achievement and/or contribution by athletes, coaches, officials or supporters.

**OATCCC District Contact Information Can be Found at:**

<https://www.oatccc.com/Contact-Us/>



# Track & Field and Cross Country Officials Association

## **President**

John Daubenspeck  
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## **Assistant Secretary & Treasure**

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Dennis Sabo  
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419-271-5055

The Ohio Track & Field & Cross Country Officials Association (OT&F&CCOA) was formed in 1985 with the purpose of promoting the sports of track and field and cross country in Ohio, and recruiting and retaining officials for those two sports.

The OT&F&CCOA is open to any current track/cross country official in good standing with the Ohio High School Athletic Association. Dues are \$25 per year, with half of the money earmarked for scholarships and the rest to fund annual Clinic expenses. The annual OT&F&CCOA Clinic is held the third weekend of January in the Columbus area.

The OT&F&CCOA annually awards Contributor Awards, Scholarships to children/grandchildren of officials, Joe Lenge Service Awards, and the association's highest honor, the Fredrick Cope Award to an outstanding track & field/cross country official.

**The Official OT&F&CCOA website can be found at:**

<https://otfccoa.wixsite.com/ohiotrackofficials>



## Rules Interpretation Meetings

Please remember that completion of the Rules Interpretation Meeting is **MANDATORY** for coaches and officials.

The **ONLINE Rules Meeting link was activated in MyOhsaa on February 9**. The last day for completion of the online version for coaches and officials is **March 23 at 11:59 p.m.** After that time, a \$50.00 late fee is charged for access to the meeting. **The FINAL deadline WITH LATE FEE, will be, April 15 at 11:59 p.m.**

**For Coaches:** Rules meetings are available through the coach's individual myOHSAA account.

IF you do not already have your account, you will obtain your myOHSAA account in this way:

1. Your Athletic Administrator adds the staff member's name by using the "Add New Staff" button.
2. Your AD follows the prompts to add the:
  - a. New Staff Member's FIRST NAME
  - b. New Staff Member's LAST NAME
  - c. New Staff Member's EMAIL ADDRESS
  - d. Check box(es) to assign the appropriate roles/positions
  - e. Click the "INVITE NEW STAFF" button
3. The invited staff member (you) receives an email from [info@myohsaa.org](mailto:info@myohsaa.org). Please check junk and spam folders for this email if you don't see it in your inbox.
4. Once the new staff member (you) opens the email,
  - a. Click the link inside and follow the prompts to either 'login' or 'create an account'

Once you login to your myOHSAA profile, click on the "Rules Meetings" tab and then Find a State Rules Meeting. Please do not use a Chromebook to watch the meeting as there have been issues with the meeting freezing. When you access the Rules Meeting, **MAKE SURE the email address tied to your myOHSAA account matches the email used in the school's staff management. If not, the school will not receive credit for the meeting.** All screens of the presentation must be viewed for attendance credit to be provided. PLEASE note that attendance credit is NOW INSTANTANEOUS, and you can check your myOHSAA account for attendance. Go to the Rules Meetings Tab and "My State Meeting Attendance" on the left-hand side. There will be a date and time stamp indicating completion of the meeting. If you do not see your attendance in your account after completing the meeting, please email me so I can make the proper adjustment.

## Scheduling & Out-of-State Contests

The first date your team can participate in a **REGULAR SEASON CONTEST** is **Saturday, March 23**.

- This could impact a team that was planning on a 'southern trip' to a non-bordering state.

Teams may travel out-of-state to compete in contests in states OR provinces in Canada that border Ohio regardless of distance, including:

- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Pennsylvania
- West Virginia
- Ontario, Canada

Teams may travel to a non-bordering state **ONE TIME ONLY** per season only and must ask the OHSAA permission by using this form:

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

**Non-Interscholastic deadline is April 29**

- In all contests competed outside Ohio, each school shall follow all Ohio eligibility standards, general and sport-specific regulations as well as the playing rules (NFHS or national governing body) as adopted by the host state association.
- The penalty for schools that participate in a regular season contest **before March 23** or travel to a non-bordering state more than one time per season shall be **INELIGIBILITY FOR THE OHSAA TOURNAMENT!**

### NFHS Sanctioning of Contests

Whether a contest/event is in Ohio or outside of Ohio, schools must secure a sanction through the National Federation of State High School Associations for competition by a member school in any of the following contests:

- a.) Any interstate tournament in which four or more schools participate ANY event which includes either an Ohio or an out-of-state school that is co-sponsored by or titled in the name of an organization outside the school community;
- b.) Events involving non-bordering states where five (5) or more states are involved;
- b.) Events involving non-bordering states if more than eight (8) schools are involved;
- c.) Events involving two (2) or more schools that includes a team from a foreign country, with the exception of Canada and Mexico. NOTE: In b.) and c.) above, no sanction is required if the contest(s) only involve Ohio schools and/or schools which border Ohio.

Schools desiring to participate in an event covered under the aforementioned scenarios must visit

<https://www.nfhs.org/Sanctioning/> in order to obtain the sanction.

### End of Season Date

Relative to regular season 'in-state' contests: Teams may schedule contests right up until the board adopted "Season End" date of **June 1**. This means that, even though you are in the OHSAA tournament or eliminated from the OHSAA tournament, you may still schedule (usually 'make up') a contest until this date. Keep in mind that playing this date also eliminates any opportunity for an athlete to participate in non-interscholastic track & field until the school season is complete.

### Scheduling Conflicts

Scheduling conflicts are going to arise. **PLEASE COORDINATE WITH YOUR ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR TO ENSURE THAT OFFICIALS ARE NOTIFIED IN ADVANCE OF ANY CHANGES.** When dates, times and/or locations are changed, it not only affects the officials scheduled for that game, but also other games they are scheduled to work.

### Over Scheduling

Scheduling more contests than the sport's regulations permit in any sport is **NOT PERMITTED**. Overscheduling will lead to contract disputes and, if not settled, could result in financial penalties being levied by the OHSAA even if there is no financial clause listed on the contract.

# OHSAA Regulations Points of Emphasis

## Bylaw 4-7-1 – Transfer

In the referendum vote which took place in May 2018, the member high school principals voted to change the transfer consequence, for those students who change high schools and do not meet a transfer exception, from the first half of the season to the second half of the season plus the OHSAA tournament. Once the first 50% of the maximum allowable regular season contests have been competed, the student becomes INELIGIBLE for the remainder of the regular season plus the OHSAA tournament. **The current regulation in track & field** is that the student becomes ineligible at **Meet 9**.

*We urge your athletic administrator to direct any questions they might have about this transition and the application of the transfer consequence to a member of the compliance team.*

## Ensure Your Students are Eligible

Coaches, parents, and student-athletes are strongly encouraged to review online the OHSAA Athletic Eligibility Guide, which is written to explain the rules to coaches and student-athletes and their parents. Simply go to the OHSAA website ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)) and click on “Eligibility.” There you will find a variety of links to help answer numerous questions. The OHSAA mandates that all coaches conduct pre-season orientation meetings for student-athletes and their parents. These meetings afford the coach the opportunity to present information pertaining to school policy, athletic codes of conduct, OHSAA eligibility rules and details concerning the track and field program. The eligibility guides could be presented at this time. Please remember that when parents sign their consent for their student’s participation in interscholastic athletics on the OHSAA authorization form, they also are indicating that they have read and understood the OHSAA rules for eligibility.

## Inclement Weather

**\*NOTE:** At night, under certain atmospheric conditions, lightning flashes may be seen from distant storms. In these cases, it may be safe to continue an event. If no thunder can be heard and the flashes are low on the horizon, the storm may not pose a threat. Independently verified lightning detection information would help eliminate any uncertainty.

The thirty-minute rule remains in place. Any time you hear thunder, there is an automatic 30-minute wait. When lightning is seen, play would be suspended as normal and the 30-minute count would begin. The note simply allows coaches and umpires to determine whether to continue play if there is no thunder and you can determine that the lightning is not a threat. This is only applicable at night.

- **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 10-12 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.**



### General Sports Regulations 7.11, Individual Skill Instruction (Non-School Coaches During the Season)

MANY questions arise regarding players receiving individual instruction during the season from individuals not associated with the school's program. These include (but not limited to) instruction from private running, jumping, or throwing coaches. The OHSAA's Sports Regulation 7.11 addresses the specifics of Instruction DURING or OUTSIDE the season. GSR 7.11.1 reads:

*"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."*

The language of this regulation provides the latitude to a school's administration OR coach to allow players to obtain "outside instruction" during the season.

### Preseason Requirements – Pole Vault Education

By Board of Directors action, all schools that intend to compete in the pole vault (**high school and 7th and 8th grade schools**) must send a coach to a pole vault coaching clinic sponsored by the OATCCC or another governing body. Coaches may also complete an approved online training course, approved courses can be found at [www.pvscb.com](http://www.pvscb.com) or [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).

### Preseason Preparations

During your pre-season preparations, invite a local official(s) to meet with your squad during pre-season workouts. It allows the officials to meet your athletes and discuss new rules. It gives your athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to competition days. We would also recommend inviting an official to a pre-season meeting with your parents. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for your parents to learn more about the game. If you would like assistance in this area, please contact BJ Duckworth at [bjduckworth@ohsaa.org](mailto:bjduckworth@ohsaa.org).

### Physical Fitness or Conditioning Programs Prior to the Outdoor Season

There are no restrictions for pre-season conditioning in this sport except programs are limited to calisthenics, weight training and running. The running shall consist only of jogging with no sprint or interval training or any activity where coaching and instruction are involved. No implements or equipment used in track and field competition may be used in the physical fitness program prior to the opening day of interscholastic outdoor track and field practice.

### Practice of Individual Events Prior to or After the Outdoor Season

Individual skill/coaching instruction by the school coaching staff may take place prior to the opening day of outdoor track and field practice per General Sports Regulation 7.11. Members of a school's outdoor track & field coaching staff may coach athletes from the school during the school year outside the track and field season.

Opening up a gym or an outdoor facility for athletes to practice track and field events without the instruction and direct supervision of a qualified coach **is not a recommended practice**. Of particular concern are the events of pole vault, shot put and discus. Schools should not permit student-athletes to practice these events outside the season of the sport without the direct supervision of a coach.

There are also no restrictions regarding individual athletes attending clinics or instructional programs prior to or after the interscholastic track and field season.



## Comments to News Media

Each year, unpleasant situations arise as a result of comments made to the news media by coaches. The OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws reads in part "Great care shall be exercised in the selection of officials, well in advance of the contest and agreed upon by schools involved" and goes on to say "Public criticism of officials is a direct reflection upon those who were responsible for assigning the officials to the game. Officials/Umpires are trained and expected to make no derogatory comments directly to the media or through the use of social media regarding other officials, the players, coaches or schools. Coaches and participants are expected to follow the same procedure and make no derogatory public comments directly to the media or through the use of social media regarding not only the officials, but also the players, coaches or schools. Failure to follow this request will result in penalties as outlined in Bylaw 11.

## Videotaping Regulations

### **Regular Season Contests**

- It is permissible for a school or a school representative to videotape or photograph regular season contests of the team or individuals from one's own school. Such videotapes or photographs may be used for "in-game" coaching purposes only if it is specified in the national playing rules of the sport or in the specific sport regulations.
- It is permissible for a school or a school representative to videotape or photograph regular season contests (including previews, scrimmages and/or practices) of teams or individuals **not** from one's own school **only with the written consent of all schools participating in the contest(s)**.

### **OHSAA Tournament Contests**

#### **Videotaping and Photographing by Participating Schools**

- Videotaping OHSAA tournament contests of the team or individuals from one's own school participating in the contest is permitted provided prior arrangements are made with the tournament manager, and it is done at the expense of the school involved. A maximum of two individuals per school are permitted to videotape.
- All photographs and videos taken by school representatives of the team or individuals from one's own school at OHSAA tournament contests are for school use ONLY. The use of photographs or videos taken by school representatives for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. Such videotapes or photographs may be used for "in-game" coaching purposes only if it is specified in the national playing rules of the sport or in the specific sport regulations.
- It is permissible for a school or a school representative to videotape or photograph tournament contests (including practices) of teams or individuals **not** from one's own school **only with the written consent of all schools participating in the contest(s)**.
- It is permissible for a school or school representative to *utilize* video and photographs of tournament contests (including practices) of teams or individuals **not** from one's own school **only with the written consent of all schools participating in the contest(s)**.

**See the OHSAA Handbook for additional regulations on use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and regulations on videotaping and photographing by spectators**

### Pre-Season Meetings

Pre-season meetings with parents are **mandatory** and will most likely occur along with other spring sport teams. This is determined by each school's athletic administrator. This is the time to cover such things as eligibility requirements, individual school policies, individual sport policies, sporting behavior issues and expectations, travel plans for away contests, etc. Also, a course titled "The Role of the Parent in Sports" has recently been offered by the NFHS and is FREE to parents. Encourage them to watch this very informative video course. This and other appropriate courses are available through the [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) website. Schools are encouraged to invite local officials to meet with their team and parents at these meetings. This allows the officials to meet the athletes and discuss new rules and gives athletes an opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion prior to game days. Again, it provides a forum for healthy discussions and an opportunity for parents to learn more about the game.

### Coaches Must Have Pupil Activity Permit

All Coaches of Middle School/Jr. High and High School teams **MUST** have a Pupil Activity Permit issued by the Ohio Department of Education to coach in the state of Ohio. The application process can begin here: <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Licensure/Audiences/Coaching-Permits>. The application requires: 1.) completion of a background check; 2.) completion of the NFHS' "Fundamentals of Coaching" course; 3.) completion of CPR training through a course approved by your school or district; 4.) completion of First Aid for Coaches requirements; 4.) completion of Concussion training, and 5.) completion Sudden Cardiac Arrest training.

### Communication to Coaches

The OHSAA will continue to send information to member school superintendents, principals and athletic administrators electronically with timely updates and reminders on a variety of topics through the *OHSAA Administrator Update*. These bulletins are usually sent weekly and are also posted on the OHSAA website. Additional communication with track and field-specific information will be emailed periodically to head coaches and athletic administrators as needed and will also be posted on the OHSAA website.

## **Indoor Track & Field**

The OHSAA does not sponsor tournament competition in indoor track and field. Thus, this sport is not considered to be an OHSAA "recognized" sport. However, many schools do sponsor interscholastic competition in indoor track and field. This information is provided to assist schools that have chosen to sponsor this sport. The following are answers to frequently asked questions pertaining to Indoor Track and Field.

**Does the opening date for coaching to begin in Outdoor Track and Field apply to schools sponsoring indoor track and field?** No. The regulation adopted applies only to track and field as an outdoor sport. Indoor track and field is a non-recognized (non-tournament) sport. This means that schools sponsoring the sport must set their own dates for the season length and for number of contests permitted.

**What procedures must be followed for those schools desiring to compete in indoor track and field?** Due to a change in a Bylaw, there are no longer any requirements that schools comply with the Bylaws and applicable sports regulations of the OHSAA in non-recognized sports. The following steps are suggested to assist schools that may want to sponsor an indoor track and field program:

### **What must I do if I plan to adopt indoor track at my school?**

- a. Authorization/approval/recognition of indoor track MUST BE GIVEN by the appropriate Board of Education.
- b. Approval/recognition of assigned coaches by the appropriate Board of Education.  
With the change in Sports Regulation 7.11.1 Individual Skill/Coaching Instruction, "Individual skill/coaching instruction may be received by a member of a school team at any time from either school or non-school coaches or instructors.
- c. Schools must determine the length of the season (i.e., a beginning date and ending date) and have a legitimate schedule identifying the number of contests to be competed. It is mandatory that schools compete in at least one indoor competition during the season in order to be considered an interscholastic program. It is no longer necessary to register the sport with the OHSAA.
- d. The OHSAA does not provide catastrophic insurance for participants in indoor track and field on the OHSAA catastrophic insurance policy. For schools that wish to sponsor the sport and maintain this insurance, there may be a way to continue that coverage for a fee. The OHSAA will continue to work to provide schools with information about this option over the next school year.
  - If the Board of Education does not recognize and sponsor indoor track and field, what alternative is there for athletes interested in competing indoors? - Those individuals may participate as non-interscholastic participants without school affiliation. The OHSAA catastrophic insurance shall not apply in such cases. The decision regarding whether to permit these athletes to wear school uniforms and/or use school equipment is a local school decision.
  - However, member schools should note that the OHSAA has endorsed Loomis & LaPann (an AIG Company) to offer schools the opportunity to purchase catastrophic insurance coverage at a very reasonable cost for students who participate in sports not recognized by the Association. Contact Information: Greg Joly ([gjoly@loomislapann.com](mailto:gjoly@loomislapann.com)), Karen Boller ([kboller@loomislapann.com](mailto:kboller@loomislapann.com)), 1.800.566.6479 or <http://www.loomislapann.com/>

**May athletes who are NOT planning to compete in indoor track and field receive coaching during the indoor season?** Yes, "Individual skill/coaching instruction may be received by a member of a school team at any time from either school or non-school coaches or instructors." (Sports Regulation 7.11.1). This regulation applies to the individual sports and includes cross country and track and field.

## **Additional OHSAA Regulations**

Regulations governing the sport of track and field are divided into two basic categories: **GENERAL Sports' Regulations** and **TRACK & FIELD Regulations (sport specific)**. These are reviewed annually and approved by the OHSAA's Board of Directors. They can be found on the OHSAA Track & Field Page.

### **High School Regulations**

**A competitor may compete in a maximum of four track and field events.** The four events may be any combination of track and field events, including relays, or may be four track events or four field events. **This regulation applies to all competitions – regular season and OHSAA tournaments. NOTE: Once an athlete has been "checked in," this is officially one of his/her four (4) allowable events even if he/she changes their mind at the last moment.**

### Participation Limitation

The maximum number of regular season contests permitted for both teams and individuals is 16.

An athlete who exceeds the participation limitation shall be disqualified. The forfeiture bylaws apply as written in Bylaw 11. In support of this, NFHS Rule 4-2-PEN specifies that a competitor who participates in more than the four allowable events shall forfeit all places and points and shall be disqualified from further competition in the meet/tournament. In relay events, the team's relay points and places shall also be forfeited.

**The four-event limitation applies to single and multi-day competition – regular season and tournaments.** An athlete who has competed in an event and qualifies for the semi-finals or finals of that particular event may not withdraw from that event to compete in another event unless he/she still remains under the maximum of four allowable events.

### Order of Events

The **Order of Events** as specified in the National Federation (NFHS) Track and Field Rules, Rule 1, shall be used in all high school competition in Ohio and **may be changed only by mutual agreement**. The javelin is NOT an approved event and is not permitted in high school competition. Rule 2 - Scoring and Ties. Exceptions to this rule are not permissible. Ties shall be resolved as specified in Section 2.

### Ninth Grade Students/Students Below Ninth Grade

Ninth grade students in all schools are high school students and shall compete in athletics in accordance with high school bylaws and regulations. Ninth grade students are not permitted to compete in interscholastic competition on the same team or squad with students below ninth grade.

Students below the ninth grade are not eligible to compete in athletics with high school students unless they meet an exception as outlined in Bylaw 4-2, Age Limitation.

### Length of Season and Coaching Regulations

- No scrimmages permitted.
- 16 contests permitted; does not include district, regional or state tournament competition.
- Student-athletes are permitted to participate in more than one meet per day, however, each meet must count toward the maximum allowable of 16 and the athlete may not compete in more than four total events per day. The 16 allowable meets pertains to the team as a whole and not to each individual.

### High School Order of Events

The order of events in high school meets shall be as listed below: In accordance with Rule 1-2, unless changed by the Games Committee in invitational meets or specified in the contract in dual, triangular or quadrangular meets, the events will count in scoring unless there is mutual consent of the coaches to delete the event.

### Field Events (order is optional)

#### Girls

Discus (1K) (2 lbs.3.27 oz.)  
High Jump  
Long Jump  
Shot Put (4K) (8 lbs. 13 oz.)  
Pole Vault

#### Boys

Discus (1.6K) (3 lbs. 8.5 oz)  
High Jump  
Long Jump  
Shot Put (5.4K) (12 lbs.)  
Pole Vault

**Throwing Sectors:** Degree Sector required is 34.92 degrees for Shot Put and Discus (per 2007).

## Running Events

### Girls

- 1 - Relay - 4x800 meters or 4x880 yards
- 3 - Hurdles - 100 meters (33" high)
- 5 - Dash - 100 meters
- 7 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 9 - Run - 1600 meters or One Mile
- 11 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 13 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 15 - Low Hurdles - 300 meters (30" high)
- 17 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 19 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards
- 21 - Run - 3200 meters or Two Miles\*
- 23 - Relay - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

### Boys

- 2 - Relay - 4x800 meters or 4x880 yards
- 4 - High Hurdles - 110 meters or 120 yards (39" high)
- 6 - Dash - 100 meters
- 8 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 10 - Run 1600 meters or One Mile
- 12 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 14 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 16 - Hurdles - 300 meters (36" high)
- 18 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 20 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards
- 22 - Run - 3200 meters or Two Miles\*
- 24 - Relay - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

Anytime the 3200M is not being competed or is being competed at a different point in the meet, a rest period of **twenty (20) minutes** from the beginning of the first heat of the girls 200 M to the start of the first heat of the girls 4x400M **MUST** be given if athletes competing in the 200M are also in the 4x400MR. **This is in effect in both tournament and regular season competitions.**

**Note:** When running simultaneous girls and boys meets, events shall be competed in the order indicated by the numerical sequence above.

### \*Allowable Additional Events (Track & Field)\*

In addition to events outlined in the approved OHSAA Order of Events, schools in Ohio may compete in additional events as outlined in NFHS Rules 1 & 9. All changes to the standard OHSAA order of events from the previous slide must be communicated per the below section.

- Triple Jump must be competed following NFHS Rule 6, 7&9
- Javelin is PROHIBITED in Ohio.
- "Special Events" must be competed under USATF Youth Rules as outlined in NFHS Rule 9 unless the OHSAA has stated otherwise (mixed gender relays).
  - When Hammer is completed, the cage used MUST meet USATF Rules (rule 190). Most Discus cages will not meet these standards.
  - Mixed Gender Relays must follow the rules as outlined in this manual.
- **\*NEW in 2024\*** In addition to the above, the 5,000M can be competed per the below regulations.
  - All schools have been notified in advance of the change of order of events.
  - USATF Youth Rules are followed.
  - The 5,000M and 3,200M cannot be competed at the same meet regardless of the number of days the meet spans.
- Any event not found in NFHS Rule 1 & 7, with the exception of the 5,000M, CANNOT be competed in Ohio.
- Certified Officials may not officiate non-approved events and should not allow events to take place in any manner not outlined in the rules (including safety cages).
- None of these additional events will be part of any tournament competition, only those events in the OHSAA order of events will be part of the tournament.

\*Not all of the above information above is new 2024, only the information related to the 5,000M is new. The rest of the information was added to the manual for clarification purposes.

## 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade OHSAA Regulations

### Participation Limitation

In any one track and field contest, a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade participant may compete in a maximum of **three (3) events**. The three events may be any combination of track and field events including relays, or may be three track events or three field events. **PARTICIPATION LIMITATION PENALTY:** An athlete who exceeds the participation limitation shall be disqualified. The forfeiture bylaws apply as written in Bylaw 11. Individual competitors and squads are limited to a maximum of **12 meets** per season **plus** one league championship meet (team and individual) **plus** the OHSAA-sponsored state meet. **Ten days practice required prior to first interscholastic competition.**

### Students Below Ninth Grade

- Students below the ninth grade **are not** eligible to compete in athletics with high school students unless they meet an exception as outlined in Bylaw 4-2, Age Limitation.
- Students below the seventh grade are not eligible to compete in athletics with students in grades 7 or 8 (or higher).

### Order of Events \*Updated 2023\*

The following is the updated Order of Events shall be used for grade 7-8 girls and boys involving Ohio schools. The following Order of Events shall be used, unless changed by the Games Committee or the Meet Director in invitational meets or specified in the contract in dual, triangular or quadrangular meets, the events will count in scoring unless there is mutual consent of the coaches to delete the event.

### Running Events

#### **Girls**

- 1 - Relay - 4x800 meters or 4x880 yards
- 3 - Hurdles - 100 meters (30" high)
- 5 - Dash - 100 meters
- 7 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 9 - Run - 1600 meters or One Mile
- 11 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 13 - Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 15 - Hurdles - 200 meters (30" high)\*
- 17 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 19 - Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards\*\*
- 21 - Relay - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

#### **Boys**

- 2 - Relay - 4x800 meters or 4x880 yards
- 4 - High Hurdles - 110 meters or 120 yards (33" high)
- 6 - Dash - 100 meters
- 8 - Relay - 4x200 meters or 4x220 yards
- 10 - Run 1600 meters or One Mile
- 12 - Relay - 4x100 meters or 4x110 yards
- 14 – Dash - 400 meters or 440 yards
- 16 - Hurdles - 200 meters (30" high)\*
- 18 - Run - 800 meters or 880 yards
- 20 – Dash - 200 meters or 220 yards\*\*
- 22 - Relay - 4x400 meters or 4x440 yards

\* Start - 200 M. mark, 5 hurdles, spacing of hurdles 50 m to the first hurdle, 35 m between hurdles, 10 m from 5th hurdle to the finish line.

\*\*A 20 minute twenty minutes from the beginning of the girls 200 M to the start of the first heat of the girls 4x400M is recommended to be given if athletes competing in the 200M are also in the 4x400M

**Note:** When running simultaneous girls and boys meets, events shall be competed in the order indicated by the numerical sequence above. Girls and boys may not compete on the same relay team unless the girl is a member of the boys team for the season.

## Field Events (order is optional)

### Girls

Discus (1K) (2 lbs., 3.27 oz.)  
High Jump  
Long Jump  
Shot Put (2.722K) (6 lbs.)  
Pole Vault

### Boys

Discus (1K) (2 lbs., 3.27 oz.)  
High Jump  
Long Jump  
Shot Put (4K) (8 lbs. 13 oz.)  
Pole Vault

**Note:** The javelin is NOT permitted in Ohio 7th-8th grade competition.

**Throwing Sectors:** Required – 34.92 degrees for Shot Put and Discus.

### \*Allowable Additional Events (Track & Field)\*

In addition to events outlined in the approved OHSAA Order of Events, schools in Ohio may compete in additional events as outlined in NFHS Rules 1 & 9. All changes to the standard OHSAA order of events from the previous slide must be communicated per the below section.

- Triple Jump must be competed following NFHS Rule 6, 7&9
- Javelin is PROHIBITED in Ohio.
- “Special Events” must be competed under USATF Youth Rules as outlined in NFHS Rule 9 unless the OHSAA has stated otherwise (mixed gender relays).
  - When Hammer is completed, the cage used MUST meet USATF Rules (rule 190). Most Discus cages will not meet these standards.
  - Mixed Gender Relays must follow the rules as outlined in this manual.
- The 5000M is prohibited in 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Any event not found in NFHS Rule 1 & 7, CANNOT be competed in Ohio.
- Certified Officials may not officiate non-approved events and should not allow events to take place in any manner not outlined in the rules (including safety cages).
- None of these additional events will be part of any tournament competition, only those events in the OHSAA order of events will be part of the tournament.

## Regular Season Contest Procedure

### Event Entry Limitations

Modifications to NFHS Rule 4-2-4

#### Part A – Individual Events

In all non-invitational /non-championship meets, each school is **entitled** to enter four competitors in individual events. The decision to increase the entry limitation shall be decided by the games committee, either in the contest contract or verbally **in advance of the meet**. Contest officials must be notified of any increase in entry limitations (greater than four) before accepting their officiating contract. For invitational and championship meets, the games committee retains the ability to limit the number of entries a school may have for an event. These limitations must be shared in the contest contract or verbally in advance of the meet.



## Part B – Relay Events

According to NFHS Rule 4-2-4-d, in a relay race, only one team per school may be designated as a scoring team. In Ohio, due to our prohibition on exhibition competition, this means that when more than one relay team from the same school is competing, **NO TEAM** shall be designated as the scoring team. Each team that is entered by a school shall have the opportunity to be the scoring team. However, only one **(1)** relay team from a competing school may score. No conferences, leagues or individual schools have the authority to set aside these event entry limitations.

Note: No conferences, leagues or individual schools have the authority to set aside these modifications made to event entry limitations.

### Required Roster

Each school must provide a **roster of athletes** before competition begins. In dual, triangular and quadrangular meet competition, a copy must be provided to each opposing coach and the referee. In meets involving five or more schools, the school roster must be supplied to the meet manager. Competition will not be permitted until the roster is provided.

### Boys and Girls Competing Simultaneously

The Board of Directors has authorized the adoption of NFHS Rule 1-2-3, which permits simultaneous competition of boys and girls events provided the head coaches unanimously agree or if the referee deems it necessary. When events are competed together, they should be scored separately

### Mixed Gender Relays (Administration & Scoring Requirements)

The following requirements have been approved by the OHSA Board of Directors for these events starting in Spring 2023, and must be adhered to under this format: These events are not required, and their addition to a track meet is totally a meet management decision. If a meet is planning to host Mixed Gender Relays, the following steps are **REQUIRED**:

- The hosting school **MUST** obtain a waiver from Dustin Ware ([dware@ohsaa.org](mailto:dware@ohsaa.org)) AT LEAST 48 hours before the start of the meet. **CLICK HERE for WAIVER**
- Per NFHS and OHSA policy, meet management **MUST** notify all participating schools in advance of the change to the order of events.
- Where in the order of events these events take place is also a meet management decision. Again, the order of events **MUST** be communicated in advance to the participating schools.
- **Running Relays** (4x100MR, 4x200MR, 4x400MR, 4x800MR, 4x1600MR, Distance Medley, Sprint Medley)
  - Female athletes **MUST** be the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> leg.
  - Male athletes **MUST** be the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> leg.
- **Shuttle Hurdles**
  - Female athletes **MUST** be the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> leg
  - Male athletes **MUST** be the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> leg
- **Field Event Relays**
  - **MUST** contain an equal number of male and female athletes.
  - When throwing implements are used, they **MUST** follow NFHS and OHSA competition regulations.

- All events **MUST** be scored.
  - 50% of the points awarded to each gender.
  - Given the 50% split scoring **REQUIREMENT**, meet management is encouraged to communicate their desire to hold these events with their timing companies well in advanced to prevent any difficulties in scoring the events in the required fashion on the day of the meet.
- All NFHS rules apply to competition.
- No meet, conference, official or district may set aside these rules.

PLEASE NOTE: Mixed Gender Relays WILL NOT be a part of the OHSAA tournament (*District – Regional – State*).

### Changing the Order of Events or the Actual Events Competed

Section 9 lists the adopted order of events for high school and Section 10 lists the adopted order for 7-8th grade interscholastic track and field competition. In dual, triangular and quadrangular meets, the listed events must be competed unless the changes are listed on the contest contract signed by the school administrators or certified OHSAA assignor. If there is no contractual exception, schools shall expect to compete in each of the events as listed. If some events are not offered or cannot be competed, the offending school, in accordance with the following procedure, will forfeit the points unless there is mutual consent of the coaches to change or delete an event or events.

**Dual** - forfeit points to opponent.

**Triangular, quadrangular** - forfeited points divided equally among the opposing schools.

**Invitational** - forfeited points divided equally among the opposing schools.

### Scrimmages or Previews

According to the definitions adopted and printed in the Sports Regulations, scrimmages and previews are **not permitted** in track and field. Track and Field is considered a sport of individuals with accumulative scoring applications resulting in a team score. Any type of interscholastic competition is considered a contest and subject to contest limitations.

### Multiple Day Meet

A meet scheduled for either a one-day period or more than one day counts as one meet. This applies even though the days of the meet are not consecutive. NOTE: The entry limitation of a maximum of four events applies even though a meet is competed on two days.

### Scheduling Two Meets in One Day

This is permissible, but each meet must be listed on the school's schedule and counts in the maximum of 16 permitted for the school team and the athlete is limited to no more than four events total for the day.

### Athlete Limitation

A high school athlete may participate in two meets in one day; however, each meet counts as one of the allowable 16 for the athlete, and the athlete is limited to maximum of four events in the two competitions combined.

### School Team Participation in Competition After June 1, 2024

It is a violation of the regulation that prescribes the school season for a school to schedule competition after June 1, 2024. Individuals may compete non-interscholastically, but school team competition must cease as of June 1.

### Pre-Meet Conference and Coaches Verification

The referee shall communicate either via a meeting or in writing with all captains and the head coach from each school the following: meet procedures, special instructions and conditions, the proper sporting conduct that is expected, along with any equipment or religious waivers. In addition, each head coach shall verify that all athletes shall be in legal uniforms, properly equipped and free of all dangerous jewelry (sec. 11.11). A form for this verification and use in large competitions is included in this manual.

### Team Competition in Field Events

NFHS rule 5-10-1 clearly identifies relays as races between teams of four competitors, not one of whom may run more than one distance (leg)." Therefore, there is no such event as a relay field event. The following interpretations are made to apply to **"Team Competition in Field Events."** Invitational Meets sponsoring team field events shall determine the number permitted to participate for each team (2 or 3 or 4).

If a team enters and competes the required number (2 or 3 or 4), the team score shall be determined by adding the individual best of each team member.

If one or more team members fail to attain the starting height in pole vault or high jump, or fouls all trials in long jump, shot or discus, the team total is still determined by adding the best efforts of all team members. Thus, in a three-person team, the team score could be from the efforts of two members, and if the total is high enough, the team could still score points in that event.

In the team pole vault or high jump, the following procedure is recommended in the case of a tie in team competition:

- A. The Games Committee may establish that the tie remains a tie.
- B. If the Games Committee adopts a tie-breaking procedure, the following procedure is recommended.
  - i. The team that has the competitor with the best performance of all competitors shall be awarded the higher place.
  - ii. If the tie still remains, the team that has the competitor with the fewest misses at the height last cleared shall be awarded the higher place.
  - iii. If the tie still remains, the team that has the competitor **tied for the best performance** with the lowest total number of unsuccessful trials throughout the competition shall be awarded the higher place.
  - iv. If the tie still remains, the team with the lowest total of unsuccessful trials throughout the competition shall be awarded the higher place.
  - v. If a, b, c, or d fail to break the tie, the result remains a tie.
- C. In meets with limited entries, in the discus, long jump and shot put, the games committee may allow only four trials with no final trials as specified in Rule 6-2-7.

### Scratch or Exhibition Competition

"Scratch" or "exhibition" running is not permitted under OHSAA Bylaws and results in the disqualification of athletes so involved. When a student participates in scheduled track and field competition, participation limitations do apply. **EXCEPTION:** The OHSAA Board of Directors may authorize competition in events within specific sports in order to accommodate students with disabilities without affecting team scoring in those sports.

As has been indicated, no school, coach, athletic administrator or any other individual may change the rules by mutual agreement. Officials do not have the authority to waive the rules. **Nor is it an official's responsibility to interpret eligibility rules or keep track of entry limitations.** In addition, only a student enrolled in one of the competing schools and eligible in all respects (age, grades, semesters, transfer status, etc.) is permitted to participate in interscholastic track and field meets. OHSAA Bylaw 10-2-1 provides that the meet shall be forfeited if an ineligible person competes.

### Implements Used in Field Events

All rules relative to safety in the field events must be strictly adhered to. In addition, in those events in which implements must be weighed and gauged or certified as legal (shot put and discus), once those implements are certified, competitors may not remove them until the competition has concluded. **Only legal implements, as inspected by the implement inspector, shall be used IN WARM-UPS AND COMPETITION (Rule 3-19-2).** Per NFHS Rule, athletes may not use implements that are less than the minimum specifications or exceed the maximum specifications (i.e., college implements) during practice since **ONLY NFHS legal and approved implements are acceptable.**

The use of the term “common implements” means that the games committee has determined that competitors may use only those implements provided by the competition site. In all other circumstances, competitors may provide their own implements that shall be determined to be legal as mandated by the games committee in accordance with NFHS rules. No official has the authority to compel an athlete to share his or her implement with another competitor. **Rule 6-2-10a-** allows for an additional trial when an implement breaks and becomes non-compliant during competition due to no fault of the competitor.

In the pole vault, per Ohio modification, the Head Vault official, provided that he presently holds a verified and valid OHSA track and field officiating permit, as well as the field referee or head field judge, may verify the legality of poles.

**Pole Vault Verification** - NFHS Rule 6-5-3 requires that prior to competition the coach must verify that each of that school’s pole vaulters and poles meet the requirements specified in the article that pertains to protecting the safety of the vaulter. Each state association is authorized to determine its own procedure regarding coach’s verification. For several years, Ohio has used a procedure requiring the coach to stipulate to the head pole vault event judge the weight of each vaulter and the pole rating of each pole submitted for competition for each vaulter. See Section 19 for a sample document that fulfills this requirement. **Each school that conducts the pole vault event shall adopt this form or develop its own form to maintain compliance with this important rule.**

### Use of Infield Areas during a Track Meet

To ensure ongoing safety & fairness, the use of infield areas for warmups, coaching or congregating is **strictly prohibited during the tournaments!** Sites must provide coaching boxes for coaches at any field events located in the infield area. **It is strongly recommended that this be followed during the regular season.**

## **Safety & Procedure In Field Events**

Data on injuries in track and field indicate that the field events represent the greatest risk to the student athlete as well as to officials and spectators who may be in the area of an event. The following items are required of all event judges who are supervising competition in the field events. In addition, coaches and contest administrators shall make note of these items and instruct student-athletes about the safety protocol for these events in practice as well as all competitions.

- Be certain the competition area is properly prepared and ready for warm-ups. Remember, warm-ups are not permitted unless supervised by an event official or the athlete’s coach.
- Prior to the event, review the assignments of judges and other workers.

- Inspect the jumping and vaulting areas, making sure all hard and unyielding surfaces around high jump/pole vault landing pads are properly padded, non-metal cross bars are being used and vaulting standards are securely fastened.
- Use traffic control ropes, flags or fences around the competition area.
- Keep the competition area clear of all non-participants.
- Keep competitors out of the impact area during warm-ups and competition.
- Implements shall be carried out of the landing sector by an official and then carried by the competitor to the waiting area.
- During the competition, call competitors “up,” “on-deck” and “on-hold”; utilize “alive” when needed.
- Rules 6-4-3, 6-5-2 - It is not a foul if the competitor is not under control before legally exiting the circle after the implement has landed.
- Ensure that the competitor has not left the circle before the implement has landed. Also remember that the event judge no longer calls "mark" when an implement has landed and there has been no foul by the competitor. It is acceptable for the official to use audible communication with sector officials.
- Use a white flag to indicate a fair trial and a red flag to indicate a foul after the competitor has left the circle or the long jump/pole vault pit.
- At the conclusion of each event, permit no practice, have all implements removed from the area and place a traffic cone in a position to indicate the area is closed.
- Remember, warming up without a coach or an event official at the venue shall lead to a warning and, if repeated, disqualification from the event. If the incident reoccurs, the athlete shall be disqualified from the competition and considered ejected from the meet for unsporting conduct. Such disqualification shall require a two-meet denial of participation in accordance with OHSA sports regulations.

## Seated Athlete Guidelines

Please review the seated athlete guide for all information related to seated events. It can be found on the OHSA Track & Field Webpage or by clicking [HERE](#).

## Uniform Regulations

A brief video providing uniform guidance can be found on the OHSA Track & Field Webpage or by clicking [HERE](#). The below is not a representation of all NFHS uniform rules and regulation, rather a highlight of the most asked topics. Additional uniform regulations can be found in the NFHS Rule Book that was provided to your school.

## Shoes

The rules require all track and field competitors to wear on both feet shoes with an upper portion and a definitely recognizable sole and heel. The shoes must be fastened securely to the foot with laces, zippers, Velcro or other closures. Slippers and socks do not meet the rule requirements.

## Removal of Any Part of the Team Uniform

Excluding shoes, while in the area of competition as defined by the games committee, is illegal. This shall lead to a warning and if repeated, to disqualification from the event. If the incident recurs, the contestant will be disqualified from further competition in the meet. (OHSAA ejection policy would apply in this case!)

## Uniform Tops/One-Piece Uniforms

Each athlete must wear a full-length track uniform top or a one-piece uniform issued or approved by the school. Track tops must be full-length (i.e., either tucked into the bottoms or hanging BELOW the waistband of the bottoms when the athlete is standing erect). Shirts are not required to be tucked in unless they obscure a hip number. Bare midriff tops are not allowed. The top shall not be knotted or have a knot-like protrusion. Numbers are no longer required on the back of the uniform top.

## Uniform Bottoms/One-Piece Uniform

Each athlete shall wear track bottoms and/or a one-piece uniform issued or approved by the school. The loose-fitting boxer-style shorts are permitted for boys and girls. The waistband of a competitor's bottom can be rolled but must be worn above the waist as per Rule 4-3-1b4.

## Legal Items on School Uniforms

School identification on the tops and/or bottoms and one-piece uniform; athlete's name on the top of the one-piece or two-piece uniform; a single manufacturer's logo/trade name, no more than 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2 ¼ inches on each item of apparel. **NOTE: New in 2022, Rule 4-3-1 now permits logos larger than 2 ¼ or multiple logos on the waistband of a uniform bottom ONLY.** The American flag, not exceeding 2 x 3 in permitted on EACH item of uniform; one commemorative/ memorial patch is permitted per uniform subject to the same dimensions as a manufacturer's logo.

## Uniform Numbers

Uniform numbers are no longer required on the back of contestants' uniforms. It is **NOT** a uniform violation if some members of team have numbers and some do not granted all other aspects of the uniform rule are met.

## Visible Undergarments

Any visible undergarment worn under the uniform top and/or bottom is now considered a foundation garment. FOUNDATION GARMENTS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO LOGO/TRADEMARK/REFERENCE OR COLOR RESTRICTIONS (Rule 4-3-1b7). Visible items worn under both the tops and the bottoms of a uniform do not have to be the same color.

## Misc. Uniform Topics

Headgear, headbands, socks and shoes are not part of the competitors' uniforms and therefore **DO NOT** need to match.

## Additional Restrictions for Relay Races and Cross Country Competition

**Each team member shall wear the same color and design of school uniform, although the length of the top, bottom or one-piece uniform may vary.** Any visible undergarment worn under the uniform top and/or bottom is now considered a foundation garment. **FOUNDATION GARMENTS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO**

**LOGO/TRADEMARK/REFERENCE OR COLOR RESTRICTIONS (Rule 4-3-1b7).** Visible garments worn under the top/one-piece uniform and/or the bottom/one-piece uniform do not have to be the same color. If worn by more than one team member, that apparel does not need to be the same color nor necessarily the same length.

NFHS Rule 4-3-2: All relay and cross country team members must wear uniforms clearly indicating, through predominant color, school logo and color combination of all outer garments worn as a uniform, that members are from the same team. The official should be able to observe that all members are from the same team. For examples of legal and illegal uniforms, please refer to the state rules interpretation meeting. Manufacturer logos do not need to match.

### Headgear, Hair Control Devices & Headbands

Hats, caps and headbands that are; not offensive or unsporting, not abrasive or hard, properly secured, and do not pose a danger to themselves or other competitors **are allowed**. The referee may ask a competitor to remove a hat, cap or headband if it is not properly secured, if it poses a danger to the competitor/other competitors, or if it could damage equipment. The referee has the authority to decide what **is safe**.

Section 1. Competitors may wear a Navy Watch-Style knit cap.

Section 2. Competitors may not wear a hat with a bill.

Section 3. Competitors may wear a headband with or without ear protectors, provided the headband is properly secured to the head and does not interfere with another. The headband does not need to be worn as the manufacturer intended and may include decoration.

Section 4. Pole vaulters are permitted to wear helmets and safety headgear.

Hair control devices and/or hair accessories are permitted. Bandanas, pre-wrap, or other items not intended to be used as headbands or hair control devices **are legal** as long as they are not offensive or unsporting, not abrasive or hard, properly secured, and do not pose a danger to themselves or another competitor.

### Jewelry

**The prohibition of wearing jewelry has been removed from the rules for track and field and cross country competitions.** The referee may ask a competitor to remove an accessory if it is not properly secured, if it poses a danger to the competitor, or if it could damage equipment.

### Wristwatch

A wristwatch, secured to the person, may be worn in competition. While the wearing of a GPS or Smart Watch is **not** prohibited; the use of use GPS and electronic communication on the watch is prohibited per NFHS Rule 4-6-5.

### Religious Apparel

Any athlete who presents that they need to wear headgear, skirts, pants, etc. for religious purposes **MUST** be allowed to participate without delay. No waiver is needed for the wearing of any religious items regardless of if it complies with uniform rules in NFHS Rule 4. Garments worn for religious reasons (e.g. dark skirts or pants) do not need to match the color and design of uniforms worn by other relay/cross country team members. This regulation is both a OHSAA GSR and Ohio Law.



## 2024 NFHS Rule Changes

**3-8-1** — As technology continues to evolve in the sport of track and field and cross country, not all Fully Automated Timing systems require separate operators and evaluators. The change gives the Games Committee and meet management the ability to set timing official requirements for each individual meet.

**4-2-1 NOTE (NEW)** — This change gives state associations the flexibility to modify the number of permitted events for each athlete beyond four events, provided it does not exceed six events.

**5-3-1, 9-4-1 (NEW)** — With the number of varying track sizes in the high school space the change clarifies that all track staggers are dependent on the geometry of each individual track, and a competent surveyor should determine the lane staggers.

**5-7-4c, d NOTE (NEW); 8-4-4 NOTE 2 (NEW)** — This change provides a clear definition of a false start and how it should be consistently officiated. Extraneous motion before the device is fired does not necessarily require a false start to be charged unless the runner leaves their mark with hand or foot after the set command or leaves their mark with a forward motion without the starting device being fired.

**5-14-1, 2** — The rules change offers clearer guidance to officials and umpires officiating hurdle events and that if a hurdle is displaced by hand this is an infraction.

**6-2-2d (NEW)** — This clarifies for officials and event judges that in the vertical jumps when a competitor enters for the first time, at any height and no matter the number of competitors left, this competitor is only permitted one minute for their attempt. **6-3-2b** — The addition offers guidance to officials when two or more tied competitors withdraw from the competition/jump-off at the same time.

**6-3-2b NOTES (NEW)** — The new note explains that an athlete withdrawing from a jumpoff concedes the higher place but does not negate the performance in the event nor is it unsporting to simply withdraw in this scenario. The addition helps explain how to officiate these scenarios.

**6-4-1, 6-5-1, 6-6-1** — The rules change offers flexibility to athletes in throws events to apply tape to their fingers provided the fingers are not taped together and all fingers can move independently. Additionally, it permits athletes to wear a wrist wrap as long as there are no artificial aids within the wrap such as hard plastic pieces to keep the wrist stiff.

**8-1, 8-5** — The rules change clarifies the course layout for ease of use by meet managers and additionally reorganizes section on teams into articles for easier reading.

**9-6-1 (NEW)** — The rules change offers guidance on the relay exchange zone in indoor track and field with the varying sizes of indoor tracks across the country.

**Cases related to the 2024 NFHS Rule Changes can be found on page 3 of the 2024 NFHS Case Book and on Page 4 of the 2024 NFHS Rule Book.**

## 2024 NFHS Points of Emphasis

### Fair Starts

It is the starter's responsibility to ensure a fair and legal start and anticipate problems. The interval between the set command and the firing of the starting device should be approximately two seconds. After a starter gives the order "set," if any competitor is in motion, the starter shall not fire the starting device. Firing the starting device too soon doesn't allow athletes to get ready, and firing the starting device too slow also creates a situation of unfairness.

Starters may for any reason cancel a start by directing all competitors to "Stand Up." The following are some of the reasons that a starter may cancel a start in races with legs of less than 800 meters:

- Noise at the start line,
- Starting block problem,
- Obstruction on the track,
- Slow athlete getting set,
- Misfire of starting pistol,
- Hands on the line,
- Extraneous movement after the set command. In distance races the following are some of the reasons that a starter could halt or recall the start.
- Runners not steady,
- Toes on the line,
- Failure to come to the line in a timely manner,
- Impeding a position of another athlete,
- Fall during first 100 meters due to contact.

Starters play a huge role in fair, consistent and legal starts for student-athletes across all events.

### Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship rules help officials, parents, coaches, and student-athletes develop and reinforce values that apply to the development of the whole person. Respect for others, honesty, fair play, learning, and understanding the rules are critical life skills that, when practiced, will enhance any individual's character. The absence of good sportsmanship jeopardizes one of the fundamental principles of participation in education-based athletics and complicates the team-building process. A sportsmanship priority is keeping winning and losing in perspective. Understanding that losing with dignity is an important lesson, everyone must learn and practice. A collaborative, working relationship should be a priority between officials, game administration, coaches, and student-athletes to promote good sportsmanship during a track meet. This includes treating people with respect and using appropriate language, actions, and language that build people up and values each person.

It is critical to remember that winning means you were the best version of yourself that day. The beauty of track and field is that one constantly tests themselves against one's best time, height, or distance. Continual improvement is a hallmark of successful student-athletes, programs, teams, and coaches. This improvement also involves positive sporting behavior, a fundamental ingredient of education-based high school sports.

## NFHS Permitted State Adoptions from Ohio (Track & Field and Cross Country)

The OHSA has maintained a stance of being “100% compliant” with NFHS Track & Field Rules. 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 contest from state to state. These permitted track & field “State Adoptions,” and Ohio’s decision on the adoptions are as follows:

### High School Modifications

<b>Rule</b>	<b>Modification</b>
Rule 1-3	Javelin is not permitted in Ohio
Rule 3-2-3a	In dual, triangular, or quad meets, the referee/starter is required to be a Class 1 registered official; In meets involving 5 or more schools, the referee must be a Class 1 registered official
Rule 3-2-6	Conferences may not adopt special rules for interrupted events
Rule 3-2-1 3-2-4k 3-5	No Jury of Appeals in Ohio
Rule 3-4-1	Referee MUST be Class 1 registered official for high school meets (recommended for middle school)
Rule 4-1-3	Field event contestants must report before the start of their flight. For events run as “open pit” the start of their flight is the start of competition.
Rule 4-2-2	PENALTY: When athletes exceed the participation limitation, the team is penalized as if they had used an ineligible athlete
Rule 4-2-4	OHSA has established limitations as described in the Track and Field Manual. Schools and Conferences may not put aside these event entry limitations.
Rule 4-2-4-d	Teams CANNOT designate in advance which team will score in relays; however, only one team from each school may score
Rule 4-3-1a3	Spikes are limited to ½” unless the games committee stipulates a shorter length.
Rule 4-3	Head gear may be worn, including but not limited to headbands (with or without sequins) and/or ear covers and navy watch style caps.
Rule 5-2-4	In TOURNAMENT competition, the 4x400 meter relay shall start using a 3-turn stagger, the 4x800 relay and the 800 meter run shall use a 2-turn stagger, and the 1600 and 3200 meter run shall use a 1-turn stagger
Rule 5-8-2	Finish line aids are NOT permitted
Rule 6-2-10	In “team field events,” each athlete participating in horizontal events shall get 4 attempts with no finals

Rule	Modification
Rule 6-3-2b	Jump offs for qualifying places in tournaments are NOT tie breakers, and those involved in the jump off shall be allowed a reasonable warm-up after the competition is completed and before the jump off begins. If the tie for the qualifying position(s) is KNOWN to exist before the bar is raised to compete for higher places, those tied for the qualifying place(s) shall be allowed to make their fourth attempt before the bar is raised.
Rules 6-8-23 & 6-2-13a	In the event of a broken pole, competitors are allowed one run through without a bar with a replacement pole
Rule 6-8-17	The head pole vault judge who holds a valid OHSAA T&F officiating permit may be designated to certify the legality of poles
Rule 7-2-1	The 5,000M is an allowable special event per the regulations listed in this document.
Rule -8-2-3	The OHSAA has accepted modified scoring.

### Middle School Modifications

Order/Events: A revised order of events is specified in this manual. This revised order shall be used unless schools otherwise agree.

## Clarification On Appeals

NFHS Rule 3-5-1 stipulates that a Jury of Appeals, **if appointed**, shall serve as the final board of appeals. When the NFHS changed this rule in 1999 and designated the Jury of Appeals as the final arbiter of all appeals with authority to overrule the referee, the OHSAA determined that no Jury of Appeals should be appointed in any contests sponsored by the member schools of the OHSAA in the sports of Cross Country and Track and Field. **OHSAA Bylaws requires that the decisions of the contest officials (in Cross Country and Track and Field, the Referee) are final.**

In OHSAA Tournament competition and many invitational tournaments, a Games Committee may be appointed. The Referee always retains the option to consult with members of the Games Committee as well as Head Finish Evaluators utilizing fully automatic timing systems in rendering decisions. By rule, when the situation under consideration is not specifically covered by the NFHS rules, the Referee may also confer with the Head Umpire and/or the Head Field Referee or a Head Event Judge.

Regarding perceived or real failure of the **approved** F.A.T. systems (primary and all back-up systems), including microchips in the Cross Country event, the referee has the authority to hold up the official results until the correct results can be ascertained from either the primary system or the back-up system(s). **This is applicable whether an appeal has been lodged or not.**

Appeals concerning correction of errors that result from a failure of the F.A.T. system or systems, a misapplication of the rules or failure to follow the prescribed conditions of competition shall be filed within 30 minutes after results have been posted or made official. **However, it is not necessary for an appeal to be filed** if, in the opinion of the referee or other contest officials, there has been an error in any of these situations, including but not limited to a failure of the F.A.T. system, which results in the misplacement of student-athletes. The primary responsibility of officials is to ensure fair competition and to correct errors whenever

possible. To this end, it is required that the referee remains at the competition site for at least 30 minutes after the posting or announcement of the results.

## Athletic Districts

Representation to the regional tournament (the number of Regional ‘qualifiers’) from district winners is determined by a formula based upon the number of teams participating in the previous year’s tournament. 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.

Central District: [www.ohsaa.org/cdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/cdab)

East District: [www.ohsaa.org/edab](http://www.ohsaa.org/edab)

Northeast District: [www.ohsaa.org/nedab](http://www.ohsaa.org/nedab)

Northwest District: [www.ohsaa.org/nwdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/nwdab)

Southeast District: [www.ohsaa.org/sedab](http://www.ohsaa.org/sedab)

Southwest District: [www.ohsaa.org/swdab](http://www.ohsaa.org/swdab)



## Ejection Procedures

**ALL ejections REQUIRE a report to be completed and filed with the OHSAA.**

- **Ejection Reports are completed and submitted electronically. This automatically sends the report to the school.**
- In the event of a coach or player ejection, he/she is ejected from ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection PLUS all contests at all levels until two regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level of the ejection or disqualification. Ejected coaches must also pay a \$100.00 fine and complete the National Federation of State High School Association’s (NFHS) “Teaching and Modeling Behavior” online course within 30 days of the ejection. The responsibility for compliance rests with the school’s administration.
- Ejected **COACHES** are required to LEAVE the premises immediately. If no assistant coach is present, the game is over and the score stands ‘as is’.
- Ejected **PLAYERS** are to remain in the BENCH AREA under the supervision of the coach.
- As of 2001 – Any player or coach ejected for fighting is ejected from ALL GAMES for the remainder of the day of the ejection and will be ineligible for all contests at all levels until **FOUR** regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level as the ejection or disqualification.
- **ALL EJECTIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT PERMITTED TO BE APPEALED** per the OHSAA’s Board of Directors.
- Though every ejection has its own story, do not call the OHSAA office asking for an appeal of the ejection. It will not and cannot be overturned. The circumstances surrounding the ejection can and should be expressed on the “School Response Form” that will be received by the school after the ejection occurs.

## General Message On Health & Safety

The safety of our student-athletes is of utmost concern at all times. Information regarding the following important topics can be found at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org) and at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org):

- Heat Stress and Athletic Participation
- Recommendations for Hydration to Prevent Heat Illness
- Suggested Guidelines for Management of Head Trauma in Sports
- Communicable Disease Procedures (can also be found in the NFHS 2008-09 Rules Book)
- Disordered Eating
- Information on Nutritional Supplements
- Links to the following sites:
  - Joint Advisory Committee on Sports Medicine
  - Ohio Athletic Trainers Association
  - American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
  - Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth
  - National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA)
  - Gatorade Sports Science Institute News

### Medical Hardware

On the advice of the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (see [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)), the following guidelines are provided:

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 its deliberations on this issue, the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee of the NFHS could find no medical reason to authorize the wearing of these appliances during competition.

However, in the event that a physician requires a student-athlete to wear a therapeutic device during competition, such medical necessity shall be specified in writing and signed by the prescribing physician, and the device shall be padded and securely attached to the player's body underneath the uniform. The medical statement shall be shown to the head contest official prior to the athlete's being permitted to participate.



# Concussion Management

## Implementation of State Law and NFHS Playing Rules Related to 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.

## 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 <http://ohsaa.org/medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.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.

### **Contest Officials Requirements**

New legislation signed into law by the Governor provides that no school “shall permit” an individual to referee interscholastic athletic contests unless the individual holds a Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or has successfully completed within the last three years a training program in concussion recognition. Therefore, all OHSAA licensed officials shall possess either a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or show evidence of completing an approved online concussion education course as stipulated in the section entitled Approved Online Concussion Education Courses. This course is valid for three years from the date of completion.

### **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.

### **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.)

### **OHSAA Concussion Authorization to Reenter Form**

<https://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Sports-Medicine/AuthorizationToReenter.pdf>

### **OHSAA Concussion Report Form**

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

## Communicable Disease Procedure

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 basketball 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.

For more information, go to the OHSAA's website at: <https://www.ohsaa.org/communicablediseases>

# Lightning & Weather

## Recognition

Coaches, certified athletic trainers, athletes and administrators should be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately 2-to-3 miles, anytime that lightning can be seen or thunder 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. A 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.

## 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 shall be announced and posted at all athletic venues.
- **Thirty-minute rule** – Once lightning has been recognized, competition shall not be resumed until at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard to begin or resume a contest. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, this would allow the storm to move 10-to-12 miles away from the area and significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. **Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count should reset the clock, and another count should begin.**

# Sportsmanship

As we prepare for the upcoming seasons, the Ohio High School Athletic Association (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 officials and coaches conduct themselves prior to, during and following a contest unquestionably impacts the behavior of others who may be involved.

The OHSAA has joined the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) in its quest to improve sportsmanship, ethics and integrity. We are involved in an ongoing campaign in every sport to do just that. Printed below is the mission statement of the NFHS concerning sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity. Please take the time to read and digest this statement and then carefully consider your impact upon students, officials, coaches, and fans. Thank you and have a great season!

The Ohio High School Athletic Association challenges all of us in the Track community to take positive steps toward the goal of attaining the high ideal of good sportsmanship. It is the responsibility of each of us to serve as a positive role model and set high expectations for others.

## The OAT&CCC and Sportsmanship

The Ohio Association of Track & Cross Country Coaches stands tall in its commitment to good sportsmanship. The school-based experience is one that affords tremendous opportunities to student-athletes that they will remember for a lifetime. Those experiences are dependent on the role model the head coach provides. The OAT&CCC encourages all coaches to exhibit behavior that serves as a role model for the student-athletes we serve. In conjunction with the OHSAA's Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity (SEI) Committee, the OAT&CCC annually selects recipients of the SEI Award that is recognized at the state tournament.

## The Administrator's Role in Sportsmanship

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. Coaches and Officials are responsible for promoting sportsmanship and positive behavior on the field. 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!

## The Coach's Role in Sportsmanship

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 participants!*** 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.

It is difficult to develop a great pitcher, a great catcher or a great outfielder. That is true. However, your greatest challenge is to develop mature young adults who will become great citizens and role models in your community.

## The Student-Athlete's Role in Sportsmanship

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.

## The Official's Role in Sportsmanship

Your job is not an easy one, but the official must be aware that they are an important component in the educational development of students. To carry out this responsibility, you must:

- Know the rules and mechanics of our sport and the philosophy behind them.
- Get fit and stay fit. An official with all of the rules and mechanics knowledge and people skills in the world does no good if he or she cannot physically keep up with play.
- Maintain professional and ethical relationships with athletic administrators, especially in the area of fulfilling game contracts.
- Work cooperatively with fellow officials during games and within the referees' association to improve members' performances.
- Maintain at all times and when interacting with all participants, an attitude of civility and professionalism.

- Practice effective preventive officiating as much as possible before, during, and after a game. The quiet word, proper signals, timely verbal instructions, a simple thank-you to a player for avoiding an unsporting act, and well-thought-out pre-game conferences with the teams and other game officials will result in an improvement of sportsmanship by eliminating the chance for things to go wrong.

The National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) conducted a survey of 550 sports officials and asked “*what is the number-one problem in our games today?*” Not too surprising, the number one response was “Poor Sportsmanship.” As a result, the NASO brought together some of the best and brightest in youth, high school, collegiate and pro sports to examine the issue and explore the official’s role in promoting positive on-field behavior. The results were published in the book at the right and identified 3 critical ideas:

1. What exactly is at Stake
2. What is Expected of Officials, and,
3. What steps need to be taken

As a result, the following are important results of this study and publication:

1. 65% of respondents indicated their respective associations do not do *enough* to help improve sportsmanship.
2. 89% of officials responding consider themselves PARTNERS with players, coaches and administrators in improving sportsmanship.
3. 54% of officials responding indicated they felt they DO have the training, authority and knowledge to make an impact.

### Sportsmanship for Parents

The NFHS has made a NO COST online course available to PARENTS to help them understand their role in their son/daughter’s athletic career. The course is titled “The Role of the Parent in Sports” and is easily accessible through the “Learning Center” at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com). And, again, it is FREE and a good tool for coaches to use in dealing with parents.

### Conclusion

Good sportsmanship is everyone’s responsibility. It is the essence of interscholastic athletics. Remember, some may question an official’s call or a coach’s substitution, but no one can question the value of good sportsmanship.



OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
4080 Roselea Place, Columbus, Ohio 43214  
(p) 614.267.2502  
(f) 614.267.1677  
Web site: [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)

**OHSAA TRACK AND FIELD COACH'S VERIFICATION OF SPORTING  
CONDUCT/LEGAL EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS  
FOR USE IN REGULAR SEASON COMPETITION**

SCHOOL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DIVISION \_\_\_\_\_ BOYS \_\_\_\_\_ GIRLS \_\_\_\_\_

HEAD COACH'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**OHSAA standards require contest officials to enforce all NFHS rules relating to sporting conduct, ethical behavior and legal uniforms and equipment. Acts that intend to demean opposing competitors, team members, spectators and officials are not in keeping with the ideals of interscholastic athletics and will not be tolerated. Let this competition reflect mutual respect!**

NFHS track and field and cross-country rules require the referee to meet with the head coach and captains to explain the expectations of good sporting conduct throughout this competition. In addition, the head coach is responsible for verifying to the referee/starter that all competitors are properly equipped (legal uniforms, legal equipment) in compliance with NFHS rules.

In all OHSAA tournament competition and in any multi-team or invitational competition that would make it difficult for the referee to meet personally with all coaches and captains, all coaches shall agree to the following:

**Coach's Verification**

I certify to the tournament referee that all contestants under my supervision are legally equipped, attired in legal uniforms and free of all dangerous jewelry in accordance with NFHS rules. I further certify that all student-athletes and other team personnel have been advised of their responsibilities relative to good sporting conduct during this competition. In addition, I understand and accept responsibility for adhering to the OHSAA participation limitation of four events per individual athlete per tournament contest.

Coach's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to area designated by the meet officials or games committee.



Ohio High School Athletic Association  
4080 Roselea Place  
Columbus, Ohio 43214  
(p) 614.267.2502  
(f) 614.267.1677  
Web Site: [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)

**SAMPLE POLE VAULT CERTIFICATION FORM**

Directions: Please complete all blanks and sign. This form shall be handed to the head pole vault official when the vaulter(s) report. Presenting an improperly completed form or if no form is presented will result in the vaulter(s) being excluded from competition. PLEASE PRINT. Include first and last name.

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPETITOR	NUMBER	VAULTER'S WEIGHT	POLE RATING(S)

\_\_\_\_\_  
COACH'S SIGNATURE



# Coaches Code Of Ethics

## From the NFHS Track & Field 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.

## Professionalism

Your professionalism is of the utmost importance. Your athletes and fans will follow your lead. If you are respectful of the game and the officials, your athletes and fans are more likely to do the same. If you are disrespectful of the game and the officials, it will be reflected in the words and actions of your athletes and fans. Officials aren't perfect and mistakes will be made, but it is all part of the learning process for our young student-athletes. So please take those disappointments and turn them into positive learning experiences. What you permit, you promote.

