

# NFHS Track and Field Rule Changes

February, 2009

## *Uniforms*

- Make sure that your athletes are in legal uniforms.
- Athletes may not compete in warm-up outfits—i.e. wind pants, sweat pants, etc.

## *Electronic Devices and Wrist Watches*

- Watches are prohibited in all competition areas.
- Electronic communication devices are also prohibited from competition areas.
- Please make sure that your athletes are aware.

## **09-10 Rule Changes**

**3-9-2:** Specifies that for gun starts only a closed barreled starter's pistol may be used by the starter.

**Rationale:** It is not appropriate to use a live weapon at an educational event and in most cases state law prohibits firearms on school grounds and school events. The starter's pistol is adequate to produce the desired result for the starting of a race.

**3-9-6:** When fully automatic timing (FAT) is used, timing shall be recorded in one one-hundredths of a second and all ties for place finishes and/or determining qualifiers for a subsequent round shall be broken by using timing to one one-thousandths of a second if the system allows.

**Rationale:** Fully automated timing is considered accurate and reliable enough to use 1/1000<sup>th</sup> to break ties and advance competitors to subsequent rounds of competition and is therefore reliable and accurate enough to break ties to determine final places or lane assignments.

**3-9-9 new:** Indoor and outdoor meets using fully automatic timing (FAT) may be started by a .32 or .22 caliber starter's pistol (closed barrel) or electronic, unless devised for record purposes.

**Rationale:** The FAT systems do not require the noise of a .32 caliber, and a .22 caliber is clearly heard by competitors and provides adequate smoke for manual timing.

**6-4-9c, 6-5-9c:** A competitor in the throwing events may enter and exit the circle without a foul providing it occurs within the time allowed for the trial and before the competitor starts his/her attempt beginning with the pause.

**Rationale:** The competitor should be able to exit the circle and return to dry his/her hands, clean his/her shoes, wipe off the throwing implement etc. without penalty providing the throw is completed within the allotted time which begins when the competitor is called "up."

## **Point of Emphasis— Safety and Risk Minimization**

- \* Coaching Box
- \* Pole Vault
- \* Games Committee Responsibilities
- \* Contestant/Competitor

**ILLINOIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

1015 Maple Hill Rd.  
Bloomington, IL 61704

Phone: 309-829-0114  
Fax: 309-829-0625  
E-mail: [iesa@iesa.org](mailto:iesa@iesa.org)

*The IESA does have several exceptions to NFHS rules. Those exceptions are included in the Track and Field Terms and Conditions. Please make sure that you are aware of these exceptions.*

## **NFHS Rule Changes (cont.)**

**3-2-4g New NOTE:** NOTE: All areas designated for the coaches to observe and confer with competitors shall be clearly identified and marked by the host meet management.

**Rationale:** The games committee has the authority to “designate specific areas for coaches to observe and confer with competitors.” The rules now give further instructions regarding the requirement for these areas to be clearly identified and marked by the host meet management. Coaching boxes are established for a specific purpose, to assist competitors by way of better communication with their coaches, however, proper location and identification are important.

**3-2-7:** Video replay or television monitoring equipment, other than the official equipment approved by the games committee prior to the start of competition, shall not be used to make decisions related to the meet.

**Rationale:** The current rule allows for the use of video replay or television monitoring equipment to be used to make decisions related to the meet only if declared official and approved by the games committee. Now the determination to approve such equipment must be made prior to the start of competition eliminating electronic images and video from being presented to meet officials for approval after competition begins.

**3-17-2:** ...and finish. In all races that require a wind reading, the anemometer shall be set 50 meters from the finish line, and for the long jump and triple jump, 20 meters from the foul line. It shall face...

**Rationale:** This change makes more specific the location of the anemometer for all events requiring wind readings. In the horizontal jumps, where competitors have a choice of take-off boards, the anemometer will remain at 20 meters from the foul line regardless of choice. The anemometer distance will be measured from the common take-off board, not the alternate choice board. The language regarding the 200 meter dash is out of date and no longer needed.

**4-5-8e:** e. Communicating with a competitor through the use of any device.

**Rationale:** This rule change broadens the description of devices that cannot be used to communicate with competitor. As technology evolves new devices will be developed. The rule now prohibits communication with “any” device and eliminates the need for new language to constantly address new devices.

**5-6-3:** All heats and/or sections shall use the same starting procedure.

**Rationale:** In order for all competitors to receive an equal opportunity in a running event, the starting procedure for the event shall be the same for all heats and/or sections. This change does not prohibit sub-varsity heats and/or sections from using an alternate starting procedure to accommodate expanded participation, as determined by the state association or individual school.

**5-13-2b:** b. Knocks down any hurdle by hand

**Rationale:** The word “deliberately” has been deleted from this rule. The official no longer needs to determine the intent of the competitor. The word “foot” has also been deleted from the rule. The deletion of the word “foot” does not remove the requirement that hurdlers must attempt to clear each hurdle.

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## **NFHS Rule Changes (cont.)**

**6-5-5:** A 34.92-degree sector shall be marked on the ground. Radial lines 2 inches (5 centimeters) wide shall extend from the center of the circle to form an area into which legal puts shall be made. The inside edges of these lines shall mark the sector, and the lines shall be placed equidistance from the ends of the stopboard.

**Rationale:** The rule was changed to correct a statement within the rule regarding the position of the sector lines in reference to the stopboard. With the 34.92-degree sector the radial lines no longer extend from the extremities of the stopboard.

**7-2-11 New NOTE:** NOTE: A bungee cord manufactured for use in the high jump and pole vault may be used during warm-ups, as approved by the games committee.

**Rationale:** The use of a bungee cord/elastic crossbar in the pole vault during warm-ups has previously not been allowed. A bungee cord/elastic crossbar may now be used during warm-ups for both the high jump and the pole vault. If used, the bungee cord/elastic crossbar must be approved by the games committee and must be a bungee cord/elastic crossbar manufactured specifically for use in track and field for this purpose. A bungee cord/crossbar may only be used if the standards for the event are such that they accommodate the specific bungee cord/elastic crossbar approved for use by the games committee.

**7-4-6, 7-5-11 New NOTE:** NOTE: Effective January 1, 2013, the crossbar shall be circular. Square with beveled edges or triangular crossbars shall no longer be legal for competition.

**Rationale:** Crossbars are now being manufactured as circular cross bars. The January 1, 2013 effective date will allow for the replacement of current crossbars which are not circular.

**7-5-4:** A competitor shall not use a variable weight pole, a pole which is improperly marked, a pole rated below his/her weight, or any other equipment which is not legal during warm-up or competition.

**Rationale:** The reference to the use of a bungee cord during warm-ups has been removed. If used, the bungee cord must be approved by the games committee and must be a bungee cord manufactured specifically for use in track and field for this purpose. A bungee cord may only be used if the standards for the event are such that they accommodate the specific bungee cord approved for use by the games committee.

**7-5-29g:** Deleted letter g, "clears the crossbar with the uprights positioned incorrectly."

**Rationale:** A competitor who clears an attempt in the pole vault should not be responsible for the uprights not being properly positioned by the officials.

# NFHS Points of Emphasis

**1. COACHING BOX** - National Federation Track and Field rules give the games committee authority to “designate specific areas for coaches to observe and confer with competitors.” Implied with the authority to designate coaching areas, commonly referred to as coaching boxes, is also the authority to establish guidelines regarding who may occupy the coaching box, when the coaching box may be occupied, what equipment may be allowed in the coaching box and what activity may occur within a coaching box. When exercising its authority to establish a coaching box, the games committee should make all decisions regarding coaching boxes prior to any competition beginning. All coaches and officials should be informed in writing or by announcement which events have coaching boxes established and be informed regarding the guidelines in place for those coaching boxes. The coaching box should be clearly marked with a fence, rope or banners. Those permitted to occupy the coaching box, while the specific event is in progress, should be issued non-transferable credentials which must be displayed at all times. Coaches need to have a full understanding that having the privilege of occupying the coaching box does not negate any rules that limit the assistance a coach may offer a competitor during the competition.

**2. POLE VAULT** - The National Federation Track and Field Rules Committee places a high priority on risk minimization for pole vault competitors. Meet management is responsible for providing a landing system, standards and runway that meet the rule requirements. Coaches are responsible for their competitors having legal vaulting poles and that the competitor’s weight is at or below the manufacturer’s pole rating. Officials are required to inspect each pole to verify that the poles used are legal. The committee has reaffirmed the requirements of Rule 7-5-3 that etchings, serial numbers, etc. that may appear on poles shall not replace the requirement of the manufacturer’s pole rating in the minimum  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch marking in a contrasting color on each pole either above or within the required 1-inch circular band marking the top handhold position. In order to preserve the integrity of the event and reduce risk of injury of the pole vault competitor, no person involved in the event: meet management, coach or officials, can disregard any requirements of the rules dealing with the landing system, standards, runway, vaulting poles or vaulter. The committee will be diligent in gathering information from experimentation and recognized studies to make certain the pole vault rules afford reasonable risk minimization for competitors. The committee will continue to seek information regarding developing safety equipment.

**3. GAMES COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES** – The NFHS Track and Field rules give the games committee the authority to determine many aspects of the management and operation of a track and field meet. Games committees need to have an understanding of policies or procedures that may have been established by their respective state association office. The games committee does not have the authority to set aside or revise policies or procedures established by the state association. The games committee must understand that in having the authority to determine aspects of meet management and operation, the committee also has an obligation to be certain that those determinations are communicated to the coaches, officials and teams participating in the meet prior to the start of any competition. The games committees should not make determinations after the competition has begun unless necessary due to an unforeseen unusual situation(s). There are occasions when the games committees make determinations for events not being held on facilities under the direct control of the committee. In these instances, the games committee should communicate with the host facility to avoid making determinations that are contrary to policies and procedures of the host facility.

**4. CONTESTANT/COMPETITOR** – Coaches and officials need to have an understanding of the track and field rules, specifically Rule 4-1, “Competitors,” identifies the status of athletes in track and field competition as having reported for the event. The status of athletes, as either a contestant or competitor, directly affects the application of rules and the penalties for those rules. A thorough knowledge of Rule 4-5, “Disqualification” will better prepare coaches and officials to assist competitors in complying with track and field rules and avoiding disqualification. Coaches and officials should be aware of their state association philosophy regarding “preventive officiating” and within the rules, inform and assist competitors in a manner that will minimize disqualifications.