

David B. Eavenson Chapter Track Officials Guide to Officiating Track & Field Events for School Districts

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The following pages have been prepared to assist coaches and athletic directors with training workers at track and field meets both at the high school and junior high levels. Many local helpers are very experienced and extremely competent in the area of their assignment and are invaluable in helping to have meets proceed smoothly and fairly. We recognize, however, that almost all schools have times when they have to bring in new or untrained people to help with meets. We hope that you will be able to use this guide to give all officials a ready reference to the basic rules of all events. Please realize that this “Guide” attempts to reflect all current NFHS rules for the season listed. The current Rule Book and Case Book must always be the last word in how all events and meets are to be run. Any inconsistency in these brief notes must always defer to official NFHS publications.

Timing Rules and Principles

1. All non-automatic timing is done to .1 of a second accuracy. Any time over an even 10th must be rounded up (e.g. a reading of 55.51 is recorded as 55.6).
2. All FAT is done to .01 accuracy (hundredths). Ties may be broken by reading to the thousandths' place, but times should be recorded and reported to hundredths.
3. A head timer should be appointed. That person should check that all times are accurate and resolve any disputes over placing. Since handheld timing can vary from person to person, accurate “calling” of places should take precedence over comparison of times if times and places do not agree. The head timer should also use a whistle or other device to signal the starter.
4. Wherever one watch is used (per place or lane), it is official. If two watches are used, then the slower of the two times is official (do not average). If three watches are used, then the official time will be the one of any two watches that agree, or, if all watches are different, then the middle time will be official.
5. Watches should stop when a part of a runner's torso (not arms/legs) crosses the finish.

Relay Judging

A legal baton pass occurs when the baton is in the zone, even if the runner is not. Both runners may not simultaneously touch the baton while it is outside the zone. Please note that since the 2021 season, the baton may be legally passed in each leg of the 4x100 meter relay anywhere within the full 20 meter length of the marked zone PLUS what used to be the “acceleration zone.” In other words, an exchange can be made at any time in the full 30-meter area between the start of the former acceleration zone to the end of the regular zone marking.

Discus Throw

1. Competitors may be given a total of four throws or given three throws each then advance four (or one more person than places that are being scored) throwers in reverse order of performance for another final three throws.
2. Competitors have 60 seconds after being called to initiate a throw.
3. Chalk, spray or rosin may be used on the hands, but gloves are prohibited. Fingers and hands may be taped to cover an open wound - or individual fingers may be taped as long as they can move independently. Tape may be used on the wrist.
4. All legal throws that are in bounds should be measured. Ties for any place are broken by comparing 2nd best throws (or 3rd best if back-ups are still tied).
5. The lines marking the throwing sector are out of bounds.
6. In addition to throwing out of bounds, any of the following are considered a foul if the competitor:
 - a. After stepping into the circle, fails to pause before starting to throw;
 - b. After starting the attempt, touches anyplace outside the inner ring of the circle while making the throw and prior to exiting the circle [note – prior to assuming a starting position to initiate a throw, a thrower may exit the circle in any location then re-enter to begin the attempt if the time limit is not reached];
 - c. Hits the cage (or any object outside the sector) with the discus;
 - d. Leaves the circle before the implement has landed;
 - e. Does not leave out the back half of the circle;
 - f. Fails to initiate trial in 1 minute from being called.
7. All measurements will be taken to the nearest lesser full inch (no fractions). The reading should be taken from the inner edge of the circle with the tape pulled through the center of the circle.
8. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event should be given the option of taking throws at any time in any order and must return before other competitors finish. The competitor with the best throw in trials has the right to throw last.
9. Competitors may use only legal implements during warm-up.

Shot Put

1. Competitors may be given a total of four throws or given three throws each then advance four (or more person than places that are being scored) throwers in reverse order of performance for another final three throws.
2. Competitors have 60 seconds after being called to initiate a throw.
3. Chalk, spray or rosin may be used on the hands, but gloves are prohibited. Fingers and hands may be taped to cover an open wound - or individual fingers may be taped as long as they can move independently. Tape may be used on the wrist.
4. All legal throws that are in bounds should be measured. Ties for any place are broken by comparing 2nd best throws (or 3rd best if back-ups are still tied).
5. The lines marking the throwing sector are out of bounds.
6. In addition to throwing out of bounds, any of the following are considered a foul if the competitor:
 - a. After stepping into the circle, fails to pause before starting the put;
 - b. After starting the attempt, touches anyplace outside the inner ring of the circle while making the throw and prior to exiting the circle [note – prior to assuming a starting position to initiate a throw, a thrower may exit the circle in any location then re-enter to begin the attempt if the time limit is not reached];
 - c. Allows the shot to drop below the shoulder during the put attempt;
 - d. Touches the top or end of the stopboard before the put is marked (note: some throwers will do this purposely as part of throwing “etiquette” to signal that they don’t wish a throw to be marked);
 - e. Leaves the circle before the implement has landed;
 - f. Does not exit the back half of the circle;
 - g. Fails to initiate trial in 1 minute from being called.
 - h. Using a “cartwheel” style of approach to a throw.
7. All measurements will be taken to the nearest lesser 1/4-inch. The reading should be taken from the inner edge of the stopboard with the tape pulled through the center of the circle.
8. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event should be given the option of taking throws at any time in any order and must return before other competitors finish. The competitor with the best throw in trials has the right to throw last.
9. Competitors may use only legal implements during warm-up.

Javelin

1. Competitors may be given a total of four throws or given three throws each then advance four (or more person than places that are being scored) throwers in reverse order of performance for another final three throws.
2. Competitors have 60 seconds after being called to initiate a throw.
3. Chalk, spray or rosin may be used on the hands, but gloves are prohibited. Fingers and hands may be taped to cover an open wound - or individual fingers may be taped as long as they can move independently. Tape may be used on the wrist.
4. All legal throws that are in bounds should be measured. Ties for any place are broken by comparing 2nd best throws (or 3rd best if back-ups are still tied).
5. The lines marking the throwing sector are out of bounds.
6. In addition to throwing out of bounds, any of the following are considered a foul if the competitor:
 - a. Makes a 360-degree turn before the javelin is released;
 - b. Uses a delivery other than an overarm, above-the-shoulder motion of the throwing arm;
 - c. Fails to hold the javelin by the whipcord grip;
 - d. Touches on or over the runway lines or scratchline arc before the throw is marked (note: some throwers will do this purposely as part of throwing "etiquette" to signal that they don't wish a throw to be marked);
 - e. Fails to exit the runway behind the scratchline arc and the perpendicular side extensions after the javelin has landed;
 - f. Exits the runway before the implement has landed;
 - g. Fails to initiate trial in 1 minute from being called.
7. All measurements will be taken to the nearest lesser inch (no fractions). The reading should be taken from the inner edge of the scratchline arc with the tape pulled through the radius point of the scratchline arc. Measurement should be made from the nearest edge of the first point of contact made by the javelin. A javelin that lands flat should be marked from where the rear of the whipcord touches the ground.
8. Javelin throwers may use alternative footwear if meet management allows.
9. If a javelin breaks in the air it does not count as a trial.
10. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event should be given the option of taking throws at any time in any order and must return before other competitors finish. The competitor with the best throw in trials has the right to throw last.
11. Competitors may use only legal implements during warm-up.
12. Perpendicular lines exactly 2 feet 5 ½ inches (75 cms) long must extend from both sides of where the foul line intersects the runway side lines (see item 6e above).
13. Since the 2021 season, competitors are PROHIBITED from running backward from the foul line to measure or check their steps either during warmup or competition. A warning will be given for a first offense, and a competitor will be DQ'd from the event for a second offense, whether the warning occurred in that event or another event in the same meet. Warnings shall be reported immediately to the starter or referee.

Pole vault

1. Competitors have 60 seconds after being called to initiate a trial that is carried to completion. When 2 or 3 competitors are left, each will be allowed three (3) minutes. When one competitor only remains, he/she will be allowed five (5) minutes to initiate a jump. Competitors making consecutive trials have three (3) minutes. Jumpers entering the competition shall have 60 seconds.
2. A competitor may elect to pass a trial at any time by communicating to the event official prior to the clock being started for timing the jump.
3. Poles should be inspected prior to the competition and each vaulter must have his pole's rated weight checked against his verification form. Only properly printed weights in or above the band are acceptable (etched in numbers are not acceptable);
4. A competitor who has not entered the competition within 60 minutes from the first jump shall be allowed two (2) minutes to warm up and check steps when entering the competition. This shall be done without the bar. This may occur only at a height change. If multiple competitors are entering at that height, each shall separately be allowed two (2) minutes.
5. Standards may be moved between the marks at 18" (45.7 cm) and 31.5" (80 cm) from the "0" point at the back of the stopboard.
6. It is an unsuccessful attempt if a competitor:
 - a. Displaces the crossbar with the body or the pole or by hitting an upright after clearing the crossbar;
 - b. Leaves the ground in an attempt and fails to clear crossbar (vaulter may lose contact with ground if attempting to abort);
 - c. Raises the upper hand or the lower hand above the upper during vault;
 - d. Touches the ground or pit beyond the stopboard plane without clearing the bar;
 - e. Steadies the crossbar with a hand or arm;
 - f. Grips the pole above the hand-hold band;
 - g. Fails to initiate trial in the required time after being called.
 - h. Clears the bar with the uprights set outside acceptable limits.
7. Breaking ties:
 - a. The competitor with the fewest trials at the height at which the tie occurs (last height cleared) receives the higher place;
 - b. If the tie remains, the competitor with the fewest total number of misses (including last height made) receives the higher place;
 - c. Passed trials are not misses;
 - d. If the tie remains, the competitors are awarded the same place – unless it is for first place. Then, all tied competitors shall make one more attempt at the height at which they missed. If no decision is reached the bar shall be lowered. If two or more competitors make that height, it will be raised again. If all miss, it would be lowered. The bar will be raised and lowered until a decision is reached where only one competitor has made a height. The interval for all bar height changes will be 3". No passes are permitted. As of 2024, any jumper may withdraw at any time. Such withdrawal concedes first place but does not affect any height earned.
8. Also no gloves, taped fingers or hands (except for open wound). Chalk, or rosin OK.
9. If a crossbar slips during a jump when hit, the jumper will receive a substitute jump.
10. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event should be given the option of taking jumps at any time in any order. If an excused competitor does not return within an established time limit, the bar shall be raised without delaying other jumpers.
11. Since the 2021 season, competitors are PROHIBITED from running backward from the pit to measure or check their steps either during warmup or competition. A warning will be given for a first offense, and a competitor will be DQ'd from the event for a second offense, whether the warning occurred in that event or another event in the same meet. Warnings shall be reported immediately to the starter or referee.

High Jump

1. Competitors have 60 seconds after being called to initiate a trial that is carried to completion. When 2 or 3 competitors are left, each will be allowed three (3) minutes. When one competitor only remains, he/she will be allowed five (5) minutes to initiate a jump. Competitors making consecutive trials have two (2) minutes. Jumpers entering the competition shall have 60 seconds.
2. A competitor may elect to pass a trial at any time by communicating to the event official prior to the clock being started for timing the jump.
3. A competitor who has not entered the competition within 60 minutes from the first jump shall be allowed 90 seconds to warm up and check steps when entering the competition. This shall be done without the bar. This may occur only at a height change. If multiple competitors are entering at that height, each shall separately be allowed 90 seconds.
4. It is an unsuccessful attempt if a competitor:
 - a. Displaces the crossbar in an attempt to clear it by hitting the crossbar or the uprights after the bar has been cleared;
 - b. Touches the ground or landing area beyond the plane of the crossbar without clearing the bar;
 - c. Steadies the crossbar with a hand or arm;
 - d. Fails to clear the bar with the entire body;
 - e. Fails to initiate trial in the required time after being called.
7. Breaking ties:
 - a. The competitor with the fewest trials at the height at which the tie occurs (last height cleared) receives the higher place;
 - b. If the tie remains, the competitor with the fewest total number of misses (including last height made) receives the higher place;
 - c. Passed trials are not misses;
 - d. If the tie remains, the competitors are awarded the same place – unless it is for first place. Then, all tied competitors shall make one more attempt at the height at which they missed. If no decision is reached the bar shall be lowered. If two or more competitors make that height, it will be raised again. If all miss, it would be lowered. The bar will be raised and lowered until a decision is reached where only one competitor has made a height. The interval for all bar height changes will be 1". No passes are permitted. As of 2024, any jumper may withdraw at any time. Such withdrawal concedes first place but does not affect any height earned.
8. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event should be given the option of taking jumps at any time in any. If an excused competitor does not return within an established time limit, the bar shall be raised without delaying other jumpers.
9. Since the 2021 season, competitors are PROHIBITED from running backward from the pit to measure or check their steps either during warmup. A warning will be given for a first offense, and a competitor will be DQ'd from the event for a second offense, whether the warning occurred in that event or another event in the same meet. Warnings shall be reported immediately to the starter or referee.

Long Jump and Triple Jump

1. Competitors may be given a total of four jumps or given three jumps each then advance four (or one more person than places that are being scored) jumpers in reverse order of performance for another final three jumps.
2. Competitors have 60 seconds after being called to initiate a jump.
3. Jumpers are allowed a maximum of two markers outside of runway and no marker may be placed beyond the take-off board without meet management approval.
4. All legal jumps should be measured. Ties for any place are broken by comparing 2nd best jumps (or 3rd best if back-ups are still tied).
5. It is a foul if the competitor:
 - a. Allows shoe to extend beyond the scratch line;
 - b. Runs across the scratch line or the scratch line extended;
 - c. Does not keep head upright at all times in long jump (no somersault);
 - d. In triple jump, in hopping does not land on same foot or in stepping does not land on other foot from which the jump is performed;
 - e. In the process of landing or leaving the pit, touches the ground outside the landing nearer to the scratch line than the nearest mark made in the pit;
 - f. Fails to initiate trial in 60 seconds from being called.
7. All measurements will be taken to the nearest lesser 1/4-inch. The reading should be taken from the closest mark made in the pit to the scratch line with the tape pulled parallel to the runway.
8. Competitors who wish to be excused to participate in another event should be given the option of taking throws at any time in any order and must return before other competitors finish. The competitor with the best throw in trials has the right to throw last.
9. Since the 2021 season, competitors are PROHIBITED from running backward from the foul line to measure or check their steps either during warmup or competition. A warning will be given for a first offense, and a competitor will be DQ'd from the event for a second offense, whether the warning occurred in that event or another event in the same meet. Warnings shall be reported immediately to the starter or referee.

Time Guidelines

The following chart should be used to establish how long each competitor has to initiate a complete throw or jump in all field events after being called (please note that competitors excused to participate in another event are not to be called up):

Number of athletes competing at the start of the round	Individual Events		
	High Jump	Pole Vault	All other field events
More than 3	1 minute	1 Minutes	1 Minute
2 or 3 Remaining	3 Minutes	3 Minutes	1 Minute
1 competitor Remaining	5 Minutes	5 Minutes	1 Minute
Consecutive Trials	2 Minutes	3 Minutes	2 Minutes