

National Federation of State
High School Associations



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 ¾-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.

5. APPLICATION OF “DESIGN OF UNIFORM” FOR RELAYS AND CROSS COUNTRY – The uniform requirements for a relay team in track or a cross country team are the same. Both rules (4-3 and 9-6) require the team members to be wearing uniforms of the same “design.” The term “design” is referring to a pattern of colors used in the uniform. For example, if three team members are wearing singlets with a white body and a red diagonal stripe four inches in width, the remaining team member(s) must also wear a white singlet of the same design with a red diagonal four-inch stripe. It would not be legal for the remaining member(s) to wear a white singlet with a vertical four-inch stripe. The design is different. The use of the same colors, but arranged in a different pattern is not of the same design. Both relay teams and cross country teams are competing as a team similar to a volleyball or basketball team. The uniform rules are written so the uniforms being worn for the team “are clearly going to identify the competitor at a glance that he/she is a member of a certain team.” This is essential to allow the meet officials to fairly and consistently identify the runners and team to which they belong.

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