



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

Guidance for Officials, Rule Organization Focal Points of 2023 Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Revisions

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 14, 2022) — Rules providing consistency and guidance to meet referees were among focal points addressed in the eight rules changes for the 2023 high school track and field and cross country seasons.

Two of the most notable changes were made to Rule 3-4-3, defining specific case book guidelines, and the introduction of Rule 9, which specifically addresses rules for indoor track and field. Six other rules changes were recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee June 13-15 at its annual meeting in Indianapolis. All recommended rules changes have been approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“Assisting meet referees in the administration of track and field and cross country meets was a point of emphasis where applicable by the NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee when it met in June,” said Julie Cochran, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee. “Although the rules are in good standing, the committee felt we had the opportunity to provide meet referees with rules that are more specific and better organized for event day administration.”

The rules committee's changes to Rule 3-4-3 defined specific case book guidelines to offer consistency and guidance to meet referees when ruling on reruns. New to the rule are scenarios to assist referees in determining when a rerun is necessary and stipulations that must apply for a rerun to be considered.

The change to Rule 3-4-3 affects Rules 5-9-2 and 5-9-3, which address instances in which interference occurs. The most notable impact was to Rule 5-9-2, which now states that in the event of interference during a preliminary heat, and when a lane is not available for the offended competitor or relay team, the meet referee may add a heat in that round or in the next round of heats.

Due to recent changes to outdoor track and field rules, the NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee adopted Rule 9 to exclusively address indoor track and field. With the continued emergence of indoor track across the country, which includes sanctioning in 21 states, more than 150,000 participants, and 17 state championships, the committee determined a separate rule was in order.

"The NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee continues to emphasize student-athlete health and safety and risk minimization in our rules review," said Cody Inglis, chair of the NFHS Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee and assistant director of the Michigan High School Athletic Association. "This emphasis can be seen in the committee's work for the 2023 rules book. In addition, the committee has worked to make the book easier to use for officials, coaches and others over the last few years by separating rules into their own sections. This year, the indoor track and field rule has been put into its own section which allows the user to easier access the indoor track and field rules as states continue to add this version of the sport."

The rising popularity of mixed relays resulted in the adoption of Rule 7-2-2g as a new item among special events. The committee noted that mixed relays are becoming more commonplace at high school meets. By adding mixed relays to the special events section of Rule 7-2-2, it allows the committee to offer guidance to member state associations on how to effectively conduct these events.

Among other rules changes was the increase in relay entries from six to eight individuals. Only those individuals who actually run will be considered official participants. Cochran noted that by providing two additional names, it presents yet another opportunity for student-athletes to be involved in not only regular and postseason track meets, but also high school athletics and activities.

A complete listing of the track and field and cross country rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Track & Field/Cross Country.”

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, outdoor track and field is the second-most popular sport for boys and the No. 1 sport for girls with 605,354 and 488,267 participants, respectively. Cross country ranks No. 6 for boys and girls with 269,295 and 219,345 participants, respectively. In addition, there are an additional 150,253 combined participants in indoor track and field.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

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