



NEWS RELEASE

High School Track and Field Rules Changes Address Reducing Risk of Injury in Throwing Events

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 9, 2026) — Two revisions in field events rules focused on reducing risk of injury highlight changes in high school track and field rules for the 2027 outdoor season.

The two field events rules were among four revisions recommended by the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee at its meeting last month in Indianapolis. All changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Rules Review Committee and NFHS Board of Directors.

In an effort to reduce risk of injury during warmups in the shot put and discus, all attempts now must be made from inside the circle and facing the sector. No backward, over-the-head attempts will be allowed.

The committee noted that warm-up attempts by athletes standing on the toe board with their backs to the sector are dangerous because competitors cannot see if the area is clear before throwing the implement. With the rule change next year, a clear line of sight will be available to make sure the landing area is safe prior to an attempt.

Another safety-related change approved by the committee addresses the growing use of foreign substances on shoes in the throwing events. Language has been revised to provide coaches and officials with clearer guidance.

“Overall, the top priority for the rules committee is always the safety and well-being of the student-athletes, and this year’s committee meeting reflected that continued commitment,” said Julie Cochran, NFHS director of sports and middle schools and liaison to the Track and Field Rules

Committee. “The rules committee continues to focus on minimizing risk in throws events and warm-ups to ensure a safer competitive environment. Overall, this was a highly productive meeting where the committee successfully balanced safety with practical rules revisions.”

The Track and Field Rules Committee also approved a revision in a rule change made last year in the vertical jumps, as well as a revision that provides games committees more flexibility in reporting for field events.

A complete listing of the track and field rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Track & Field” and then “Rules.” The print version of the 2027 Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Book will be available for purchase in October at www.NFHS.com, and the digital version will be available in October via NFHS Digital at www.NFHS.org.

According to the 2024-25 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, outdoor track and field is the most popular sport for girls with a total of 513,808 participants in 17,373 schools, and it is the second-most popular sport for boys with a total of 644,235 participants in 17,390 schools across the country.

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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 18 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 19,800 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 8.2 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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