

## 2014 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- 1. Throwing implements returned to competitors by officials** – Coaches and officials, including all those who may volunteer to assist with administration of the throwing events, must always work together to minimize the risk of injury due to improper return of throwing implements, lack of throwing sectors being cordoned off and/or lack of training for those individuals working the event. A throwing implement should never be thrown or tossed back to the competitor once a trial is completed. There should be a pre-determined process (probably best practiced during warm-ups) and individuals designated to have the responsibility to walk/transport the implements back. This process should also include ***the path to follow when walking back*** to avoid walking through the throwing sector. This process should be carefully reviewed with all those working the event prior to any warm-ups commencing as well as at any coaches meeting and with the athletes as they report for warm-ups/competition. Everyone involved should always be alert as the unexpected can always happen. Equally important is the coach following similar procedures with their athletes during practice sessions.
- 2. Proper coaching requires staying up to date on rules and techniques** – The sport of track and field, like other sports, continues to have advancements made in equipment, uniforms, techniques, and training. Such advancements may be related to improved performance, better and more efficient training, and many times changes which reduce the chance of injury. As an example, the new standard for the pole vault plant box padding has the potential to minimize the risk of injury to a vaulter which 1) makes the event safer and 2) allows the vaulter to minimize the effects of potential injuries and enjoy greater amounts of participation. **Coaches have the responsibility to study the rules**, attend clinics, read current sport literature on training and new equipment, and learn from others to stay current with the advancement and opportunities in the sport. Just as the athlete has the goal to get better, much of that advancement is contingent upon the coach staying up to date on rules, techniques, and risk minimization in the sport.
- 3. Coaches “getting it right” with uniforms** – Track and Field is a sport which traditionally has colorful uniforms and styles that serve different purposes for performance. Having the athlete show up for competition in a legal uniform starts with the coach. Anytime there is a violation due to uniforms, it is a violation that could have been avoided. The ***officials do NOT have the responsibility for putting athletes in legal uniform, but do have the responsibility to enforce the rules. It is the COACH who must know the rules*** and then take the time in each season to educate their athletes on the rules and to come ask questions if the athlete wants to wear a different garment due to weather or an injury. This season there are changes in the uniform rule and coaches must educate their athletes to these rule changes and emphasize the importance and responsibility of each athlete to be accountable to come ready to participate in a legal uniform.

- 4. Importance of proper training of volunteers who work the meet** – It takes a number of volunteers to work a track and field meet. Unlike many other sports where there is a defined number of officials who are trained and generally certified as an official to work the contest, track and field meets may only have a few certified officials and the rest are volunteers. During the regular season many of them may or may not know a significant amount about the details of officiating the events they are working. In order to run a fair, safe, and well administered meet, the schools must take the time to adequately train the individuals with the knowledge and skills to work their event. Athletic Directors and coaches should work together to develop a training system and materials to educate these individuals volunteering to work. Local officials will also be of assistance as they may be able to provide training materials or knowledge of where they can be obtained. The NFHS provides an Officials' Manual which is suitable for use with volunteers. To avoid problems and conduct an efficient and enjoyable competition take the time to properly train the many volunteers who will work your track and field meets.

## COMMENTS ON THE 2014 RULES REVISIONS

1. **Rule 3-1-2** -- Clarifies within the rules that the Referee, meet officials, or a jury of appeals does not have the authority to set aside a rule, except as provide under special circumstances in Rules 3-4-1 and 3-4-6.
2. **Rules 3-2-8, 3-2-4k, and 3-2-7** – Technology advancements in the area of electronic audio and video devices have made such items easy to use and very accessible. Their use, if not used for communication during the actual competition when a competitor is on the track or completing a trial, no longer creates an advantage or disadvantage among competitors or teams and can serve as a coaching tool. These items may be used in the coaches' box and/or unrestricted areas. They shall not be used to review an official's decision. The Games Committee no longer has authority to restrict their use. **State associations do have that authority.**
3. **Rules 3-19-3 and 7-5-5** – Generally, the implement inspector's expertise is in the throwing implements, not the vaulting poles. The scales typically used are limited to about 40 pounds, and therefore are not suitable for this purpose. It was felt to be more efficient and practical to place this responsibility with the field referee or head field event judge.
4. **Rules 4-3-1c(7), NOTES 1, 4-3-2, 9-6-1c(7) and NOTES 2** – Compression-style shorts that extend beyond the length of the uniform short, but above the knees are frequently being worn as foundation garments (i.e. underwear), similar to a sports bra. The color of such visible undergarment plays no significant role for officiating purposes. The time and attention by officials in making certain that athletes are in compliance when wearing such items delays progression of the meet, and the severity of a penalty of disqualification for a non-compliant garment is (was) too severe, as the item does not impact the competition. These foundation garments are NOT part of the uniform, are NOT subject to being a single, solid color, and are no longer a uniform factor for relay or cross-country teams.
5. **Rule 6-6-1 NOTE** – Updates the equipment requirements for the rubber tip javelin and places responsibility on the manufacturers.
6. **Rules 7-2-10 and 6-2-9** – adjusts the prescribed time limits for the pole vault to **one minute** and now places the time limits for consecutive trials in Rule 6 (Throwing Events) which has not been previously addressed in the throws.
7. **Rule 7-5-24** – For the purpose of minimizing risk of injury to a pole vaulter, the rule requires that planting box padding shall meet the applicable ASTM Specification Standards no later than the start of the 2014-15 Track season. This required implementation date will allow for product availability. The track season begins with the first meet of the season (indoor or outdoor) for the purpose of establishing the required implementation date. Schools may use this padding now if State Association policy does not determine otherwise.