

Pole Vault Planting Box Padding Required for the 2014-15 High School Track Season

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The installation of pole vault planting box padding permitted under Rule 7-5-24 will be a requirement in high school track and field beginning with the 2014-15 season.

This was one of 13 rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field Rules Committee at its June 10-12 meeting in Indianapolis. All rules changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

"Several of these major rules changes are areas the committee has discussed and monitored for the past two or three years," said Becky Oakes, NFHS director of sports and staff liaison for track and field.

Pole vault planting box padding that meets ASTM specification standards was allowed this past season and will be permitted in 2013-14 before being required in 2014-15. The padding can be incorporated into the design of the planting box or can be an addition to an existing planting box.

"The committee viewed this as one of the areas of pole vault where padding meeting the specific ASTM specification standard has the potential to prevent or minimize the severity of an injury that may occur to a vaulter landing in the plant box," Oakes said.

Another change in the pole vault will limit a competitor to one minute to initiate a trial after being called for the attempt (more than three entrants). If two or three competitors remain, the allowable time is three minutes; if only one remains, the time limit is five minutes. The time limit for consecutive trials remains unchanged at three minutes.

With an increasing number of track and field participants wearing compression-style garments under their uniform shorts as foundation garments, Rule 4-3-1c(7) was modified to require only those visible garments worn under the uniform bottom that extend below the knees to be unadorned and of a single, solid color. Current NFHS rules regarding logos and insignias apply to knee-length or longer garments. There are no longer restrictions to visible garments worn under the uniform bottom if they terminate above the knees.

"The committee is continuing to address uniform rules to ensure that they are practical for today's high school athletes," Oakes said. "It is also working to make the penalties for non-compliance fit the severity of the violation and preserve the integrity and spirit of the rule on uniforms."

Rule 3-2-8 now permits the use of electronic devices in unrestricted areas and coaching boxes, providing the location does not interfere with progress of the meet as determined by the meet referee. With this allowance, some supporting rules have been established.

Electronic devices shall not be used to transmit information to the competitor during the race or trial, nor are they permitted to be used for any review of an official's decision. However, state associations may also have policies in place to further address the use of electronic devices.

Violation of these rules will result in competitor disqualification from the event and team personnel disqualification from further participation in the meet for unsporting conduct.

"This rule clarifies that coaches can use electronic devices and share information with their athletes as long as the devices are being used in accordance with the stated rule," Oakes said. "This is an opportunity for coaches to use available technology as a coaching tool and increase the opportunity for good coaching."

Two rules were added to the "Meet Officials and Their Duties" section. Rule 3-1-2 states that the meet referee, other meet officials or the jury of appeals shall not set aside any rule. Additionally, Rule 3-2-7 permits official communication equipment to include wireless communication devices, among officials, for aiding in matters related to the meet.

In another rules change, vaulting poles are no longer inspected by the implement inspector. They are now to be inspected by the field referee or head field judge prior to warm-ups, according to changes made to Rules 3-19-3 and 7-5-5. The committee believes that implement inspectors have more expertise in throwing implements, and this change ensures a more efficient and practical process for inspections of vaulting poles on site.

In the javelin (Rule 6-6-1 Note), specific diameter dimensions of the rubber tip were removed from the rule to align with the current process of manufacturing the equipment.

Finally, Rule 6-2-9 requires a pass to be communicated to the event judge by the competitor before the start of the trial clock.

Outdoor track and field is the second-most popular sport for boys at the high school level with 575,628 participants, and the most popular sport for girls with 468,747 participants, according to the 2011-12 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey. The sport ranks second in school sponsorship with 16,218 schools offering the sport for boys and 16,143 sponsoring the sport for girls.

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