



# Track and Field Pre-Meet Notes

National Federation of State High School Associations

2012



## Risk Minimization in Throwing Events

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This is probably not the first article you have read on safety (also called risk minimization). And hopefully it will not be the last. In all sports, risk minimization is important. In track and field, with the combination of its flying metal objects and competitors, it is even more so. For that reason, two of the five Points of Emphasis this year deal with risk minimization. One focuses on the safety around the landing systems for high jump and pole vault; the other focuses on the throwing events. Here are some thoughts regarding these topics:



- Areas around the pole vault and throwing event venues should not only be free of people but also clear of obstacles, such as hurdles and other unnecessary track and field equipment.
- Rules 7-4-4 and 7-5-9 require hard or unyielding surfaces (such as concrete, metal, wood, or asphalt)

around the landing pad to be padded meeting rules requirements.

- Throwing venues, especially those in the infield, should be flagged off to avoid people crossing the landing sector. Flagging should be placed far enough away from the sector lines to keep people away from the unusual wild throws. Flagging does sometimes result in people having a false sense of safety; though it sounds funny, implements do not recognize the flagging and remain within the "preferred" area!
- While there is no such thing as a 100% safe spot around a throwing venue, having competitors, when not throwing, and spectators behind the throwing ring or in a position where the discus cage generally would block the flight of the implement are the safest spots. Officials must stay focused and alert at all times.

### Want to become an official? Start your training today!

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee and the USA Track & Field Officials Training Subcommittee are combining efforts and experience to provide the NFHS Pre-Meet Notes, an online track and field education publication. It is our goal to encourage more individuals to become track and field officials. Another way to ENJOY the sport!

**High School** - Contact your state high school athletic/activities association at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) >State Association Listing >NFHS Member State Associations  
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## National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study



Boys' and girls' track and field have low injury rates based on the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study.



As high school sports participation continues to increase in the United States, the number of sports injuries have the potential to increase. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the NFHS Sport Rules Committees use information from the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIO™) to monitor rates and patterns of sports injuries among high school athletes. High School RIO™ has collected its 3rd year of track and field exposure and injury data.



High School RIO™ data shows that both boys' and girls' track and field have among the lowest injury rates of the 20 sports under surveillance. Additionally, boys' track and field injury rates have dropped slightly over the past 3 years. Thigh/upper leg sprains/strains are by far the most common injury in track and field representing 19.7% of all boys' and 15.2% of all girls' injuries. However, injury patterns differ by event. For example, head and



neck injuries account for 17.2% of all pole vaulting injuries and less than 2.0% of all injuries in all other events combined. Understanding such patterns of injury is one important tool when considering a new rule change and keeping risk minimization as a priority in the efforts to keep track and field athletes as safe as possible.



**Interested in More Information or Becoming a Reporter?**

To become a reporter for boys' and/or girls' track and field, please visit <http://injuryresearch.net/rioreports.aspx> for summary reports or send an email to [highschool-rio@nationwidechildrens.org](mailto:highschool-rio@nationwidechildrens.org)

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## Rotating Flights Become Modified “5-Alive”

In previous years, the rules allowed for the use of “continuing flights” of three to five competitors when there is a large field of competitors. The purpose of these continuing flights is to keep the competition moving and the competitors warmed-up for their second or third jumps at a height instead of having them wait until everyone has completed their first jump.

In 2012, the rules (7-4-10 and 7-5-17) have been modified to have five competitors in the continuing flight. While this is often known as “5-Alive,” the NFHS’ method is different than the generally applied method in NCAA and other levels of competition.

The basic premise is the same: the five jumpers remain in the continuing flight until they either make the jump, have three misses at the height, or pass their remaining attempt. When this happens, the next jumper is added to the flight. However, unlike the other rules codes, the added jumper is placed at the end of the order instead of replacing the other jumper in the order. This process continues until you have completed the height. It is recommended when starting a new height and there are eight or fewer (total) competitors remaining in competition, that the continuing flight (5-alive) procedure be abandoned and the competitors be called in the order they appear on the event card/sheet. In USATF, the continuing flight is abandoned when 12 remain in the competition at a new height.

Here is an example using the NFHS rules: there are 20 jumpers (A-T) jumping at a height. The first five jumpers are A, B, C, D, and E. A, B, D, and E miss their first jump; C makes her first jump. F is added to the order. So, the order is now A, B, D, E, and F. A, B, and E miss their jumps; F and D make their jumps. So the order for the next jumps is A, B, E, G, and H. B, E, and

G miss their jumps; A and H make their jump. Because A, B, and E had their third attempt, I, J, and K are added – this would have happened whether it was a make or miss.

In chart form (with the jumping order in superscript):

Competitors			
A	X <sup>1</sup>	X <sup>6</sup>	O <sup>11</sup>
B	X <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>7</sup>	X <sup>12</sup>
C	O <sup>3</sup>		
D	X <sup>4</sup>	O <sup>8</sup>	
E	X <sup>5</sup>	X <sup>9</sup>	X <sup>13</sup>
F	O <sup>10</sup>		
G	X <sup>14</sup>	X <sup>19</sup>	
H	X <sup>15</sup>	X <sup>20</sup>	
I	O <sup>16</sup>		
J	X <sup>17</sup>	O <sup>21</sup>	
K	O <sup>18</sup>		
L	X <sup>22</sup>		
...	...		

### Fundamentals of Coaching Track and Field

[www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)

The NFHS in partnership with USA Track and Field developed this course to teach the fundamentals of running, jumping and throwing, the importance of sound mechanics, and how to teach these basic skills. For only \$75, join decorated Olympic athletes Dan O’Brien and Hyleas Fountain in learning techniques and skills to become a better coach or official!





## Undergarment Rule Modified; Jewelry Penalty Changed for 2012



The rules committee took action on two uniform rules for the upcoming season.

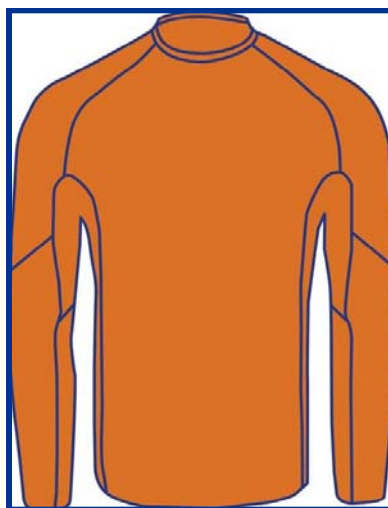
The basic visible undergarment requirements remain the same: (1) fabric of a single, solid color, unadorned and (2) single logo (school and/or manufacturer) of no more than 2¼ inches. However, the rules now permit stitching in a different color than the fabric if it "functions as the actual seam of the undergarment's construction" (Rules 4-3-1b, c and 9-6-1b, c). On shirts, "actual seams" are often found along the sides of the body and around the armpit. But they may also be found other places to hold the undergarment in a particular position. Note that actual seams are rarely in the form of a logo. An official's inspection should be cursory and brief; if intense analysis is needed to determine if the different color is actual seaming, officials should err on the side that it complies with the rule.

While the visible undergarment rule was modified, the penalty for a uniform violation remains the same – competing in an illegal uniform results in disqualification from the event.

The penalty for jewelry has evolved over the past few years. Prior to 2011, a competitor found competing in jewelry was disqualified from the event. Last year, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee modified the rule to allow for a team warning for the first jewelry infraction, followed by individual disqualification (s) for subsequent violations.

Now, a jewelry violation and penalty has become solely an individual competitor issue. The first time a competitor is observed wearing jewelry during competition, he or she is warned and required to remove the jewelry before continuing in the competition. Failure to remove the jewelry will result in disqualification, either for continuing to use the illegal uniform in the competition, or unacceptable conduct by willfully failing to follow the directions of a meet official.

Because the violation and penalties are individual-based, violations should be reported to the referee so a competitor warned for violating the jewelry rule in one event can be disqualified from a later event if discovered to be wearing jewelry (4-3-3 Penalty).



Visible undergarments displaying seams stitched on the outside of the garment in a visible contrasting color to the single, solid color of the undergarment and function as actual seams for garment construction are legal.



## Rules Committee “Steps Up” to Consistency in Distance Race Starts



## Uniform Compliance— Who’s Responsible?

The rules committee has modified the starting procedures for races and opening relay legs more than 800 meters (600 meters indoors). The modification requires the use of a “step-up start.” Prior to the starting commands, the competitors take a position about three meters behind the starting line. At the “On your marks” command, competitors walk up to the starting line, take their starting position, and remain still. When all the competitors are “steady,” the starter fires the starting device (5-7-3).

This change was made to provide consistency on four fronts: (1) The competitor will experience the same starting procedures in all the meets he or she competes; (2) Consistency in the distance behind the starting line for the step-up mark used in all one command running events; (3) The distance allows for a definite stop before the competitors move to the starting line and (4) the starting procedure is now the same as the other rules codes (NCAA and USATF rules).

Here are some thoughts on implementing the change:

- No additional track markings are required. While some tracks may have dashed lines for the step-up or some officials may make a chalk line, neither is required.
- There will likely be a greater lapse of time between the “on your marks” command and the start. However, just like in short races, avoid a possible “rolling start” by waiting until the competitors are at the starting line and steady.

Coaches maintain the ultimate responsibility to ensure that all competitors are legally attired and are not wearing jewelry. Competitors should be informed of all rules and the application of those rules prior to competing. Prior to the start of the meet, the coach confirms with the meet referee that all competitors are legally attired and are not wearing jewelry. Coaches who educate their athletes and enforce the rules in practices as well as meets will find far fewer violations amongst their athletes.

Although the ultimate compliance responsibility rests with the coach, the meet officials enter into the equation at the meet. The officials serve two roles, one being preventative and the other being enforcement.

1. In the preventative role, the officials make an effort to monitor illegal uniforms or wearing of jewelry a priority. Having the competitor make the necessary uniform adjustments or removing jewelry prior to competition when feasible will eliminate the need for the “warning” or possible disqualification.

2. In the role of enforcement, meet officials shall issue a warning and further penalties when a competitor is not in compliance with rules. The meet referee is then responsible for contacting the competitor’s coach of the warning and that another violation will result in disqualification from the event.

With proper education and enforcement by the coach, responsible actions by the competitor and officials operating in the preventative role, penalties for uniform or jewelry violations should vanish from the meet.



## Relay Exchanges a Focus in 2012

The rules committee has clarified the definition of a legal handoff for relays and emphasized the need for a sufficient number and knowledgeable officials to staff the exchange zones. The rule (5-10-7) now includes the following definition: "The passing of the baton commences when the baton is first touched by the outgoing runner and is complete when the baton is solely in the possession of the outgoing runner."

Officials assigned to the race should be knowledgeable about their duties, both pre-race and during the race. Here are some things to remember:

- **Positioning of the Outgoing Runner:** The outgoing runner must take his or her preparatory position entirely within the team's lane (if applicable) and anywhere in the acceleration or exchange zones. Team members are permitted to put markers (generally tape) down on the track; all marks must be in the team's lane. The size, number, and type permitted is determined by the games committee. The knowledgeable official knows what is permitted, assists to the extent possible in helping the competitors comply but enforces the limitations when necessary.

- **Handoff specifics:**

- ◇ It is the position of the BATON that is decisive: the baton must be within the exchange zone during the exchange. The position of the runners is irrelevant.
- ◇ The exchange must be a hand-off – the baton cannot be thrown between team members.
  - ◇ If the baton is dropped within the exchange zone in a genuine attempt to pass (i.e. not thrown), either runner may recover the baton. (Rule 5-10-7)



When the exchange zone is ready, officials should communicate this fact to the starter or head umpire. This is often done by raising and holding a yellow flag while the competitors are getting prepared, and then raising a white flag when the zone is ready.

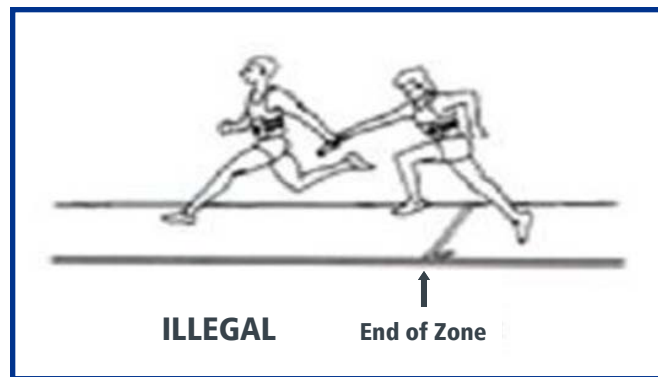
- **Umpire Positioning and Observation Tips for 4x100 Meter Relay:** The ideal world would have at least four umpires at each exchange zone (two at the beginning; two at the end). With less than four, there are priorities on where to place the umpires. If you only have one umpire at the exchange

zone, you need to assign the most experienced person to the first exchange zone. Because the race is run in lanes, the starting lines (and, therefore, the exchange zones) are staggered so each team runs exactly 400 meters. This means that the end of the first exchange zone of the outside lane is further down the track than the first exchange zone of the inside lane. To see as much as you can, you will want to position yourself about 8-10 feet past the end of the exchange zone in the outside lane. This allows you a narrow field of vision of the end of the exchange zones for all the lanes. While you may not see all the exchanges, any slowing of competitors should get your attention so you can focus on that team's exchange. A similar position in the second and third exchange zone is recommended. With more umpires, you can fill in positions on the inside and outside of the track and at the beginning and end of the exchange zones.

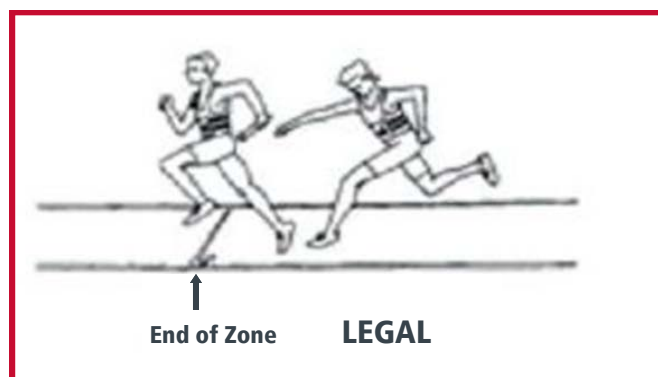
- Umpires should also be alert to any interference which occurs. The incoming runner can and should remain in his or her lane after the exchange (or in a straight line for non-lane exchanges) until it is safe to leave the track. If a runner moves left or right and interferes with another team, the umpire should report what he or she saw to the referee.



The baton shall be handed from the incoming runner to the outgoing runner. A legal exchange must occur within the exchange zone.



Baton exchange **outside** of zone

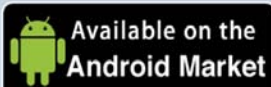


Baton exchange **inside** of zone

### NFHS Rules Application for Mobile Devices

NFHS rules books and case books will now be available on Android and iPhone mobile devices.

Material will be cross-referenced to display related content, and is offered as a companion piece to the printed books. Be on the look out for the NFHS Track and Field Rules Book and Case Book coming to the Android Market in January 2012 and to the App Store in February 2012!







## Rules Committee Addresses Two Pole Vault Items

There were two pole vault items passed by the rules committee for 2012. In the first (7-5-2), the committee eliminated the restriction of a maximum two layers of tape for the grip end of poles. Now, there is no limit on the number of layers. However, any tape at the grip must be of "uniform thickness." The direction of taping does not matter: either top to bottom or bottom to top is legal.



The rules committee clarified who can catch the vaulting pole and when (7-5-25 and 7-5-29). Previously, the rule stated no person could touch the pole unless it was falling away from the crossbar. The new rule makes clear that the pole may never be caught by anyone to prevent it from dislodging the crossbar; a competitor doing so results in a foul for that attempt. The rule now expressly states who can catch the pole: an assigned official, a designed pole catcher, or the competitor him or herself. The rule language now mirrors that in the NCAA rule book.



## Starter Positions

Starters and assistant starters must be positioned to fairly observe the start of each race. The NFHS Track and Field/Cross Country Officials' Manual contains diagrams of preferred positioning of officials for both races on the straightaway and the curve. It is important to recognize that the recommended distances are in meters not feet. This diagram can be found on page 57 of the NFHS Officials Manual.

Another consideration besides the type of race would be the actual physical layout of the facility. Positioning of the assistant starter may be affected by placement of fences, walls, and other barriers. It is important to position oneself so that the start of the race can be seen while also minimizing exposure to the report of the starting device for competitors, officials and spectators.

### SITUATION

The inspector of implements inspects a vault pole and discovers it has four layers of tape on the grip end. The surface is of uniform thickness and the official proceeds to certify the pole.

**RULING:** Correct procedure.

**COMMENT:** More than two layers of tape on the grip end of the pole no longer renders a pole illegal provided the layers are of uniform thickness.



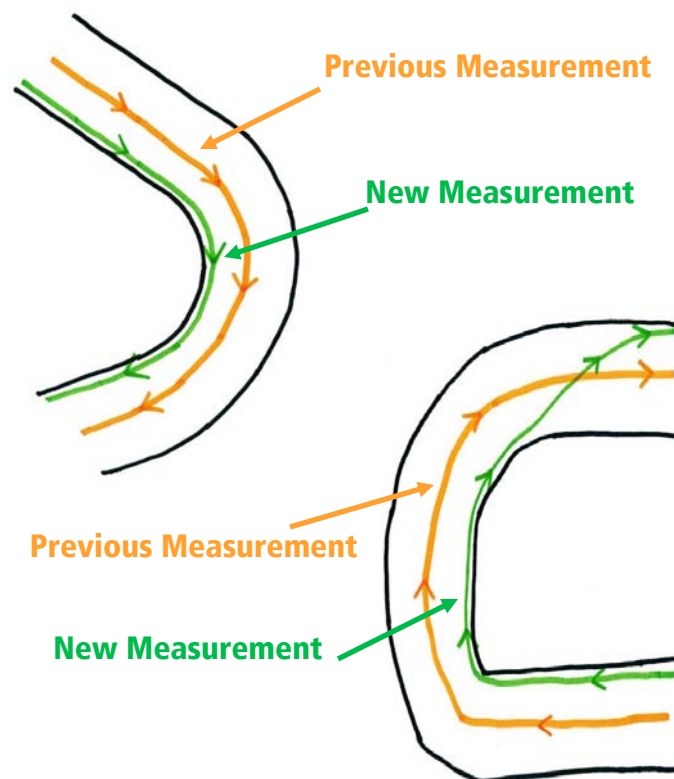
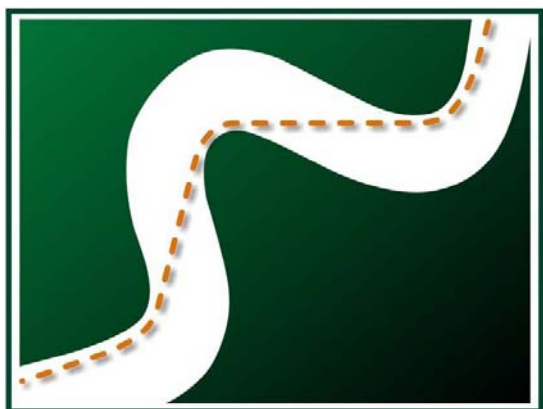
## Cross Country Course Measured by Shortest Route

The high school cross country course shall be 2,500 to 5,000 (1.5 to 3.1 miles) in length. The course distance is determined by the games committee or by state association policy.

Beginning in 2012 when measuring the course, the distance is based upon the shortest possible route a runner may take. This method of measurement is a more accurate distance of the actual running route taken by the competitors. This method ensures all runners will run at least the stated race distance.

There are several methods used to establish the course by walking the course and using a measuring wheel and then follow up with a GPS as a back-up. Keep in mind the GPS should not be the primary measuring device. If using the exact course as previously used with the new method of measurement, the starting line or finish line should not be in the same place as previously located using the old course measurement method.

Envision the shortest possible route as a string, stretched along the course. Along corners/sharp curves, stay approximately one foot off corner/curve, straight through S-turns and diagonally between corners and curves. You will measure in this fashion:



## Safety Around High Jump and Pole Vault Landing Systems

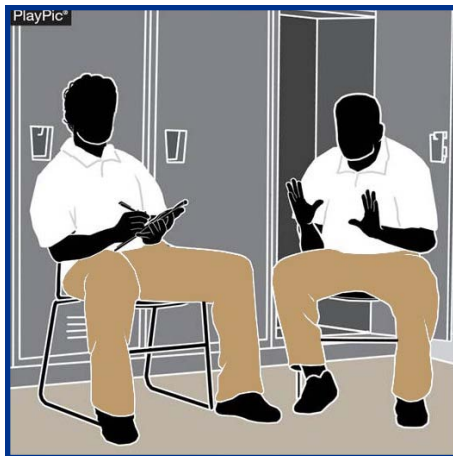
Risk minimization in the events of high jump and pole vault extends beyond the landing system. In addition to the host school providing legal landing systems and the upright standards that support the crossbar, the host school has the responsibility to provide a safe environment around the landing systems.

The hard and unyielding surfaces around the vertical jumps' landing pads are to be properly padded (7-4-4 and 7-5-9). This includes any items extending from underneath the landing pads. The area surrounding the landing pads should be clear of all unnecessary items not part of the official event equipment. Items such as chairs, benches, hurdles, starting blocks, and other items should not be in the vicinity of the landing area. Having an oversize landing system does not release the host from providing the additional padding.



## Referee's Authority and Administrative Duties

The meet referee's authority begins with his/her arrival at the meet site, and concludes thirty minutes after the results of the last event have been made official. However, administrative duties for the meet referee may need to continue after the meet to document actions that occurred during the competition. For this reason, clerical authority is retained by the referee through the completion of any reports, including disqualifications, for actions occurring during the meet while the referee has jurisdiction.



There may be unusual incidents that occur while the meet referee has jurisdiction or even after the competition is completed for which the respective state association may need to intercede. Rule 3-4-2 clarifies that the state association may continue to develop and implement policies that allow for review and actions for unusual incidents even when the referee has jurisdiction and/or the meet is completed.

## Computerized Transponders and Chips Determine Place Finish

The rules have allowed the use of computerized chips for several years. As technology advances, meet administration may also choose an alternate to chips by using computerized transponders. The transponder will be located in the competitor's bib opposed to the chips being worn on each shoe (9-3-3 and 9-6-2).

When chips or transponders are used for the finish:

1. Competitors shall wear the assigned computerized transponder or chips (one on each shoe) unaltered for the purpose of official timing and place finish.
2. If competitor numbers are also assigned, the number shall be worn and unaltered.
3. The official order of finish for the runners is that recorded by the transponder/chip.

It is important for good meet administration that a back-up system for determining the order of finish is always in place. Should there be irregularities regarding timing or finish not covered by rule or under the jurisdiction of other officials, the meet referee makes the final decision (9-4-2).

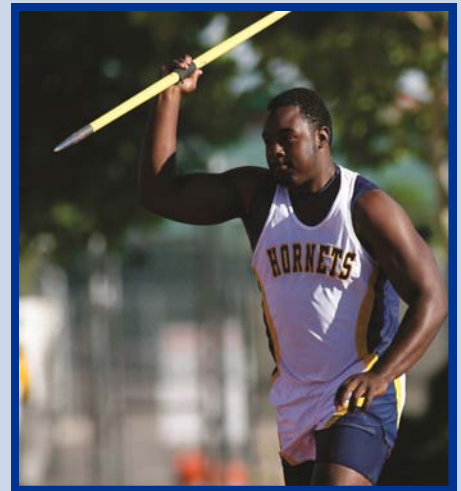
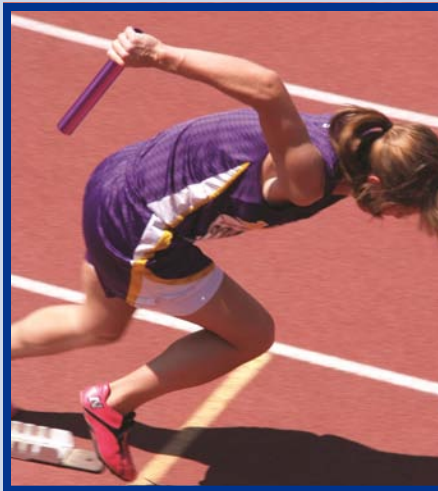


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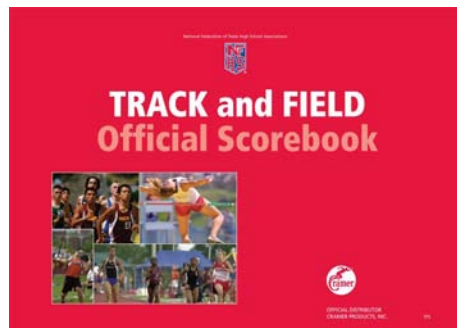
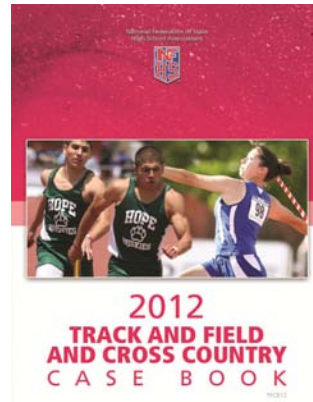
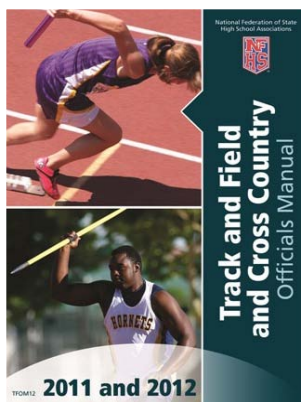
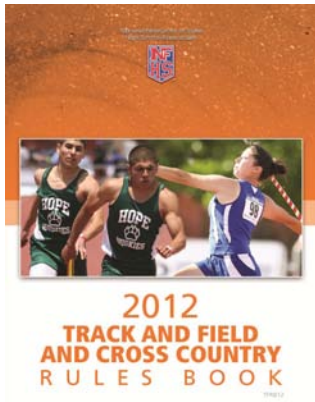
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