

NFHS Track & Field

2014 Track and Field and Cross Country Points of Emphasis

Thursday, February 27, 2014

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- 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 adequate 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 predetermined process and individuals designated to have the responsibility to walk 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 the coaches meeting and with the athletes as they report to the event for warm-ups and competition. Everyone involved should always be alert as the unexpected can always happen. Equally important is the coach following similar procedures with his/her athletes during practice.
- 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 risk 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 in person and online 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 it is a goal for our athletes to continue 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 athletes show up for competition in a legal uniform starts with the coach. Any time 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 uniforms but do have the responsibility to enforce the rules. It is the coach who must know the rules and then take the time each season to educate his/her 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 that coaches must educate their athletes to these rule changes and emphasize the importance and responsibility of each athlete to be accountable for his/her actions to come ready to participate in a legal uniform.

4. Importance of proper training of volunteers to work the meet- It takes a number of volunteers to work a track and field meet. Unlike sports such as soccer, volleyball or basketball 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 to work the meet. During the regular season these volunteers may or may not know a significant amount about the details of officiating the events they are working. They are versed in the basics and then expected to run off a good event. In order to run a fair, safe and well administered meet, the schools must take time to adequately train the individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to work the event. Athletic directors and coaches should work together to develop a training system and materials to educate these individuals who are going to work their meets. Local officials will also be of assistance as they may be able to provide training materials or have training materials on a web site. Many state associations have material on their web sites which are useful. The NFHS provides an Officials Manual which is suitable for use with volunteers. To avoid problems and run an efficient and enjoyable meet, take time to properly train the many volunteers who will work your track and field meets.