

Summary of High School Track & Field Rules

From: National Federation of State High School Associations Track & Field Rules Book

UNIFORM

- The jersey cannot be knotted or have a knot-like bulge.
- The jersey must hang below or be tucked into the waistband of the shorts or briefs.
When competitor is standing straight midriff cannot be visible.
- The competitor must wear the uniform issued by the school.
- The waistband must be worn above the hips.
- Removing any part of the team uniform (excluding shoes & socks) while in the area of competition is illegal. **Penalty:** Officials warning 1st time. Subsequent violation shall result in disqualification from the event.
- Any visible garment worn under the uniform top or bottom is considered a foundation garment and is not subject to logo or color restrictions.
- Relay team members must wear the same predominant color and design school uniform.
Officials should be able to observe all members are from the same team.
- Socks and shoes are excluded from the uniform rules.
PENALTY for illegal uniform - if observed, shall be required to make legal. Subsequent violation shall result in disqualification from the event.

CONDUCT **Applies to Both Coaches and Contestants**

- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** is behavior that is unethical or dishonorable. It includes, but is not limited to, disrespectfully addressing an official, any obscene behavior, intentional contact, taunting, criticizing or using profanity.

PENALTY - Disqualification from that event and further competition in the meet.

- **Unacceptable Conduct** includes, but is not limited to, willful failure to follow directions of an official, using profanity that is not directed at someone or any action that could bring discredit to the competitor or their school.

PENALTY - Disqualification from that event.

- It is an **Unfair Act** when a competitor receives any assistance from any other person that could improve that competitor's performance. Assistance includes:

- Interference with another competitor.
- Pacing (5 or more strides) alongside the competitor by a teammate not in the event.
- Competitor using an aid during the race.
- Communicating with a competitor with a wireless device.
- Competitor views a video or digital photo of their performance prior to completion of competition.
- Competitors joining or clasping hands during a race

Note: a competitor should not be penalized for helping another competitor who is distressed or injured when no advantage is gained by the competitor who is assisting.

PENALTY - Disqualification from that event.

STARTS / FALSE STARTS

The starting command for races shall be "On Your Marks." In races of *less than 800 meters* the starter shall then instruct them with the command "Set." (There is no "Set" command for races of *800 meters or longer*.) At the "Set" command all competitors shall *at once and*

without delay assume their full and final set position.

Violations which constitute a **False Start** include:

- Failure to comply with the starter's commands.
- Having any part of the body in contact with the starting line or beyond.
- Repeated use of disconcerting acts.

NEW RULES: In an effort to more clearly define false starts in high school track and field events, two new starting violations have been adopted for the 2024 season.

In Rule 5-7-4c, the previous language which required participants to remain motionless after assuming the set position prior to the starting device being fired, has been replaced with the following:

"If a runner leaves their mark with a hand or foot after the 'set' command but before the starting device is fired." In addition, a new violation in (d) calls for a violation "if a runner leaves their mark with a forward motion without the starting device being fired."

Further, a new NOTE in Rule 5-7-4 states that "extraneous motion before the device is fired does not necessarily require a false start to be charged unless the criteria in the rule are met. If the starter thinks the movement creates a situation of unfairness to any of the competitors, the starter may cancel the start with the command 'stand up,' or if the device has been fired, recall the race as an unsteady or unfair start and redo the starting procedure."

PENALTY - A competitor who commits a false start shall be disqualified.

FIELD EVENTS - GENERAL RULES

- Warming up shall not be allowed unless supervised by a coach or official.

PENALTY - A warning will be given and, if repeated, disqualified from that event. If the incident recurs, the athlete will be disqualified from further competition in the meet.

- A competitor has 60 seconds after being called to take the jump or throw.

PENALTY - Foul

- It is illegal to run backward or in the opposite direction (non-legal direction) on a horizontal jump, pole vault or javelin runway.

PENALTY - Foul

- A competitor MUST leave a Shot or Discus throwing circle from the REAR half of the circle after the throw. **PENALTY** - Foul

RELAYS

- The baton must be passed while the **baton** is within the exchange zone. **Note: new rule as of 2021 increases size of exchange zone from 20m to 30m & does away with the acceleration (fly) zone. All exchange zones for relays in excess of 800 meters (i.e. - the 4x400) will remain at 20 meters.**

- If the baton is dropped in the exchange zone either runner may retrieve it, even from another lane, provided the competitor does not interfere with an opponent and the baton is retrieved within the limits of their lane's exchange zone.
- If the baton is dropped outside the exchange zone, it must be retrieved only by the runner who dropped it.

- If the baton is retrieved by the incoming runner, that runner must still PASS (cannot throw) the baton to the outgoing runner *within the zone*.
 - A runner may leave the track to pick up a dropped baton as long as no interference occurs and no advantage is gained.
 - Incoming runners cannot assist teammates by pushing them.
 - A baton cannot be thrown (either in celebration or in disgust) following the finish of any relay. A team must finish the race with the same baton that it used at the start of the race.
- PENALTY** - Disqualification of the relay team from that event.

RACES RUN IN LANES

- Competitors who accidentally run out of their lane on a straightaway or in the lane to the outside on a curve are not in violation provided they *do not interfere* with another runner.
 - On a curve, runner cannot step on or over the inside lane line or curb for 3 or more consecutive steps with either or both feet.
 - A competitor cannot interfere with or block a runner in another lane.
 - Runner must finish the race in the assigned lane. Relay pass must be made in the assigned lane.
 - Competitor cannot take one or more steps inside the assigned lane at the break line.
- PENALTY** - Disqualification from that event.

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