



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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New high school track and field rule reduces pole vault liability

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 20, 2005) — At its June 27-28 annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field Rules Committee added a new rule requiring coaches to verify that their pole vault participants' equipment meets requirements prior to competition.

Rule 7-5-3 calls for a procedure that will ensure that the standard is met prior to participation at each meet, thereby reducing liability for coaches. Each state association will determine its own verification procedure.

“We’re enforcing this in the spirit of fair play. We want to reduce the risk of vaulting with an inappropriate pole,” said Cynthia Doyle, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee.

In other changes, Rules 6-4-5, 6-4-8 and 6-5-1 were modified to require all references and diagrams to reflect one standard sector at 34.92 degrees for shot put and discus competitions, effective 2006-07. By having a common sector for the shot and discus, competitors will not have to guess which sector will be used for competition. The smaller, 34.92-degree sector requires better control of the implements, reduces risk to spectators and is easier to lay out for meet administrators.

“The NFHS questionnaire suggested we implement the change in sector,” said NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee Chairman Mike Colbrese, executive director of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association. “This minimizes risk to athletes and to spectators alike by encouraging good throwing technique and exerting better control.”

Although the sector is minimized, spectators will still be expected to keep their distance from the throwing area.

The committee also stressed the importance of marking curved lines for alley starts, using computerized chips in the absence of a finish judge, and measuring from the “zero point” in pole vault competition.

Track and field is the third-most popular sport among boys and the second-most popular sport among girls at the high school level with 923,123 combined participants during the 2003-04 season, according to the High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS. It also ranks second in school sponsorship for both boys and girls.

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