

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

2010 Track and Field Rules Changes Announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 7, 2009) — Beginning next track and field season, officials no longer will need to interpret the intent of hurdlers who knock over a hurdle by foot during the race. The competitor must attempt to clear the hurdle, but will not be faulted for knocking over the hurdle with his or her foot.

This change to Rule 5-13-2b and 10 other rules were made by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Committee at its annual meeting June 14-16 in Indianapolis. The changes subsequently were approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The committee changed Rule 5-13-2b language from “deliberately knocks down any hurdle by hand or foot” to simply “knocks down any hurdle by hand.” Although the

words “deliberately” and “foot” have been removed from the rule, competitors must attempt to clear each hurdle.

“The committee decided to take out the issue of determining whether an athlete knocks the hurdle down deliberately or by mistake,” said Becky Oakes, NFHS assistant director and committee liaison. “If the hurdler knocks down one after another after another, then the official can determine that the competitor is not attempting to clear the hurdle. It isn’t to a hurdler’s advantage to hit and deliberately knock down hurdles.”

The committee made several changes affecting competitors in the vertical jumps. A modification to Rule 7-2-11 now allows the use of the previously prohibited bungee cord in place of the crossbar for warm-ups. The committee noted that the bungee cord must be approved by the games committee and must be manufactured specifically for use in track and field for this purpose. In addition, the bungee cord may only be used if the standards for the event are able to accommodate it. Rule 7-5-4 is also affected by this change. The committee added the phrase “or any other equipment which is not legal” to clarify this rule, regarding items not permitted in warm-ups.

Another change affecting pole vault competitors is a modification to Rule 7-5-29g regarding fouls by the competitor. It is no longer a foul when a team member

clears the cross bar in the pole vault when the uprights are positioned incorrectly by the officials.

A final modification specifically affecting pole vaulters and high jumpers is a note added to Rule 7-4-6, stating that beginning January 1, 2013, the crossbars in these events must be circular (as opposed to being triangular or square with beveled edges). Rule 7-5-11 is also affected by this change.

Another important change by the committee is a note added to Rule 3-2-4g, which states that designated areas for coaches to observe and confer with their team members must be clearly marked and identified by the host meet management.

“This addresses risk management and fair competition,” Oakes said. “The rule keeps the safety of the athletes and the coaches a priority. If the coaching box is clearly identified with flags or in another way, the coaches can be confident about where they can and cannot be. It will also make it easier for the officials to enforce the rule.”

A change to Rule 3-2-7 states that any television monitoring equipment must be identified and approved by the games committee before the start of the competition.

“The terms and conditions for the meet should always be established before competition starts,” Oakes said.

Following are other changes approved by the committee:

- Rule 4-5-8e prohibits communication with the competitor in competition through the use of any device.
- Rule 4-6-3 states that all heats and/or sections shall use the same starting procedure.
- Rule 6-5-5 clarifies how a shot put sector should be marked through the stopboard.
- Rule 3-17-2 specifies the location of the anemometer for all events requiring wind readings.

The committee also identified five points of emphasis for next season: 1) coaching box, 2) pole vault, 3) games committee responsibilities, 4) contestant/competitor and 5) application of “design of uniform” for relays and cross country.

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 548,821 boys and 447,520 girls, respectively, participating during the 2007-08 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.