



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Entry and participation limits redefined in high school track and field rules

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (June 23, 2004) — At its June 15-16 annual meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Track and Field Rules Committee clarified the difference between the number of entries and the number of competitions allowed for high school track and field participants.

The clarification will provide track and field coaches greater or lesser latitude for coaching strategies, depending on former practices within their respective states. The committee reaffirmed a position that permits high school athletes to participate in a maximum of four events per track meet. Rule 4-2-1 allows a competitor to be entered into four individual (running and field) events, along with being listed as an alternate on relays. Participation on a relay team counts as one of the four events for the meet.

“To minimize risk, the committee has clearly defined the number of events one may participate in during a single- or multiple-day meet,” said Cynthia Doyle, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee. “However, this does not prevent participation in multi-events such as decathlons, heptathlons or pentathlons.”

In other changes, Rule 3-2-4t now permits, by state association adoption, the games committee at any high school track meet to use a 34.92-degree sector for both shot put and discus throw. The more common measurement for both shot put and discus has been a 40-degree sector on the inside or outside of the track oval.

High school rules allow a 60-degree sector in the discus and 65.5-degree sector in the shot put when the events are located outside the track oval.

“The committee received information from experts indicating that a smaller sector teaches athletes better control in throwing, and the committee agreed that this is a viable option for high school track,” Doyle said. “In addition, it is actually easier to mark the 34.92-degree sector than the 40-degree sector.”

The committee also modified rules pertaining to track and field uniforms. Participants are now permitted to wear bodysuits (unitards) in competition. Previously, shorts were required at meets. The bodysuits must still meet other NFHS uniform restrictions, including logo and color restrictions. They can be either one- or two-piece suits.

A new penalty was also established by the committee. A warning, disqualification from the event and then disqualification from the meet can now be enforced if a coach or event official is not present when athletes are warming up for throwing or jumping events.

“This penalty is consistent with other NFHS penalties, and is designed to minimize risk at NFHS track events,” said NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee Chairman Mike Colbrese, executive director of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association.

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 913,629 combined participants during the 2002-03 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, with more than 15,000 schools offering the sport.

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