

# 2019 Rule Changes

Summary and Commentary by Eric D. Zemper

The following summarizes the major rule changes for this year that are most directly relevant to the working official. There are many additional changes not noted here that are of a more administrative nature, are editorial changes, or are reorganization of specific rules. If you work as a referee, you are advised to review all the rule changes in the relevant rule books. Complete information on all rule changes can be found in the 2019 editions of each rule book. *(Editor's comments are in italics and enclosed in parentheses.)*

## **National Federation (High School) Rule Changes for 2019**

*(Again this year, there were relatively few major rule changes from the Federation.)*

- Rule 4-3-1 – Expands the definition of undergarments to include any item worn under the uniform top and/or bottom: “Any visible garment(s) worn underneath the uniform top and/or bottom is considered a foundation garment. Foundation garments are not subject to the logo/trademark/reference or color restrictions.” *(This change has the effect of allowing anything to be worn under the uniform without regard to color or numbers of logos, etc. Now the only thing the official need be concerned with is the school-issued or school-approved uniform top and bottom.)*
- Rule 4-3-2 – “All relay and cross country team members must wear uniforms clearly indicating, through predominate color, school logo and color combination of all outer garments worn as a uniform, that members are from the same team.” Revised Rule 4-3-2 Note states “The official should be able to observe that all members are from the same team.” *(These changes make things much easier for us. We no longer have to be concerned with slight differences in design or shade of color or other factors, as long as we can readily tell from their uniforms that athletes are from the same team.)*
- Rule 6-2-20 – Adopts common method for recording vertical jump performances to match other rule books (“ – “ for pass, “O” for cleared, “X” for failed).
- Rule 6-6-11, 6-8-12 – Modifies language regarding distance measurements in discus and javelin events to also allow measuring metric distances to the nearest lesser centimeter. *(Gradually edging toward using metric measurements, like every other rule book? Maybe.)*
- Rule 6-9-5 – “a. In the long jump, the distance between the takeoff board and the nearer edge of the landing area shall be at least 3 feet (1 meter) and not more than 10 feet (3 meters). The distance between the foul line and the farther edge of the landing area shall be at least 32 feet (10 meters).  
b. In the triple jump, the nearer edge of the landing area shall be at least 36 feet (11 meters) from the foul line for men and 27.89 feet (8.5 meters) for women. Distances of 32 feet (10 meters) and 26 feet (8 meters), respectively are recommended. *(These set standards for safety of the athletes. If you haven't worked a particular site before, it would be a good idea to run a quick check to make sure these standards are met, and adjust the takeoff boards if necessary to meet them, by laying down a new take off board with athletic tape or white duct tape. With these standards in the rule book now, it's a liability issue if they are not met.)*
- Rule 6-9-5 Note – “Distance from the foul line or takeoff board may be adjusted to accommodate different levels of competition. Competitors may change which foul line or takeoff board they are using during the competition, but only with the prior notification and confirmation of the event judge.” *(Clarifies that multiple takeoff boards can be used in a horizontal jumps competition, and a competitor can change takeoff boards during the competition as long as they notify the board judge before the attempt.)*
- Rule 8-1-1 – Adds clarifying language regarding marking of cross country courses with lining and flags.
- Rule 8-3-2 through 8-3-4 – Adds language to clarify that no matter what system is used for determining order of finish in a cross country meet (hand timing with tear tags, shoe or bib chips, or photo finish system), the order of finish is always based on when the torso crosses the finish line. *(So with hand timing, there must be some human eyes on the finish line to determine order of finish by torso, and when chips are used there should be some visual backup to help sort out close finishes recorded by chips, whether it's a video system or photo-timing camera.)*

- *(Note that NFHS did not adopt the expanded 30 meter exchange zone for the sprint relays this year. It was considered by the NFHS rules committee, but they didn't adopt it because they thought the NCAA was not going to adopt it this year. The NCAA did adopt the change (see the next section), so the NFHS is the only rule book that hasn't made this change. It's likely it will be adopted next year. The NFHS also did not adopt the 30 second time limit for all field events except the pole vault, as the NCAA did this year. From comments from some of the committee members, it sounds like this one won't be adopted anytime soon.)*

### **NCAA Rule Changes for 2019-2020 Rulebook**

- Rule 1-1.6 – Beginning Dec. 1, 2018, all newly constructed or resurfaced indoor tracks shall be surveyed for a curb and shall have a regulation curb in place for competition. Beginning Jan. 1, 2021, all newly constructed or resurfaced outdoor tracks shall be surveyed for a curb and shall have a regulation curb in place for competition.
- Rule 1-1.6 – Specifies the placement of cones on the track for both indoor and outdoor meets shall be no more than 4 meters apart. *(This replaces the 1.5 meter requirement for indoor meets; this 4 meter distance also applies to cones marking the alleys at the start of longer races.)*
- Rule 2-2.2 – Specifies that the games committee shall require starters to use the information provided by IAAF-approved Start Information Systems if such a system is being used.
- Rule 3-2.y – Adds as a duty of games committee to approve official video review equipment.
- Rule 3-2.z – Adds as a duty of games committee to approve the use of the Start Information System to determine a false start.
- Rule 5-1.3 – The games committee may require the use of starting blocks.
- Rule 5-2.1.d – Note: In races where starting blocks are used, commencement of the start is defined as movement resulting in one or both hands losing contact with the ground, or one or both feet losing contact with the foot plates of the starting blocks. *(These last five changes indicate the NCAA is moving toward the requirement to use blocks in sprint races and the use of the SIS and video review as used by IAAF/USATF. This movement apparently was spurred by an incident this past year where a college sprinter's world record was disallowed by the IAAF because the SIS was not in use at the college meet. As part of this process, the NCAA will be requiring the use of blocks, the SIS, and an electronic starting gun at regional and national championships starting in 2019.)*
- Rule 4-3.1 – Clarifies the uniform rule by stating that all team members must wear uniforms with the same primary color, logo, etc. And a new note adds that “If single color body suits are worn, it shall be the primary color and have the same institutional logo of the top garment of the entire team on a give day, *(So uniforms don't have to be exactly identical, they just have to be sufficiently similar so that it is not difficult to tell they're from the same team.)*”
- Rule 5-8.4 – In relay races, allows the use of self-adhering tape (or suitable material as determined by meet management) to be used on the track to mark acceleration points; when conditions dictate, the use of tacks may be used to assure markers stay in place.
- Rule 5-8.5 – Adopts the 30 meter exchange zone for the 4x100 and 4x200 relays, as recently adopted by the IAAF/USATF. For the sprint medley relay (200, 200, 400, 800), the first exchange zone shall be 30 meters and all others 20 meters.
- Rule 6-1.2-5 – Adopts the 30 second time limit for field events except for pole vault, which remains at one minute, as recently adopted by the IAAF/USATF. For the throwing events a Note has been added: “As a guide, and in an effort to ensure all competitors in the discus, hammer and weight throw have equal time per event, the time clock will start when the athlete steps onto the concrete pad prior to initiating their attempt.” For the pole vault it now specifies that in addition to starting the one minute clock when the athlete's name is called, the event judge shall make a visual indication. *(The note for the throws about starting the clock when the athlete steps onto the concrete pad is an attempt to ensure some consistency in when the clock starts during the competition, but it seems to assume all pads are the same size, and we know some are smaller and some are huge. The official should use discretion in applying this rule if the athlete will be using a big chunk of the 30 seconds walking across a*

large pad to get to the circle. Maybe use a cone or similar marker near the circle and start the clock when the athlete passes that marker.)

- Rule 6-1.6 – This rule lays out the chart with the time limits for different number of competitors remaining in the event; the chart is now changed to match the time limits of the IAAF and USATF. (*This is a great change toward obtaining consistency across rule books. Now if we can get the NFHS ...*)
- Rule 6-1.8.a.5 (new) – Prohibits a thrower from holding anything in their non-throwing hand during the course of the throw.
- Rule 6-10.2 – Reduces the number of required landing sector judges for the javelin from two to one; it recommends the use of two landing sector judges if trained officials are available. (*The NCAA is recognizing that the rule requiring one official assigned solely to judging landings is seldom observed because of lack of sufficiently trained officials, and they recognize that one official can both judge landings and spot the landing at the same time.*)

### **USATF Rule Changes for 2019**

At the 2018 USATF annual meetings in Columbus, Ohio, this past December the Rules Committee considered 101 rule changes, most of which were Youth and Masters rule changes, and most were administrative rules of concern to meet management, such as rules regarding age limits for distance races for Youth. Among the rule changes of most immediate concern to working officials are the following:

- Amend Rule 143.2 – In hot weather, an athlete competing in a Long Distance race may compete without a top shirt. This ruling will be made by the Referee with the approval of the Games Committee. (*This applies to both road races and events on the track, but the decision is made by the referee and meet management.*)
- Rule 166.2(h) – Modifies advancement tables, adding a separate table for Masters competitions.
- Rule 170.16 – Clarifies that if a dropped baton rolls off the track, the runner who dropped it may go off the track to recover it, provided that the distance to be covered is not lessened. (*This clarifies that a runner going off the track to recover a dropped baton is not going to run afoul of Rule 163.6(a) stating that runners voluntarily leaving the track are not allowed to rejoin the race.*)
- Rule 180.12(a) – Adds two Notes  
Note 1: The officials, and the referee in particular, must be fully aware of the current competition environment, including direction of Event Presentation, when deciding when to start the clock or to ‘time out’ and call a failure.  
Note 2: Particular circumstances which should be taken into account are the availability of the runway for an athlete’s trial in High Jump or Javelin Throw, when Track Events are being held simultaneously in the same competition area, and the distance for athletes to walk to and through the cage to reach the circle to take their trial in Discus Throw and Hammer Throw. (*With the adoption of the 30 second time limit for most field events, this is a reminder to officials to use some common sense in judging when to start the time clock so you don’t unnecessarily short-change the athletes on their allowed time. See also NCAA Rule 6-1.2 above.*)
- Amend Rule 332.3(c) – In the vertical jumps, a competitor who has not taken an initial trial in at least one (1) hour from the first trial of the competition, shall be allowed, under direction of the event official, to use the runway and landing areas without the crossbar to warm-up with one attempt within one minute. Such warm-up shall occur at the change of the bar to the height the competitor enters the competition. (*This is a change for Masters competitions from the old rule of passing for three consecutive heights.*)
- Rule 332.3(h) – In Masters horizontal jumps, where multiple boards often are used, the new language specifies that the boards shall be 0.20m in width; in the Long Jump, one or two take-off boards may be used, one of which shall be 0.5m or 1.0m from the nearer end of the landing area; in the triple jump, two or more take-off boards may be used, and when more than one is used, each shall be placed in full meters apart from the take-off line closest to the nearer end of the landing area; and for both events plasticine is not required.
- Add New Rule 332.4 – Specifies that scoring of Masters Combined Events will use WMA scoring procedures, WMA Age Factors and IAAF scoring tables, and establishes the procedure for breaking ties in Masters Combined Events; a Note states that ties in Masters Combined Events will not be broken if more than two competitors are tied.

- New Rule 333.4 – A Penalty Zone shall not be used in Masters races. (*Masters race walk events will not use the Penalty Zone, also known as the pit lane.*)

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