

Track and Field Rules Interpretations

By NFHS on February 10, 2021

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NOTE: Due to the cancellation of spring sports last year because of the Coronavirus, the 2020 NFHS Track and Field Rules will be used for the 2021 season. In addition to the Rules Interpretations written last year which will apply for the 2021 season, two additional Situations have been approved for the coming season. The two additional 2021 Situations, along with the 2020 Situations approved last year, all apply to the 2020 NFHS Track and Field Rules and will be in effect for the 2021 season.

2021 SITUATIONS

CORRECTIONS

Case Book Page 79

6.5.27 SITUATION H: A vaulter for Team B is not satisfied with his/her approach and pulls up to stop. In doing so, the pole is planted in the box and as the vaulter stops, the momentum causes him/her to leave the ground and return. Unless it is unsafe to do so, the vaulter should step off the runway and returns to the starting end of the runway ~~and~~ to restarts the approach. The vaulter clears the bar and completes the attempt within the allowed 1 minute. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** When aborting the approach in this situation, the vaulter may still make a legal attempt providing he/she does so within the allotted time for a trial. (6-5-27b)

Case Book Page 80

6.5.27 SITUATION I: A vaulter from Team B initiates his/her approach, plants the pole and clearly swings upward for the vault. The vaulter stalls and rides the pole back to the ground. The vertical plane was not broken and there was no contact with the landing system or crossbar. Unless it is unsafe to do so, the vaulter should step off the runway and quickly returns to the starting end of the runway to restart the attempt. The head event judge rules a foul. **RULING:** Correct ruling. **COMMENT:** It is not a foul if a vaulter is stopping and aborts the approach. Once a vaulter is

committed to the vault and is positioned perpendicular to the runway, if his/her feet leave the ground and return without successfully clearing the crossbar, it is a foul.

SITUATION 1: As Athlete A runs down the runway to begin competition in the javelin, the athlete realizes his or her steps are off and does not release the javelin. Since there is still time on the clock, Athlete A steps over the runway line and returns to the starting position and completes the trial within the time limit. The event judge marks the attempt as a foul for stepping over the line. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** The intent of Rule 6-8-10d is to be applied after the javelin has been released by the athlete. As long as the athlete completed his or her attempt within the allotted time, this mark should be measured. (6-2-6, 6-8- 10d)

SITUATION 2: As part of the pre-meet duties, the meet referee inspects the venue and determines that there is no safe area around the event venue for pole vault for the athlete who pauses a trial attempt to get back to the starting point. The safest route for the athlete who aborts an attempt during competition is to run back on the runway to the starting point. The meet referee informs coaches that at the pole vault during competition, the athlete who pauses an attempt on the clock will be able to run back on the runway to return to the starting position. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The meet referee has the authority to rule on special circumstances and must inspect the venue to make sure the events can be conducted safely within the parameters of the rules. (3-4-8, 6-2-6)

2020 SITUATIONS

RULES BOOK CORRECTIONS: (Underlining shows additions; ~~striketrough~~ shows deletions.)
3-2-3h: Approved items (tape, chalk, half-tennis balls, etc.) and locations of these marks ~~in the acceleration zones of~~ for all relay races run in lanes.

CASE BOOK CORRECTIONS: (Underlining shows additions; ~~striketrough~~ shows deletions.)

3.2.4 SITUATION H: In the 4x100-meter relay, Team A wishes to place a mark on the track outside the ~~acceleration~~ exchange zone to aid the outgoing runners in timing their start. The mark, or marker, is: (a) half of a colored tennis ball placed in Team A's lane; or (b) a colored tongue depressor; or (c) a chalk mark. Meet management approves the marking in (a) and (b), but prohibits any markings such as chalk, water-soluble spray paint, etc. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The games committee and/or meet management is within its authority to prohibit all markings on any surface, including the running track.

(3-2-3h); 5.10.7 SITUATION B: During a relay, A1 passes the baton to A2 in assigned Lane 1. A1, steps off the track. During the actual exchange, A1 was running on the grass surface outside the lane, but within the ~~acceleration~~ exchange zone while A2 remained within the assigned ~~acceleration~~ and exchange lane and zone. The baton was: (a) within the exchange zone, (b) outside the passing lane and zone when it was exchanged. No interference with any other competitor occurs. **RULING:** It is an illegal exchange in both (a) and (b). Team A is disqualified. **COMMENT:** The exchanges are illegal because in (a), A1 is off the track and in (b), the baton is not handed off in the exchange zone. It is not legal for the outgoing runner to touch the baton outside of the exchange zone.

SITUATION 1: The outgoing Runner 3 from Team A lines up outside the exchange zone in the 4x100-meter relay. As the incoming runner approaches, Runner 3 accelerates, and the exchange is made inside the 30-meter exchange zone. **RULING:** Team A is disqualified. **COMMENT:** Each outgoing competitor, while waiting for the baton, shall take a position entirely within the exchange zone and must complete the exchange while the baton is within the exchange zone. (5-10-9)

SITUATION 2: During warm-up for the javelin, the athletes are all working on their steps. Thrower B starts at the beginning of the sector and runs backward down the runway. The event judge notifies the field referee, who gives the thrower a verbal warning. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** It is illegal to run backward or in the opposite direction on the javelin runway. The first offense shall result in a warning and, if repeated, disqualification from the event. Preventive officiating would encourage that this be included in pre-event discussions with all athletes prior to the runways being opened for warm-ups. (6-2-6)

SITUATION 3: In a 4x200 meter relay, competitors from both Team A and Team B drop their batons. In the confusion, the competitor from Team B picks up the baton from Team A and continues the race. The competitor from Team A is confused and looks for help. The umpire raises the flag and discusses the situation with the meet referee, who disqualifies Team B and offers a rerun to Team A's coach. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** A relay team must finish the race with the same baton with which it began the race. (5-11-1)