



September 3, 2025

## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

### Guide Runner Instructions

The following are the guide runner instructions for a tethered guide runner.

1. Guide-runners or Assistants must be clearly identified. (e.g. wearing a distinctively colored vest).
2. When competing with a guide-runner, the method of guidance for athletes shall be the use of a tether of non-elastic material. World Para Athletic Rules dictate a maximum length of 30cm for track events and 50cm for road events.

**(The NFHS does not specify the maximum length of a tether).**

- a. The tether attachment shall only be established between hand(s) and/or arm(s) of the pair.
  - b. In addition, the runner may receive verbal instruction from the guide-runner.
  - c. The guide is not allowed to use a bicycle or other mechanical means of transport.
  - d. The guide-runner is not allowed to pull or propel the athlete to gain an advantage at any stage during the race.
  - e. The guide runner may not pace the athlete.
  - f. The athlete shall cross the finish line first and the guide runner behind them.
3. In the event of a breach of the rule committed by a guide-runner resulting in disqualification or warning, the accompanying athlete shall be consequently disqualified or warned.

NOTE: When considering your tether length in your state the main reason for having a maximum length in cross country is to ensure other runners have a fair opportunity to not get trapped behind an athlete and their guide.





September 12, 2025

## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

### UNIFORMS

**SITUATION 1:** Competitor is seen using their watch listening to their coach give them updates on other athletes on the course. An official on the course sees this occurring and reports to the meet referee. The meet referee disqualifies the athlete. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** The jewelry restriction was removed from the NFHS rules book in 2015. With this change came the ability for athletes to wear watches. However, electronic devices are still not legal to transmit/communicate to a competitor during a race.

**SITUATION 2:** The officials are checking the starting boxes when the starter calls for the athletes to remove their sweats. One clerk notice that Team A runners have the same colored shorts or pants, but some are wearing tights while others have shorts. The uniform tops are all the same. The clerk notifies them they must have the same bottoms on and mut change before the race. **RULING:** Incorrect Procedure. **COMMENT:** The teams jersey's clearly make it clear they are from the same school and all their bottoms are the same color so the team should be able to participate in the race.

**SITUATION 3:** Team A arrives at their box to be clerked for the cross country race. The entire team has on navy blue shorts, but two team members have solid red tank tops and 3 have red and white tank top. The competitors are told they must make their uniforms legal prior to competing. The clerk notifies the meet referee who notifies the coach of the issue. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** The teams must wear uniforms that clearly indicate that they are members of the same team. Having red and white tops and solid red tops could be confusing to other competing teams. The meet referee should also notify the state association of this uniform violation. [4-3-2]

**SITUATION 4:** In a cross country race, A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 are wearing maroon bottoms with a white top and a maroon sash, while A6 is wearing white bottoms and a maroon T-shirt and A7 is wearing blue bottoms and a blue top. The school colors are maroon and white, and the coach claims all uniforms were issued by the school. **RULING:** Warning to A6 and A7 for illegal uniforms. **COMMENT:** All cross country team members must wear uniforms clearly indicating through predominant color, the school logo and color combination of all outer garments worn as a uniform, that members are from the same team. A7's blue uniform does not meet this requirement. A6's uniform, while in the school colors, the

flip of the color combination does not clearly identify the athletes as being from the same team, therefore, a warning should be issued and the uniforms corrected before the next race. [4-3-1, 2]

**SITUATION 5:** Team A arrives at their box to be clerked for the cross country invitational. The entire team is wearing watches. The clerk informs the athletes that they must remove their watches to participate in the race. The coach protests this removal to the meet referee. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure by the clerk. **COMMENT:** The jewelry restriction was removed from the NFHS rules book in 2015. With this change came the ability for athletes to wear watches.

**SITUATION 6:** An official at the State Cross Country Meet observes A1 wearing a head covering prior to the start of the race. The official informs the player that a note is needed from the state association to run in the meet. The incident is reported to the meet referee prior to the start of the race. The referee checks with A1 and observes that the garment in question is a religious head covering and therefore legal. **RULING:** A1 is not in violation of Rule 4-3-1b(8). No warning. **COMMENT:** Athletes are permitted to wear head coverings for religious reasons without approval from the state association. The head coverings should not be made of abrasive, hard or unyielding materials; and must be secured to the body and/or uniform.

**SITUATION 7:** A1 reports to their starting box wearing compression shorts with a manufacturer's logo on the thigh just above the knee as well as around the entire waistband. The trademark around the leg is no larger than 2¼ square inches. A1 wins the race. After the completion of the race the coach of Team B protests to the meet referee that A1's uniform shorts are illegal. **RULING:** A1 uniform is legal. **COMMENT:** Bottoms may have manufacturer's logo/trademark/references larger than 2¼ square inches around the waistband. Additionally, there may be a logo on the thigh if it meets the 2¼ square inches requirement.

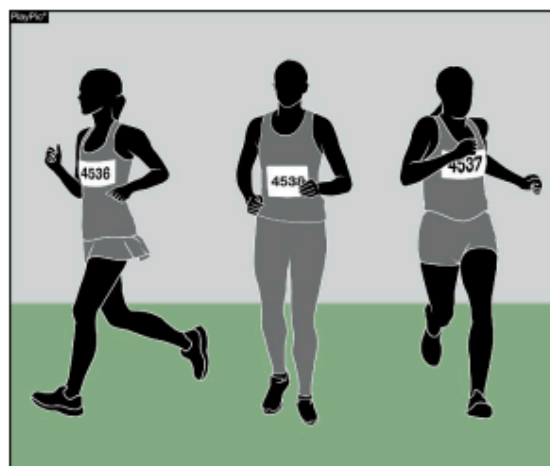


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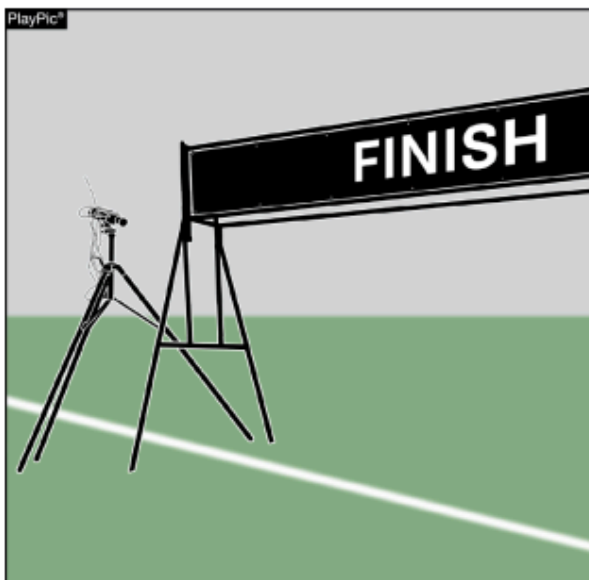
## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

### Uniform

**SITUATION 1:** Team A enters the starting box after warm-up and removes their sweats. The clerk notices that while they all have the same top on the bottoms are different and informs the meet referee. **RULING:** Team A uniforms are legal. **COMMENT:** Since all team members are wearing the same uniform top and liked colored bottoms it is clear that they are from the same team and doesn't matter that one has compression shorts, one has leggings and the others are wearing running skorts.



### Timing



**SITUATION 2:** Transponders chips on the shoes are being used to determine times in a cross-country meet. Runner A dives across the finish line to barely edge out Runner B. The finish judges pick Runner A, because the torso clearly crossed the line first. When the official results come in, Runner A had the second fastest time but was awarded first place.

**RULING:** Correct procedure.

**COMMENT:** No matter the timing system used, the order of finish is based on when the torso crosses the finish. When Identilynx systems or

other cameras are used at the finish line of a cross country meet an individual should review and confirm finish order is correct. [8-3-3]

**SITUATION 3:** Competitor A1 and A2 mistakenly exchange their bibs with transponder chips when the coach hands them out for the race. The meet referee disqualifies the two athletes.

**RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Each competitor is responsible for wearing the assigned contestant number and computerized chips during competition. The penalty is disqualification. [8-3-3]



9/24/2025

## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

**SITUATION 1:** At a cross country meet with a single line defining the course, at a yellow flag, a competitor runs to the right of the flag rather than the left. The umpire on course reports the violation. The meet referee disqualifies the athlete. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** Yellow flags indicate a turn to the right on the course and runners must stay on the left side of the flag. Athletes that who fail to complete the prescribed course is disqualified. [8-3-3]



- A red flag indicates a turn to the left. Runners must stay on the right side of the flag.
- A yellow flag indicates a turn to the right. Runners must stay on the left side of the flag.
- A blue flag indicates a course straight ahead. Runners may run on either side of the flag.

**SITUATION 2:** In a regular season meet, a group of athletes on course that is marked with a single wide line only and meet management is using natural boundaries to indicate the correct course. The group makes a turn on the inside of the line and cuts the corner of rock on the course. The runners behind them make the same cut. Several coaches protest and the single referee does not disqualify the group because the course marking was unclear. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** When the use of a single boundary line and natural boundaries are unclear then flags or other markings should be utilized on a course. The referee and management should walk the course in advance to make sure all turns are clear. In absence of additional markings, the referee must rule on any irregularities. [8-1-3]

**SITUATION 3:** B1 is on course and as they are running utilize their medically prescribed inhaler they have been running with the entire race. The coach from Team A complains to the meet referee that this is an aid. The meet referee informs the coach there is no violation. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** The use of an atomizer (inhaler) during competition containing a prescription drug designed to alleviate the asthmatic condition is not considered to be an illegal aid. [4-6-5]



October 1, 2025

## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

**SITUATION 1:** A cross country runner for Team A is wearing a heart monitor during competition. The item is not being worn for medical reasons. The item sends a transmission of the heart rate to the coach for post-race analysis. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** Wearable technology may be worn as long as the coach does not communicate with the athlete during competition. [8-6-1]

**SITUATION 2:** The coach from Team B arrives at the course early to walk through it with their team. They find several obstructions, such as a fallen tree, in the course that they ask meet management to deal with prior to the race. Meet management refuses so the coach involves the meet referee. The obstacles are removed or marked prior the running of the races. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. **COMMENT:** The course should include the following features: b. No ground obstructions which might cause tripping, turned ankles, etc. No overhead objects such as tree branches lower than 8 feet above the ground. Meet management should look at all natural barriers and man-made barriers that may cause a tripping, turned ankles or other risks. These are considered a hazard and are not permitted on the course. Running through bodies of water (creek, pond, lake etc.) is one such hazard. [8-1-2]

**SITUATION 3:** After being called to the starting line at a cross country meet for the starter's final instructions, all members of Team A run away from the starting line for a team cheer. The starter warns the team that if any further runouts occur before the start, those involved will be disqualified for unacceptable conduct. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Once teams have been called to the starting line by the starter for final instruction, no further run-outs shall be permitted. Any second violation shall result in a disqualification. [8-4-4]



October 8, 2025

## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

**SITUATION 1:** During the clerking for an invitation, the official notices (a) runner C1 is not wearing shoes. The official notifies the athlete and their coach that they must wear shoes to participate in the race.

**RULING:** Correct Procedure **COMMENT:** Each competitor must wear a shoes on both feet and the shoes must have an upper and recognizable sole and heel. The shoe must be designed so that it can be designed so that it can be fastened securely to the foot. The sole and heel may contain grooves, ridges or track spikes which are no longer than 1 inch. The games committee may determine the length of spikes allowed in cross country events. [4-3-1]

**SITUATION 2:** A1 reports to the clerk of the course wearing a slip-on (sock type for each toe) footwear. The clerk indicates A1 will not be allowed to compete. A1's coach files a protest claiming that the shoes have a definite recognizable sole and heel and designed so that it can be securely fastened to the foot. **RULING:** A1 is allowed to compete because it is determined that the footwear is legal as there is a recognizable sole and heel and the shoe is securely fastened to the foot by elastic. **COMMENT:** Changes in manufacture of shoes now include a variety of fasteners and styles that are acceptable. [4-3-1]

**SITUATION 3:** The umpire at a cross country invitational observes A1 wearing a religious head covering prior to the start of the race. The official informs the athlete that a note is needed from the state association to run in the meet with the head covering. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Athletes are permitted to wear head coverings for religious reasons without approval from the state association. The head coverings should not be made of abrasive, hard or unyielding materials; and must be secured to the body and/or uniform. [4-3-1]



October 15, 2025

## NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

**SITUATION 1:** At a large cross country invitational, the games committee has made no statement about hats and sunglasses and the state association does not have a policy in the handbook. Athlete A shows up wearing (a) sunglasses, (b) billed hat with no logo. The clerk informs the athlete that these are not permitted in all cases. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** If hats and sunglasses are not addressed by the state associations rules or games committee rules, they are permitted to be worn by an athlete.

**SITUATION 2:** School A arrives at the start line in their school approved and school issued uniform.

The clerk notices that the team has what appears to be cow spots all over their running shorts. The clerk informs the team that they must change their shorts before competing. **RULING:** Incorrect Procedure. **COMMENT:**

There is no obligation that the school uniform shorts to be the school colors. The entire team is uniform and clearly recognizable to their opponents. The uniform bottoms are school issued, and school approved. Bottoms may also have manufacturer's logo/trademark/references larger



than 2¼ square inches around the waistband. Additionally, there may be a logo on the thigh if it meets the 2¼ square inches requirement. [4-3-1b]

**SITUATION 3:** When reporting to the clerk of the course, all members of Team B are wearing compression garments under their shorts. Some extend below the knee and some do not. They are all different colors, and the team is wearing black running shorts over these foundation garments. The clerk observes and takes no further action and the team competes. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

**COMMENT:** Compression style shorts and tights are considered foundation garments when worn under the team short. The color and length play no role in the uniform for officiating purpose. These foundation garments may be any color or design unless the state association has applied stricter rules in their handbook. [4-3-1b7]