

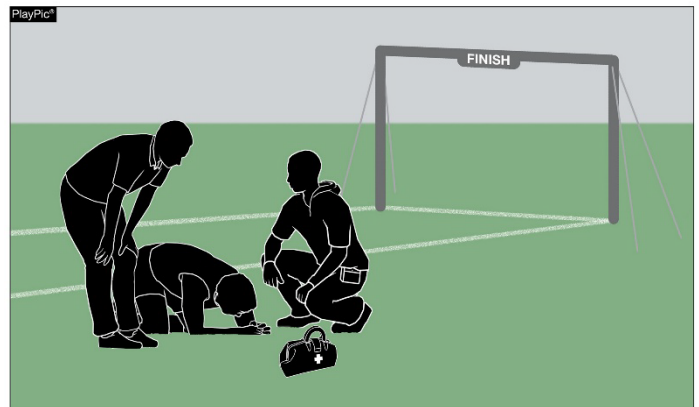


September 2, 2026

NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

Assistance

SITUATION: In the final stretch of a cross country meet, A1 appears to be shaky, displaying lack of balance, and extremely fatigued. A1 then falls to the ground and attempts to crawl to the finish line. A medical official, approved by the games committee, comes to evaluate the downed runner (A1) on the course and walks alongside the crawling athlete talking with them as they crawl, **RULING:** Legal, A1 did not receive aid from the designated medical professional. **COMMENT:** The games committee will establish appropriate health care professionals for a meet. These individuals may evaluate a downed competitor on the course during a race without resulting in disqualification provided no assistance is given in progressing along the course.



SITUATION: In the final stretch of a cross country meet, A1 appears to be shaky, displaying lack of balance, and extremely fatigued. A1 then falls to the ground and attempts to crawl to the finish line. A medical official, approved by the games committee, comes to evaluate the downed runner (A1) and helps A1 to their feet and determines A1 can complete the race on their own. **RULING:** Legal, even though A1 was helped to their feet for the medical evaluation, A1 did not receive aid from the designated medical professional.

SITUATION: In the final stretch of a cross country meet, A1 appears to be shaky, displaying lack of balance, and extremely fatigued. A1 then falls to the ground and attempts to crawl to the finish line. A medical official, approved by the games committee, comes to evaluate the downed runner (A1) and helps A1 to their feet and assists A1 toward the finish line down the prescribed course. **RULING:** Illegal, A1 was walked down the prescribed course towards the finish line and completion of race.

SITUATION: During a triangular cross country meet, the coach of Team B brings cups and water to distribute to the team members to keep them from dehydrating during the races as it is a day with high heat and humidity. The games committee has indicated it will not provide water on the course for all competitors but has identified the unrestricted areas. Team B's coach hands out water from an unrestricted area to the team members during the run. An opposing coach complains, stating that this is giving assistance to those competitors. **RULING:** Legal. **COMMENT:** The coach may give liquids to the team members provided it is done in an unrestricted area. It would be much more appropriate for the games committee to provide

liquids for all competitors at specific Points along the course when temperature and/or humidity could cause a concern for competitors' welfare.