WISCONSIN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

2026-27 NFHS Cross Country Rules Book

(PLEASE KEEP WITH YOUR RULES BOOK)

NATIONAL FEDERATION ALLOWED ADAPTATIONS

a. The maximum length of a course is 5000 meters for boys and girls. (Rule 8-1-1)

b. Measuring wheels on visiting courses must be used for coaching purposes only. If used to question or challenge the length of the course the coach shall be charged with "Unsportsmanlike Conduct." (Rule 8-6-1c)

c. Any runner, coach, or team personnel who is observed tampering with a flag on the course anytime during premeet warm-ups, competition, or post-meet activities shall be charged with "Unsportsmanlike Conduct". (Rule 8-7)

d. Any runner who has not reported to the clerk of course prior to the three-minute race countdown shall be charged with "Unacceptable Conduct". (Rule 8- 7)

STATE ASSOCIATION REGULATIONS

a. Starting Procedure (Rule 8-4-4)

The following starting mechanics and techniques (season and WIAA tournament series) must be used at all meets:

(1) **STARTERS should not give instructions** nor answer questions after the three-minute countdown. The information given over the public address system must be:

15 minutes to the start of the race 10 minutes to the start of the race 5 minutes to the start of the race

2 minutes to the start of the race – **all runners remove sweats, coaches and non-competing athletes must vacate starting box area**
1 minute to the start of the race – **all runners must have reported to the clerk of course**

1 minute to the start of the race – **all runners must be positioned, and remain, behind the starting line**

30 seconds to the start of the race

15 seconds to the start of the race

10 seconds countdown to 5 seconds

The **starter** fires the gun when all runners are **"set and motionless."**

(2) If a public address system is available the entire countdown to 5 seconds is done by the announcer. The starter is responsible only for firing the gun when all runners are set and motionless.

(3) Other than music used by meet management, noisemakers and audible music will not be allowed at or near the starting line. (Earbuds are allowed.)

(4) Music should cease two minutes prior to the start of the race.

b. Uniforms/Equipment (Rule 4-3-1)

(1) Headwear – Billed hats, caps, visors, headbands, knit caps and durags without flaps which are unadorned except for school name, school nickname or school mascots and follow the single 2 1/4" manufacturer logo rule are legal. Waivers for other head coverings may be issued for medical situations by the WIAA staff.

(2) Athletes must compete using the defined appropriate shoes/spikes. Spikes, if allowed, may NOT be longer than 1/2 inch. [Rule 8-6-1a(3)]

(3) Face paint, body paint or symbols and temporary tattoos can be displayed, however full face, solid block color cannot be used. Markings cannot be offensive or distract from the integrity of the competition.

(4) Electronic devices may only be used in unrestricted areas and coaching boxes and shall not be used to communicate information from any person to the competitor during a race (NFHS Rule 4-6), Biometric data from watches or smart watches including heart rate, GPS or pace is allowed. Athletes and coaches shall not be allowed to use GPS data to contest the length of a course or review any decision made by a race official.

c. Scoring waiver – Scoring shall be based on the first seven team members in accordance with NFHS rules. Schools may request a waiver from the WIAA in order to score additional athletes.

d Coaches must report to their school administration within 48 hours following a contest any player or coach ejection. School administrators must then report the ejection to the WIAA via written communication within three (3) school days following the contest. This written communication must also include a plan of action to prevent future ejections. Officials will continue to provide electronic reports to the WIAA.

OFFICIALS

a. One WIAA licensed official (referee-starter) is required, but two are recommended for all interscholastic competition.

b. The required official's uniform/equipment is:

(1) Shirt/Jacket - Black and white striped.

(2) Slacks/shorts - Black.

(3) Shoes/socks - Black or white.

(4) A .32 caliber starting gun and shells.

(5) Ear plugs and whistle on a lanyard.

(6) A bright colored sleeve to wear on the forearm used to shoot the gun.