



August 26, 2026

NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

UNIFORMS

SITUATION: 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. [4-6-5]

SITUATION: As the athletes line-up at the start line, an official notices that a couple of athletes are wearing hijabs on their heads and asks the athletes to remove the head coverings or produce a letter from the state association. **RULING:** Incorrect Procedure. **COMMENT:** Head coverings worn for religious reasons are permitted without approval from the state high school association. [4-3-1]



SITUATION: The officials are checking the starting boxes when the starter calls for the athletes to remove their sweats. One clerk notices that the kids are talking to an athlete about their glasses and they are showing them that they can record the race and light up at the nose piece. The official informs the runner that they may not wear any type of audio or video device to record, transmit or livestream the race. **RULING:** Correct Procedure. [4-6-6]

SITUATION: 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: 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. [4-3-1b5]



SITUATION: At the start of a cross country race, team members of Team A appear at the starting line wearing headgear with fake antlers attached (the school's mascot being "the elks"). The referee directs the competitors to remove this headwear. The coach objects as the games committee did not prohibit headwear. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Although the wearing of headwear is not prohibited, the wearing of apparel that is demeaning to the sport should not be approved. It is helpful if the games committee specifies "headwear which is reasonable and not demeaning to the competition." This would apply to any item worn in excess of the school issued uniform. [3-2-4n]