

Track & Field Points of Emphasis - 2026

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Throws Safety – Shot Put, Discus, and Javelin

Safety in the throwing events must be a top priority during both practices and competition. Coaches, meet officials, event managers, competitors and volunteers should review proper safety protocols during the preseason and before each meet to reduce the risk of potentially dangerous situations, during both warm-ups and competition periods. These safety measures must also be implemented consistently at practice.

Each throwing venue should be carefully regulated and set up with safety for athletes, officials, and spectators in mind. A clearly marked safety zone must be established for each event, using flagging or rope placed outside the sector lines and the farthest potential landing area of the implement. It's important to recognize that the flagged safety sector indicates the primary danger zone, but not the only one. Implements such as the discus and javelin can deviate significantly from their expected flight paths, and even well-marked venues require constant vigilance.

Officials must inspect venues for hazards, including checking cages for holes, loose netting, or other deficiencies. Any damage must be repaired prior to the start of throwing activities. Event personnel and athletes must be reminded to never turn their back to the throwing area during warm-ups or competition and to always wait for an official's signal before retrieving implements or leaving the designated area. These precautions are essential to prevent accidents due to premature entry or unexpected throws. Ongoing attention to safety by all involved is critical to protecting participants and ensuring the integrity of the competition.

Restricted Areas – An often underestimated responsibility of the games committee is the designation of restricted and unrestricted areas within the meet facility. This delineation is key to all meets, not just the state meet series. Clearly defining these areas supports risk minimization, maintains the integrity of competition and ensures efficient meet operations.

Restricted areas are those where only competitors currently involved in an event, meet officials, and designated personnel are permitted. All others, including non-competing athletes and coaches, must remain in unrestricted areas, such as coaching boxes or designated viewing zones. Per Rule 4-6-6, electronic devices can only be used in unrestricted areas. This rule applies to coaches and managers recording performances for review and instructional purposes, but also to athletes. Use of headphones, cell phones and other devices are prohibited by competitors in restricted areas. Athletes using an electronic device while crossing the track or approaching a field event venue may be distracted and unaware of their surroundings which increases the risk not only to themselves and others.

Coaching from a restricted area is considered assistance under Rule 4-6-5, which results in the coach's athlete being disqualified from the event. Coaches wandering from a designated coaching box into a restricted area of the facility can interfere with the competition and expose themselves to risk.

The games committee must make clear designations of restricted and unrestricted areas, communicate them effectively to all and enforce them consistently throughout the meet. This proactive approach promotes safety and fairness.

Protest/Appeal Process – During a track and field competition there are instances where there are disagreements with an official's call. In these cases, a protest may be made to the Meet Referee.

The referee shall review each written protest. The referee shall review all allowable evidence, such as an umpire's written report, and circumstances regarding the protest. Video replay or television monitoring equipment, other than the official finish line equipment approved by the games committee prior to the start of competition, shall not be used to make decisions related to the meet. Video or photos from the bleachers, streaming footage or any electronic means cannot be used as part of the appeal process. After the referee renders any decision, the referee shall notify the coach of the competitors affected by the decision and if necessary, results revised, posted and announced.

At meets where a Jury of Appeals is appointed by the games committee a coach may protest if they believe that the stated terms and conditions of competition or the application of the rule(s) have been misapplied or misinterpreted by the Referee, a written appeal may be made to the Jury of Appeals.

The following situations are subject to protest and appeal:

- Misapplication of the rules which must be filed within 30 minutes after the announcement of event results.
- Correction of clerical or team scoring errors - corrected up to 48 hours after the end of the meet.
- Another time period may be specified in advance by the games committee or meet director.
- Correction of meet results involving an ineligible participant
- May be made at any time when discovered.
- Failure to follow a procedure contained in the terms and conditions of competition
- This would include such items as the time schedule, the number of qualifiers to advance, number of trials, etc.

Coaches may **NOT** protest

1. Any judgment decision pertaining to violations or alleged violations of the rules.
2. A decision made by the finish judges or timers that does not involve misapplication of a rule, or the terms and conditions of competition.
3. Whether a start is fair and legal.



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