

# NCAA Track & Field Rule Interpretations and Corrections

*Updated: February 2007*

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## **Rule 1**

### **Rule 1**

**1-1.1 THROWING CIRCLE (2005):** Clarify the inclination allowed for the surface of a throwing circle so that allowance could be made for drainage.

RESPONSE: The circle must be as level as possible. Drainage can be accomplished by having small holes, along the inside edge of the ring, through the concrete surface to the ground.

**1-1.1 RUNWAY INCLINATION (2005):** Where are the two points on a Long Jump runway that are used to determine the maximum allowed inclination?

RESPONSE: Documentation presented to the Rules Committee on Rule 1-1.1 and international provision states that the proper two points would be the 'start of the runway and the take-off line'.

**1-5.3 POLE VAULT RUNWAY MARKINGS (2006):** What types of marks can be painted on the runway to indicate distance from the back of the vault box?

RESPONSE: There are two types of marks. The first, which is required, is a series of seven lines in the center of the runway following the pattern described in the Rule. The second, which is voluntary, is an indication of distance for the full length of the runway. These optional marks must be no larger than specified in the Rule, must touch the line marking the edge of the runway, may be inside, outside or on the edge line and also apply to the runway for Long/Triple Jump (1-6.1) and Javelin (1-12.1). (30Jun06)

**1-6.1 LONG JUMP RUNWAY (2005):** Must the runway for a long jump pit be centered with the constructed landing area?

RESPONSE: Lacking specific reference in the NCAA Rules Book, an international provision indicates ?The landing area shall, if possible, be so placed that the middle of the runway coincides with the middle of the landing area.? When the runway is constructed off-center, the actual legal landing area boundary should be marked within the constructed landing area so the runway is centered for the actual landing area.

**1-6.5 FOUL INDICATOR (2006):** Can an electronic device be use to detect a foul in the Long or Triple Jump event?

RESPONSE: No. Such a device is not authorized for judging, but may be used to assist judges in the common practice of determining final foot plants. (05Jan06)

## **Rule 2**

**2-8.1 ILLEGAL IMPLEMENT (2001):** While checking in the shot, the implement inspector feels movement inside the shot. The implement inspector impounds the illegal implement. Is this a correct decision?

**RESPONSE:** No. This shot is a legal implement. Movement within the shot is allowed.

**2-12 DEVICE CALIBRATION (2006):** How can the accuracy of a laser device be determined?

**RESPONSE:** Verification of the accuracy can be determined by comparing its measurement to that of a known surveyed distance, such as the 100 meters. (30Jun06)

## **Rule 3**

**3-4.2b REFEREE AUTHORITY (2004):** The referee observes a competitor violating the lane running rule, Rule 5-5.2. No other official sees the violation. Does the referee have the responsibility to warn or disqualify the athlete?

**RESPONSE:** In meets in which a games committee has not been established, the referee does not have this responsibility and can only act upon the information provided by the appropriate meet official. However, if a games committee has been established for this meet, the referee has the authority to warn or disqualify the competitor for any violation of conduct rules, but not for administrative rules.

**3-7.1 INTENTIONAL FALSE START (2006):** What action is taken for an intentional false start?

**RESPONSE:** An intentional false start is treated no differently than any other false start. There is no additional action on the part of the starter or any other official. (30Jun06)

## **Rule 4**

**4-1 UNSPORTING CONDUCT (2001):** A meet official observes an athlete shortly after competition throwing a baton (or any equipment) in a display of disappointment or anger. The official reports this observation to the referee. Does the referee have the responsibility to warn or disqualify the athlete?

**RESPONSE:** Yes, the referee can warn or disqualify due to the fact that the athlete displayed unsporting conduct.

**4-2.2 HONEST PARTICIPATION (2006):** A competitor starts the 5,000-meter run. After completing five laps, he steps off the track, tells the nearest official that he has severe stomach cramps. He then leaves the stadium. The next day, in the same competition, the

same competitor is declared in and reports for the 1,500-meter run. Should the competitor be allowed to compete in the 1,500?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Competitors must start in all events in which they are declared. This competitor did start the 5,000-meter run. The reason for not completing the event is not relevant under Rule 4-2.2. (30Jun06)

**4-2.2 HONEST PARTICIPATION (2006):** A listed long jump competitor checks-in and just prior to his first jump informs the judge that he will not be competing. In the middle of the second round, the athlete returns and informs the judge that he has changed his mind and now wants to compete. Should the athlete be allowed to compete in this and other events?

**RESPONSE:** The athlete did not pass the first jump, but scratched from the event. Re-entry to this event is not allowed, and participation in subsequent events is not allowed. (30Jun06)

**4-3.1 UNIFORM (2001):** A competitor reports to the start of the 100-meter dash with the straps of his uniform down and his chest exposed. An umpire issues a yellow-card warning. The competitor contends that he is in conformance with the rule since he did not lower his straps in the area of competition. Is the umpire's decision to issue the yellow-card correct?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Before entering the area of competition, a competitor shall be responsible for wearing a legal uniform. When removing a jacket or shirt that is covering the running top, the uniform straps must already be on the competitor's shoulders. While it is best that the checking for conformity with this rule occur during competitor check-in, the closest observing official may issue a warning. Such warning must be reported to the referee for possible further action if the violation is not corrected.

**4-3.1 UNIFORM (2006):** At the end of the women's 1500-meter race an official approaches a competitor, informs her that her singlet is in violation of the rules since she had a bare midriff during the race and issues her a yellow card. Is this correct procedure?

**RESPONSE:** No. The primary responsibility for checking the legality of a uniform rests with the clerk of the course at initial check-in. A singlet which meets or hangs below the waistband while the competitor is standing satisfies the conditions of the uniform rule. (30Jun06)

**4-3.1 UNIFORM (2006):** A vaulter is denied the opportunity to compete by the event judge because the competitor is wearing a bicycle helmet instead of a vaulting helmet. Is this ruling correct?

**RESPONSE:** No. Helmets, like shoes, are not considered uniform, but equipment. NCAA rules do not have specifications for the helmet. Therefore, any type of headgear, or lack thereof, is permissible. See Rule 2-6.6. (30Jun06)

**4-3.2 RELAY UNIFORM (2001):** Two competitors from the same institution are wearing sport bras underneath their singlets. One is wearing a black sport bra; one is wearing a yellow sport bra. Have they violated the rule that visible undergarments must be of an identical solid color?

**RESPONSE:** No. Sport bras are not considered undergarments; therefore, the competitors have not violated the uniform rule. An example of an undergarment would be a T-shirt or turtleneck.

**4-3.2 RELAY UNIFORM (2002):** A relay team comes to the starting line with three members wearing identical tops and wearing pants, shorts or briefs of identical color(s). The fourth member is wearing a one-piece body suit. The clerk tells the team that all members must have identical uniforms and cannot compete until all are dressed the same. Is this ruling correct?

**RESPONSE:** No. It is not necessary for all members to be in one-piece body suits, or in tops and pants, shorts or briefs. However, it is necessary for the primary color of the components (top and bottom) of any one-piece body suits worn by members of a relay team to be the same as the primary color of the corresponding components of those members not wearing one-piece body suits.

**4-3.2 RELAY UNIFORM (2005):** Do all body suits used by members of a relay team have to be identical, or just the same primary color?

**RESPONSE:** The primary color of each component, top or bottom, of any relay team members uniform, including body suits, must be the same. The style and design of one-piece or two-piece uniforms may vary, including stripes or piping. All members of a relay team need not wear identical uniform types. Example: Three relay team members are wearing school issued white singlets and black shorts. The fourth member is wearing a school issued all white one-piece. This is not legal for the relay team uniform requirement. The addition of black shorts, worn over the one-piece, would put the team in compliance. (01Nov05)

**4-5 ELECTRONIC DEVICE (2001):** During competition, a competitor is observed operating a cellular phone. When questioned, the competitor indicates that he is speaking with a friend who is not in attendance. Is this permitted?

**RESPONSE: No.** The viewing of videotape or photos, or the use of any wireless communication device, by a competitor during event competition is prohibited. This warrants a yellow-card warning, with disqualification to follow if another violation provided by the rules occurs during the meet.

## **Rule 5**

**5-2c FALSE START (2005):** If a competitor comes up on the command 'set', just keeps moving, comes out and never stops? Is that covered by the rules as a false start?

**RESPONSE:** Rule 5-2b covers this situation. "A false start may be charged against a runner who fails to comply promptly with the command 'on you marks' or with the various requirements of the command 'set' ", which is to assume their full and final set position (Rule 5-1.4). The option to charge is provided since it is possible that the start could be cancelled by the starter. (01May05)

**5-2c FALSE START (2005):** Is a 'flinch' considered to be a false start?

**RESPONSE:** A 'flinch' can be considered a false start using Rule 5-2b, since it is a violation of the various requirements of the 'set' command. The intent of rule 5-2c is not to absolutely create a new condition which results in a false start being charged, but to conform to the wording in other rule books and to clearly define the act associated with a false start. The

starter has the option to cancel the start, which has the effect of negating any possible violation or disruption caused by a 'flinch'. (01May05)

**5-5.2c LANE VIOLATION (2001):** The runner starts the 100 meters in lane one and crosses the finish line in lane three. The runner does not impede another competitor. The referee, after consulting with the appropriate officials, disqualifies the runner. Is this a correct decision?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The runner must finish the event in the assigned lane, a situation different than that in the Note of Rule 5-4.1.

**5-5.4a ASSISTANCE (2005):** a) Is the use of a 'rabbit' legal? b) Is there a violation of 'Honest Effort' in any way? c) Are there any disqualifications of teammates resulting from the use of a "rabbit"? d) Is the 'rabbit' disqualified from further competition in the meet?

**RESPONSE:** A person in the race specifically for the purpose of being a 'rabbit' should be so designated before the race begins, and preferably have no affiliation common to the competitors in the race. There is no specific prohibition for the practice. It would not be proper for the 'rabbit' to be a 'competitor' in a future race. A 'rabbit' sets the pace for the entire field, not just another individual or a single team. Therefore, it is not a matter of illegal assistance.

**5-5.4a ASSISTANCE (2005):** Is the use of a heart rate monitor prohibited?

**RESPONSE:** Such a device is not prohibited by NCAA rule.

**5-5.4a ASSISTANCE (2001):** Can fluids be provided to athletes during a distance race on the track or during a cross country race?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. This is not considered to be a competition aid. Only persons designated by meet management shall make fluids available to all competitors.

**5-5.4a ASSISTANCE (2001):** Team A's coach is standing near the starting line of the 1,500-meter run and is announcing splits to his runners in the race. Meet management has established boundaries as to how close coaches and team personnel may stand to the starting line to announce splits or give encouragement. Team A's coach is outside the boundaries. Is this illegal assistance?

**RESPONSE:** No. Meet management must establish the boundaries. Announcing splits and giving encouragement from the stands is permissible.

**5-9f RELAY INTERFERENCE (2001):** In the 1,600-meter relay, Team A wins the event. As the rest of the teams are finishing, a member of Team A steps out onto the track to celebrate the win and interferes with Team B's anchor runner five meters before the finish line, knocking the baton from his hand. Team B's anchor finishes the race without the baton. Should Team A be disqualified for interfering with Team B, and should Team B be disqualified for finishing without a baton?

**RESPONSE:** Team A is disqualified for interfering with Team B. No other disqualification takes place, because Team B was not afforded the opportunity to finish the race with the baton.

## **Rule 6**

**6-1.6 ABSENCE FROM COMPETITION (2001):** The games committee for a competition has determined that the alternate procedure, Rule 6-3.1, will be utilized in the long jump. A competitor is in the first flight and requests to be excused from the jumping order to compete in the 400-meter relay. Is the competitor permitted to jump out of order?

**RESPONSE:** No. Since the games committee adopted the alternate procedure, the event is contested as a final with four attempts. The competitor must initiate an attempt in the predetermined order and within one minute after his name is called by the event judge.

**6-1.6 ABSENCE FROM COMPETITION (2004):** Competitor A is in the combined event long jump. She leaves to participate in an open event. The combined event official allows the 60-second clock to run down for Competitor A and calls the next competitor to the runway. Competitor A returns to the combined event long jump and requests to take her jump out of order. The official does not allow her to take the jump and charges her with an attempt. Is this the correct ruling?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The combined event is treated as a final event. When a competitor in a combined event jump or throw misses an attempt to participate in an open event, the event clock is started. If the competitor fails to report for her attempt within the allotted time, she is charged with an attempt.

**6-1.10 TAPING OF FINGERS (2007):** Is the use of tape, which is not allowed during competition, allowable during the warm-up period?

**RESPONSE:** Tape used and allowed during a competition must be shown to an official before the start of the event, which is at a published scheduled time. Warm-up is usually prior to that time, before the start of the event, therefore tape use not legal during the competition may be used during warm-up. (06Feb07)

**6-1.10 TAPED WRIST (2006):** Is the use of tape or a brace on the wrist permissible?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The use of tape or a brace on the wrist, and only the wrist, is permissible. Any tape or brace that extends below the radiocarpal joint of the wrist so that it tends to immobilize any fingers or support the hand is not permissible. (30Jun06)

**6-1.11 WARM-UP (2004):** Two pole vaulters have not taken an attempt in one hour. Upon re-entering competition after a height change, Vaulters A and B use only one of the two allowable warm-up minutes on the runway and landing area without the crossbar. Is Vaulter B allowed to use three minutes (one remaining minute from Vaulter A and the two allowable minutes)?

**RESPONSE:** No. Each competitor in the pole vault is allowed a maximum of two minutes on the runway and landing area without the crossbar at a height change with the permission of the event official. Subsequent competitors do not have the right to utilize the unused time of previous competitors. The same ruling applies to the high jump, except that a maximum time of one and one-half minutes is allowed per competitor for warm-up.

**6-1.13 CERTIFIED IMPLEMENTS (2001):** All certified implements become the property of meet management. May any competitor use these certified implements?

**RESPONSE:** A competitor may use another competitor's implement during competition, with the other competitor's permission. If meet management supplies meet implements, then anyone may use the meet implements.

**6-1.14a ALTERED IMPLEMENT (2001):** An athlete wants to use a weight or hammer, which has tape on the handle. Is this permissible?

**RESPONSE:** No. Modifications of implements are not allowed.

**6-2.2 ADVANCING TO FINALS (2006):** Four teams are involved in a scored meet in which the top eight places will receive points. Entries are limited to three athletes per event per team. Before the competition, there is no agreement to use the alternate scoring system for four teams. Therefore, advancement to the finals will be the top eight performers in each event. Is this method of advancement correct, and what are the scoring limitations?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. In scored meets with four or fewer teams, by default, the top eight or nine performers shall advance to the finals. Within this group, only two from a single institution shall score, in compliance with Rule 7-1-1. Points are not reassigned to a lower finishing place.

**6-4.1 WARM-UP FOR GROUPS (2007):** Is the 15 warm-up maximum the total time allowed?

**RESPONSE:** No. When there are flights or sections of a field event with a general warm-up period, a flight specific warm-up with a maximum of 15 minutes must exist. This maximum does not apply when there is only flight specific warm-up scheduled. (06Feb07)

**6-5.3, 6-6.2 VERTICAL JUMP FOUL (2001):** A competitor in the high jump or pole vault aborts his approach. During the deceleration process, a body part or the vaulting pole passes through the vertical plane. The competitor did not make contact with any part of the landing area or ground beyond the plane. Does this constitute a missed attempt?

**RESPONSE:** No. It is permissible for a competitor to break the vertical plane above or below the crossbar, provided no contact is made with the ground or landing area beyond the vertical plane.

**6-6 POLE VAULT FOUL (2001):** A competitor completes an unsuccessful attempt in the pole vault competition. Immediately after the attempt, it is brought to the attention of the head event judge that the uprights were improperly positioned. Should the competitor be credited with a failed attempt?

**RESPONSE:** No. This is considered a no vault due to the official's error and the competitor should receive another attempt. If the attempt were successful, the competitor should be credited with a successful attempt despite the official's error.

**6-6.5 CATCHING THE POLE (2006):** Is it permissible for a competitor to catch their own pole?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The competitor, who has completed the vault, or an official, may catch the pole provided that the catching is not to prevent the pole from dislodging the bar. (30Jun06)

**6-7.2 TAKEOFF BOARD (2001):** In a dual-meet competition, a competitor in the triple jump wishes to change the takeoff board being used for the finals. Is this permissible? Would it be permissible between days in a meet where there is a qualifying round on the first day and the preliminaries / finals on the second day?

**RESPONSE:** No. The competitor must declare the board to be used throughout any single day competition, however, the competitor may change boards from day one to day two.

**6-7.4 EXITING LONG JUMP (2005):** A long jumper completes the jump inside the landing area and then steps out of the landing area nearer the takeoff board before the jump is ruled fair. Is this a legal jump?

**RESPONSE:** No. The jump is declared a foul. The jumper must exit the landing area no closer to takeoff board than the mark made in the landing area. (25Jun05)

**6-7.5 NON-UNIFORM APPAREL / ACCESSORY (2001):** A competitor in a horizontal jump is wearing glasses, gloves, hair ties, etc., that fall off during an attempt and land beyond the foul line, outside or on the runway, or in the landing pit. Is this a foul? Is it a foul in a throwing event if it were to land outside the throwing circle?

**RESPONSE:** No. In horizontal jumps, a legal jump is measured from the nearest break in the landing area made by any part of the competitor's feet, hands, body or uniform. In throwing events, a foul occurs if the competitor touches the outside of the throwing circle, the foul line or run-up lines with any part of the body. A foul is not created by non-uniform apparel or accessory falling from the body of the competitor. Applicable Rules: 6-8.3c, 6-9.3c, 6-10.4b and 6-11.3b.

**6-8.2 TAPING OF FINGERS (2001):** Is it permissible for a competitor in the shot to tape individual fingers to prevent injury?

**RESPONSE:** No. This type of taping is illegal. Tape can only be applied if there is an open wound.

**6-8.3 SHOT PUT ATTEMPT (2005):** Is there any foul if an athlete in the Shot Put enters the circle, walks to the toe board, puts the implement down inside the circle, leaves the circle from the front half, re-enters the circle, picks-up the implement, and then proceeds to complete the put, if all done in the allotted time?

**RESPONSE:** No. The attempt must start from a stationary position with the implement positioned properly. All foul situations occur 'after entering the circle and starting the put'. The start of the put had not occurred before the front exit, therefore no violation.

**6-8.3 EXITING A CIRCLE (2005):** Must an athlete be "in control" when exiting the circle in a throwing event?

**RESPONSE:** No. This, by itself, is not cause for a foul under NCAA rules. This also applies to the Shot Put, Discus (6-9.3), Hammer and Weight (6-11.3) throws.

**6-10.1 JAVELIN THROW (2001):** An athlete throws the javelin. Upon landing, the metal head hits the ground first just above the tip. The properly positioned field judge calls the throw a foul (flat) by raising the red flag. Was the official's call correct?

**RESPONSE:** No. The javelin did fall metal head first, as required, differentiated from the tip or point.

**6-11.1 LEGAL HAMMER THROW (2006):** Must a competitor start from a stationary position in the hammer?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The provisions of 2005 Rule 6-1-14 were distributed to each of the rules for events contested from a circle. Since the hammer rule already contained statements regarding the start from a stationary position, an additional sentence was not added. The Committee interprets 'start again from a stationary position', in Rule 6-11.1, and "return to a stationary position", in Rule 6-11.3, to mean that starting from a stationary position was used at the prior time. There was no rule change concerning the method of throwing implements from a circle. (18Jan06)

**6-11.1 HAMMER THROW GLOVE (2001):** Is it permissible during the hammer throw for an athlete to compete wearing a glove that fully conceals any or all fingers?

**RESPONSE:** No. This type of glove is illegal for both the Hammer Throw and the Weight Throw (Rule 10-9.5).

**6-11.2 SUBSTANCE ON HANDS (2001):** Is it permissible for competitors in the weight and/or hammer throws to apply a suitable substance to their hands or gloves?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Competitors may apply a suitable substance to their hands or gloves. See Rules 6-8.2, 6-9.2 and 6-10.2 for other throwing events.

## **Rule 7**

**7-1.5a-3b POLE VAULT JUMP-OFF (2002):** In the pole vault, Competitors A and B are the final two vaulters in the competition. Both made 4.88 meters as their best height. Competitor B passes 5.03 meters and fails at all three attempts at 5.18 meters. They are tied on the number of jumps and the number of failures. Competitor A attempts to clear 5.03 meters three times, but fails at each attempt. This forces a jump-off for first place. At what height is the bar placed to begin the jump-off?

**RESPONSE:** Even though the last height attempted was 5.18 meters, the jump-off begins with the bar at 5.03 meters, which is the lowest height attempted by any of the tied competitors above the tying height.

## **Rule 8**

**8-2.2b HAY BALES (2001):** May hay bales be placed on a cross country course for a collegiate meet?

**RESPONSE:** No. Obstacles and other hindrances shall be avoided throughout the course.

**8-4-2 XC Finish Placing (2005):** Is the use of a photo/video based placing system required in all XC races, and to be used when the finish times show a 1/10 seconds or less differential.

**RESPONSE:** No. The Judges at the finish have the primary responsibility to determine finish placing determined by the torso of each competitor. A photo-finish system may be substituted as the primary system. A finish placing system, based on time or an attached chip, may not be substituted as the primary system unless there is some video method to verify any place determined by a time within 1/10 seconds of another finishing place. A video verification method for determining finish places is recommended for all XC events. (30Jun06)

**8-8 XC UNIFORM (2005):** Is the use of briefs, black in color but some with a white logo and others with a white piping and no logo, legal for use by a team in XC.

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The tops must be identical. The bottoms need not be identical, which includes logos, piping, length and design. See interpretations regarding primary color for uniform and/or undergarments in Rule 4. (01Nov05)

**8-8 XC UNIFORM (2006):** Two runners on the same cross country team are wearing a different dye-lot color school issued singlet. Have they violated the rule that any tops must be identical?

**RESPONSE:** Uniforms of the same color but a different dye lot should be considered to be identical for the purpose of this rule. This ruling applies to visible undergarments also. (30Jun06)

## **Rule 9**

**9-2.6 HURDLE LANES (2005):** When should alternating or consecutive lanes be used in the short hurdles in combined event competition?

**RESPONSE:** The decision rests with the Games Committee and would probably be decided on the basis of facility, field size, length of race, and quality of the competition.

**9-8 ABANDONING COMPETITION (2001):** An athlete starts, but does not complete, an event in a combined event competition. Is the athlete permitted to continue to compete in the combined event competition?

**RESPONSE: Yes.** The athlete is not considered to have abandoned the combined event competition.

## **Rule 10**

**10-2.3 Indoor Facility (2005):** For an indoor facility, can the lanes around the oval be 30??

**RESPONSE:** Yes. The rule indicates the recommended width of lanes around the oval on an indoor facility. There is no restriction to using lanes of other width.

**10-9.4 Indoor Weight (2006):** Is an implement for the Women?s Weight which weighs 20 pounds legal?

**RESPONSE:** Yes. Rule Books prior to 2006 listed 9.080kg and 20 pounds as equivalent measures. There was no intent to change this with the 2006 Rules Book, but to promote the use of metric as a primary standard of measure. It was assumed that the conversion was correct and that the 20 pound implement would be legal when weighed metrically. (05Jan06)

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