

2003 Volunteer Official's Recruitment and Orientation Program

Introduction and Purpose

To offer a basic overview of officiating supported by written instructions and model forms to help ensure that each competitor experiences a fair competitive opportunity and receives accurate marks for their efforts.

This program is designed to help the high school meet officials take the needed steps to produce a well-officiated track and field meet. This modular approach offers one page task descriptions supported by model forms to enable the meet officials to help inexperienced volunteer officials gain a basic understanding of the appropriate application of track and field rules. It is our hope that as a result of these materials it will help volunteer officials feel better prepared to assist the high schools to provide the high quality meet each athlete deserves.

Covering all aspects of a meet from initial volunteer recruitment to the reporting the final results, this content focuses on providing the volunteer with the specific information needed to effectively execute her/his assigned officiating responsibility. Though not intended to produce certified officials, this material provides a general overview of the major rules and officiating duties for key event areas. It also offers useful tips and techniques to increase the volunteer official's confidence to properly officiate an event.

Recruitment

Volunteer officials should be identified and recruited as far in advance of the meet as possible. A simple listing of needed tasks (*see sample assignment sheet*) with a brief description of the duties should be prepared to facilitate sign-up and recruitment efforts—often this is best accomplished by describing the needs and distributing a sign-up sheet at the season opening association meeting. The tasks description should also describe meet date and location, start time for the first event, volunteer arrival time and who should be contacted for check-in and final assignment.

Set-up

In advance of the meet, all clipboards, watches, measuring tapes, pencils, waterproof paper forms, plastic sheet covers, flags, cones and other officiating materials should be set up by event. As well, a set of brief description of the officiating tasks and a photocopy page of the applicable rules should be attached to each clipboard. Other set-up considerations include:

- Placing the hurdles at their proper height and location for the first event
- Setting up the high jump and pole vault standards as well as required mats
- Preparing the long/triple jump pit – light watering and aggressive raking
- Making sure that the head official is ready to receive athletes and supervise warm-ups a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the scheduled field event start time
- Establishing a Clerking area in a visible location and providing the Clerk with all heat sheets
- Establishing a visible officials check-in/equipment check-out area
- Checking that the watches are working properly and ready for check-out by the head timer
- Announcer has a calls schedule (script), has tested the public address system and is ready to make the announcement for officials to report to their assigned area 30 minutes prior to the first event start time

Arrival

Each volunteer should receive a phone call 24-48 hours prior to the meet to confirm the commitment to officiate as well as the arrival time and check in procedure. Ideally, the arrival time should be 60 minutes prior to the start of first event (and not less than 30 minutes) to permit each volunteer to receive and review an officiating assignment and instructions. It is particularly important to have the field event, timing/picking, umpire, announcer and hurdle crew personnel to arrive early since their duties require more preparation and instruction.

This early preparation is the best assurance of the meet starting on time. It also establishes in everyone's mind the expectation that the meet will operate and be officiated effectively.

Instructions to Athletes and General Order of Events

Event Check-In. Field event athletes generally check in at the event area with the Head Official. Track event athletes check in with the Clerk immediately following the first call for the event (15 minutes prior to start).

Order of Events. For high school meets, the normal order of events as suggested by the OSSAA for invitational meet with timed finals are as follows:

Invitational Meet (timed finals) Track Events

4 x 100 meter relay (Girls, Boys)
4 x 800 meter relay (Girls, Boys)
100 meter hurdles (Girls) 33"
110 meter hurdles (Boys) 39"
3200 meter run (Boys)
4 x 200 meter relay (Girls)
800 meter run (Girls, Boys)
100-meter dash (Girls, Boys)

Proposed Break

3200 meter run (Girls)
400-meter dash (Girls, Boys)
300 meter hurdles (Girls) 30"
300 meter hurdles (Boys) 36"
200-meter dash (Girls, Boys)
1600 meter run (Girls, Boys)
4 x 400 meter relay (Girls, Boys)

Field Events

Shot Put (Boys, Girls)
Discus (Girls, Boys)
High Jump (Girls, Boys)
Long Jump (Boys, Girls)
Triple Jump (Boys, Girls) (After long jump)
Pole Vault (Boys, Girls)

Qualities and Considerations for Being a Good Track & Field Official

Responsibility. The basic responsibility of every official is to work as part of a team to create a competitive environment in which each competitor has a fair opportunity to achieve her/his best performances, with no competitor gaining an advantage or suffering a disadvantage.

Considerations/Approach

1. **Athlete Centered.** Always use a proactive *athlete centered* approach to officiating. The interests of the athletes must be considered as primary. The competitors are the central reason for having a meet, not the officials or spectators.
2. **Proactive.** Ensure a fair competition – take proactive steps to avoid having to make a call – the goal is not "to catch the competitors" but rather to seek a fair competitive opportunity for all.
3. **Consistent.** Treat all competitors and events equally – no one should get special treatment, but consideration should be given to ensuring to each the fair opportunity to compete. Sometimes fairness requires a referee's decision to disqualify, do not shy from this duty when required.
4. **Positive Attitude.** Take a positive approach to interactions. A dictatorial manner is usually upsetting and distracting to nervous competitors. Never take an action that interrupts the competition – all actions are taken once the running event or field event trial has been competed.
5. **Professionalism.** In field events, consider the needs of the competitors, spectators and coaches. Announce all marks clearly. In running events, stay off the track and avoid unnecessary movement.
6. **Teamwork/Communication.** Work as part of a *team of officials*, ensure clear communications with fellow officials and with competitors. Take the initiative to clarify to avoid possible problems.
7. **Stay On Time.** Every official has a role to ensure that the meet runs on time. Each competitor who reports by the designated time needs an adequate and predictable warming up period. A poorly administered schedule may result in poor performances, lost confidence or injuries.

Key Qualities

The basic qualities required of an effective official are to:

1. Exercise teamwork, common sense, judgment, tact and a proactive approach to assigned tasks.
2. View officiating as both an art and a science – consider the circumstances in applying the rules.
3. See every meet and every event as important – to maintain fairness, objectivity, consistency and impartiality in every situation and in every event.
4. Work as a team to exhibit and exercise a high level of professionalism, integrity and consistency.
5. Maintain a high standard of concentration and communication—remain prepared to react quickly.
6. Focus on safety and act decisively, brisk but not brusque. Be solutions oriented.
7. Be knowledgeable of the appropriate application of the rules to the situation – always verify any non-routine ruling by looking it up in the current rulebook. Do not be afraid to ask or check.
8. Be understanding of the athletes' needs and circumstances – be present, but not highly visible.
9. Be patient and positive despite the conditions, statements of others or personal feelings.