

South Dakota Cross Country/Track & Field Officials Association (SDCCTFOA)

Spring, 2025 Newsletter

Officiating Philosophy

Be Safe: Safety – for athletes, officials, coaches, fans, and media – is the number one priority. Safety is the responsibility of EVERY OFFICIAL! Be proactive in promoting safety and make sure proper safety protocols are followed. Do not be timid if you see unsafe situations or if others are not being vigilant.

Be Fair: Know the appropriate rules for the meet and the event you are officiating and apply them consistently. Don't make up rules. No athlete should be allowed to gain an unfair advantage and no athlete should have to suffer an unfair disadvantage. All athletes should be regarded as equals, regardless of ability, the level of competition or who they represent.

Treating athletes and others with respect and dignity by

Kevin Nelson

Officials, as stated in the NFHS Code of Conduct, when working at an interscholastic athletic event, are participants in the educational development of student-athletes. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline and responsibility and have a profound commitment to uphold the values that define their role in the sporting community.

By demonstrating integrity, neutrality, respect, and sensitivity, they set a standard of professionalism that influences how athletes, coaches, and the public perceive the profession. Their dedication to tactfulness and discretion fosters an environment where athletes can feel safe to work hard and pursue excellence.

Moreover, officials serve as models of effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, ensuring clarity and fostering mutual understanding. Their conduct, marked by honor and dignity, not only preserves the respect for their profession but also cultivates a culture of fairness and trust.

In return, officials deserve respect from athletes, coaches, parents, fans, and the broader community. By maintaining this reciprocal relationship, officials contribute to a positive and enriching sports experience for everyone involved.

Officials play a critical role in supporting the growth and success of student-athletes, who, like all learners, thrive when their foundational needs are met. Drawing on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, officials must recognize their interactions contribute not only to the athletes' physical and emotional safety but also to their sense of belonging, esteem, and, ultimately, their ability to reach their full potential.

This means being approachable, kind, and intentional in their communication. Providing feedback in a way that empowers athletes is essential. The most effective feedback is immediate, addressing actions in the moment; specific, focusing on what was done well or could be improved; cause/effect-oriented, helping athletes understand outcomes; growth-focused, looking forward rather than dwelling on the past; and dignity-preserving, ensuring that critique never shames and centers on actions rather than personal characteristics.

By fostering an environment where athletes feel safe, valued, and respected, officials help lay the groundwork for student-athletes to achieve their best both on and off the field.

Thank you to Kevin Nelson for taking the time to share his thoughts on what a track & field or cross country official should aspire to.

SDCCTFOA Officers, Regional Representatives and their duties

- President: Tim Casper, Lake Preston, 605-203-1754 tim.casper19@gmail.com
- President-Elect: J.D. Evans, Salem, 605-491-4207 jd.evans@k12.sd.us
- Secretary/Treasurer: Dana Nelson, Sioux Falls. 605-280-1333 dana.nelson0007@hotmail.com

Regional Representatives

- Region 1 (Northeast) Robert Kwasniewski, Webster, 605-265-0008 rkwas1@abe.midco.net
- Region 2 (Southeast) Tony Waterman, Tea, 605-941-1106 twater.cups@hotmail.com
- Region 3 (Central) Steve Charron, Huron, 605-354-4716 scharron123@hur.midco.net
- Region 4 (West) Larry Stevens, Rapid City, 605-877-4081 ldstevens57@outlook.com
- Region 4 (West) Randy Thomas, Faith, 605-381-0394 faithlbr@faithsd.com

Regional Representatives are appointed for a three-year term, and are members of the Board of Directors for the SDCCTFOA. Regional Representatives are responsible for the officials and territory within the regional boundaries identified in the SDCCTFOA Constitution. They interact with and communicate with officials in their region and are responsible for inquiries and requests from officials in their region. They are also responsible for hosting an in-person meeting in the region for the purpose of a track and field/cross country clinic. Topics for the clinic will be identified and an agenda developed by the board. The clinic may be conducted by a designated clinician or the Regional Representative, as appropriate. The board may assign additional duties or responsibilities to the Regional Representatives, as needed.

Track and Field Rules Changes - 2025

5-7-6: Changes the recall distance for races not run in lanes, or with more than one runner in a lane to 50 meters. Rationale: 50 meters is sufficient for calling a fair start.

5-10 and 11: Reorganizes Sections 10 and 11 for relay races and infractions, putting all relay infractions into Section 11.

5-13-3: Clarifies how to determine if an infraction occurred when an athlete leaves the track on a straightaway, by providing guidance for the referee as to when an athlete leaves the track on a straightaway, whether or not the competitor should be disqualified.

6-2-2f (NEW): Provides guidance for warning competitors the time limit to initiate a try is about to expire.

Rationale: This change gives athletes notification their time limit is about to expire, and brings officiating practices in line with other rules codes while still giving the games committee options for using flags, signal clock or verbal signals.

6-2-2 CHART: Defines field event time limits for all competitors. The change to the table and additions of the notes helps clarify the time limits for all competitors throughout the competition, and reinforces that a competitor first entering the competition gets only one-minute on their first attempt.

6-3-2 NOTES 1: Clarifies the starting height in a jump-off if athletes go out at different heights. The jump-off begins at the next height in the progression after the tying height.

6-8-2: Further defines an active flight (five-alive) and continuing flight (straight through).

6-9-22: Establishes the standard placement of the high jump crossbar and standards. Creates a standard distance for the placement of the high jump crossbar and standards from the landing pad, as 4 inches.

2025 Point of Emphasis, include managing Vertical Jump Landing Systems, excused athletes, time limits in vertical jumps and false starts.

SDCCTFOA 2025 Clinic Topics, Dates and Locations

Beginning in the 2024, a clinic or jamboree is required periodically for SDHSAA registered track and field and cross-country officials. A new official is required to attend a clinic in their first or second year, and current officials are required to attend a clinic every three years to maintain their registered status.

To fulfill the requirement, the SDCCTFOA will present five (5) track & field clinics before the 2025 track season. Those clinics are in-person presentations, hosted by Regional Representatives. Track coaches and athletic directors are also invited to the clinics.

Clinic topics for 2025:

Topics for this year's clinic include the new NFHS rules and interpretations; best practices; starting procedure and starter location; duties of the referee and field event head judges; with continued special consideration for the javelin. There is also time for questions, comments and observations.

Locations, Dates & Times for 2025 South Dakota track and field clinics:

- **Yankton**
 - When: Wednesday, February 5, 2025
 - Where: Yankton High School Library-follow signs
 - Time: 7:00 pm Central
 - POC: Tony Waterman, 605-941-1106 twater.cups@hotmail.com
- **Aberdeen**
 - When: Wednesday, February 12, 2025
 - Where: Aberdeen Central HS-east parking lot, main entrance, room B108
follow signs
 - Time: 7:00 pm Central
 - POC: Robert Kwasniewski, 605-265-0008 rkwas1@abe.midco.net
- **Rapid City**
 - When: Wednesday, February 19, 2025
 - Where: Rapid City Central FACS Room-follow signs
 - Time: 6:00 pm Mountain
 - POC: Larry Stevens, 605-877-4081 ldstevens57@outlook.com
- **Murdo**
 - When: Wednesday, February 26, 2025
 - Where: Jones County School-northside entrance-Tech Center-follow signs
 - Time: 7:00 pm Central
 - POC: Dana Nelson, 605-280-1333, dana.nelson0007@hotmail.com

- **Huron**
 - Wednesday, March 5, 2025
 - Huron Crossroads Hotel-same mtg room as previous clinics-follow signs
 - Time: 7:00 pm Central
 - POC: Steve Charron, 605-354-4716 scharron123@hur.midco.net

Contact your regional representative for clinic registration, and to designate a site for attendance. Clinics are free to all attendees.

- Region 1: Robert Kwasniewski, 605-265-0008 rkwas1@abe.midco.net
- Region 2: Tony Waterman, 605-941-1106 twater.cups@hotmail.com
- Region 3: Steve Charron, 605-354-4716 scharron123@hur.midco.net
- Region 4: Larry Stevens, 605-877-4081 ldstevens57@outlook.com
- Region 4: Randy Thomas, 605-381-0394 faithlbr@faithsd.com
- Any Region: Dana Nelson, 605-280-1333 dana.nelson0007@hotmail.com
- President: Tim Casper, 605-203-1754 tim.casper19@gmail.com
- President-Elect: J.D. Evans, 605-491-4207 jd.evans@k12.sd.us
- Secretary/Treasurer: Dana Nelson, 605-280-1333 dana.nelson0007@hotmail.com

KEY DATES FOR SOUTH DAKOTA TRACK & FIELD

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| First allowable practice for pole vault: | February 3, 2025 |
| First allowable practice: | March 3, 2025 |
| First allowable meet: | March 15, 2025 |
| Last chance completion date: | May 23, 2025 |
| State Track & Field Meet: | May 29, 30, 31, 2025 |

CLERK OF THE COURSE

The Clerk of the Course is the heart of a successful track and field meet.

Inefficient or disorganized clerking leaves athletes, coaches and spectators with an experience they would rather forget, and that is unfortunate. The focus of successful clerking is Personnel and Setup/Staging.

The most important element of clerking is who you assign to the position. The clerk's area and those staffing it are often the first point of contact for coaches and athletes.

A welcoming smile and helpful attitude go a long way to establish a positive first impression. Personnel assigned to clerking must be ready to answer almost any question

from complete knowledge of the rules of track and field and any administrative rules for the event, to the location of the bathrooms, without coming off as a know-it-all.

Coaches and athletes like consistency and expect rules, deadlines and patterns to remain the same for the duration of the event.

The most important responsibility is to maintain the meet on schedule. Issues arise and decisions have to be made. Clerks need to anticipate potential issues and seek solutions before the problem manifests itself to the point it interrupts the meet.

The second area is set-up and staging. The location of warm-up areas, the medical area and the staging area are critical to quality clerking. Essential services located in the same proximity allows better communication.

Athletes appreciate the fact that all the services they may need during the event are located in the same area and it saves time, energy, and effort for everyone involved.

JUDGING LANE VIOLATIONS ON THE CURVE

Meet officials and umpires observe running events to ensure no competitor gains an advantage and no competitor is placed at a disadvantage. This is most important during races run around one or more curves.

Rule 5-12-1a: Without being fouled and while running around a curve, steps on or over the inside lane line or curb for three or more consecutive steps with either or both feet.

As a meet official or umpire, place yourself in a position to have the best visual vantage point of all lanes. Observe the runners as they approach, and once passed, scan back and forth at their feet. Pause and observe a runner whose feet are near the inside lane line.

A less common lane violation on the curve involves interfering with a runner assigned to the lane outside the runner's right. This may occur more often in long hurdle races and relays.

Rule 5-12-1c: While running around a curve, runs over the outside lane line and interferes with another competitor.

Umpires also observe the break line for athletes cutting early.

Rule 5-12-1e: The competitor takes one or more steps inside the assigned lane line at the break line.

It is important to note what happened in these situations, prior to the violation, during the violation and after the violation, how many steps over the line, and approximately where the violation occurred

These are vital aspects for the referee to know to make a determination, and provides necessary information to explain to coaches if a violation and disqualification is warranted.

The Crucial Role of Lap Counters

Lap Counters play a crucial role to ensure smooth operation of long-distance races. By providing athletes with accurate lap counts, it helps runners pace themselves and perform their best.

The responsibility to count laps belongs to the referee or an individual the referee designates. The person tasked to count and indicate laps needs to be experienced and knowledgeable.

At the high school level, meet management should provide additional lap counters for races of two laps or more. However, it is not always possible to have enough lap counters, so a single official should be designated and given the responsibility for races over two laps. The official always needs to know who the lead runner is and how many laps that runner needs to complete to finish the race.

Ideally, lap counting should be delegated to a group, so each lap counter only counts laps for three or four competitors. While a single lap counter may be able to handle fields with up to 16 runners, if the number of runners exceeds 16, assistants are recommended. Prior to the race, lap counters should identify the competitors for which they are responsible, using hip/bid numbers, uniform colors, etc to help.

The head lap official is responsible for tracking the lead runners and keeping the lap board accurate. If the field separates, the official maintains focus on the lead runner but begins to note the tail runners as well. Using a clipboard, the tail runners' numbers are noted.

If the lead runner passes a tail runner, the official marks a "tick" mark for the lapped runner. This indicates the athlete has an additional lap to complete compared to the field. Continuing this process, the lap counter ends up with the lead runner counted correctly, and knows which runners have additional laps to complete. All runners behind the leader with no notations on the board are on the same lap as the leader and finishing the race.

Another method to keep track of laps is to use a chart. Write the laps to go in descending order across the top of the page. As each runner passes, note the hip number in the

appropriate column. It may be difficult to record each runner's number initially, but after a few laps, it becomes manageable.

Other methods include listing runners' numbers down the left side of the page in advance and marking an X in the corresponding laps to go column as they pass. Alternatively, lap counters can work in pairs, one calling out numbers and the other marking them. This method is useful for races with more than 16 runners.

When a visual indicator is used, one person should oversee its operation. Placement is inside of the track, 3-5 yards in front of the finish line so runners have clear vision as they run toward the finish line.

The visual indicator shows the remaining laps for the race leader and should be changed **as the leader enters the home straightaway**. Lapped runners should be given a verbal indication as to how many laps they have remaining. Flipping the lap board reflects the laps remaining **for the leader only** and should not be switched back and forth

In meets where FAT time is in place, it may be possible to obtain and display lap counts and times, however the use of this technology does not replace manual lap counters.

Officials should keep track of things on a paper-and-pencil form as backup for decisions, and it should contain information such as date, event, competitor name, hip/bib number, team and uniform color. Each lap time should be written down in case there are issues with FAT timing or disagreements about the order of finish.

Diligence in lap counting pays dividends and protests are minimized or become non-existent. Races finish correctly, competitors know their place, and the meet runs smoothly.

CORRECTLY MEASURING JAVELIN THROWS

At track & field meets, no throwing event measurement presents as much a challenge as the javelin. The challenge centers around the varied landing options of the implement.

Per NFHS Rule 6-6-7: "The measurements shall be from the nearest edge of the first point of contact made by the javelin".

Identifying **The First Point of Contact** is the challenge, and there are five potential options for the landing:

1. Tip first – impact causes tip to stick in the ground
2. Tip first – does not stick in ground- javelin slides
3. Tail first – javelin bounces
4. Flat throw – neither tip or tail lands first

5. Lands outside the sector

The point of measurement for each landing listed above:

1. The first point of contact is the back end of the sticking tip where the javelin first contacts the ground, before it pierced further into the ground. (Where the javelin tip first hits the ground, typically several inches behind the spot where the javelin ultimately sticks.)
2. Observe carefully where any part of the tip first hits. Do not get distracted by the javelin's slide.
3. Observe where the tail first hits. Do not get distracted by the javelin's bounce.
4. If the first point of contact was the cord grip. Observe carefully where the grip first hits. The first point of contact is from the **back of the cord grip** (nearest the foul line).
5. It is a foul. The throw is not measured but counts as a trial.

If the javelin's first point of contact is in the sector but slides out of the sector or sticks in the ground within the sector with part of the body outside the sector, it is NOT a foul. First point of contact is what matters.

Uniforms—School issued or approved

School issued or approved should be easy to judge. Such things as t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants and tights, if issued or approved by the school are also legal. Typically, we see this type of uniform supplement in field events. But, there are some conditions, often overlooked by event judges during the season, which show up at the State Meet. Often, event judges are not aware of uniform rules, so referees must be diligent to spend time at the field events and check uniforms.

One condition is the limit of one manufacturer's logo/trademark on the top, and one on the bottom. However, those logos may not exceed 2 ¼ inches square. If you are in doubt, measure it. For a frame of reference, a typical ball point pen is about 5 inches in length, so half of that would be OK. Larger logos need to be policed during the season.

Bare midriffs are not legal, and uniforms must be tucked in or hang below the athlete's waist when standing upright. Knotted tops are not legal. Fortunately, we no longer have to deal with foundation garments (visible garments worn underneath the top or bottom). Foundation garments are not subject to color or logo restrictions.

Shorts with oversize logos on the legs or side inserts. While we certainly do not expect our officials to carry a measuring device with them, bottoms that feature logos that are grossly oversized should be ruled illegal. Again, please note that the vast majority of off-the-rack shorts are illegal because of this rule. Examples include the following:



The following are two, off-the-rack shorts from Scheels. Both are illegal because the logo on the leg is over the 2.25" size requirement. While we do not expect our officials to measure every single garment, those whose logos are obviously oversized such as this are illegal for competition. Each logo below measured 3" in width.



2- Several individuals have also asked questions on whether or not a spandex or lycra short that expands when worn would be subject to the 2.25" rule on max dimension for logos – and if so, is that 2.25" is when worn or when off the competitor.

Our official interpretation of these shorts is as follows: **If the logo would be within the legal dimensions when not worn/stretched out on the athlete, the item remains legal even if the logo becomes "oversize" when worn. If the logo begins as over the threshold, please consider the garment illegal.**

3 – Rolling of the waistband. Per the SDHSAA Uniform Rules document that has been posted on the website for a good number of years, please note the following additional information:

"The waistband of a competitor's bottom shall be worn above the hips. Bottoms must be worn as the manufacturer intended and may not be rolled down."

Discovery of a waistband that has been rolled can result in disqualification if intentionally done by the athlete prior to competition.

Bob DeBoer, Huron named T&F Official of the Year

Bob DeBoer graduated from Grant-Deuel High School in 1977, and attended SDSU for his undergraduate degree in education. He started his track and field coaching career Sioux Valley High School. His first teaching job was in Elkton as an assistant track and field coach from 1982-1991.

Bob moved to Huron in 1991 to continue teaching and coaching at Huron High School, including serving as the head boys and girls track and field coach for Huron High School from 2003-2013.

He became a track starter in 1992, working as an assistant, starting middle school meets and eventually high school meets, once he retired from coaching he was able to increase his officiating duties. He has serves as meet referee, field referee and starter for several meets every year.

Bob had support and love in his coaching and officiating career from his wife, Kathy, and many other track and field officials.

Congratulations Bob for being named SDHSAA Track & Field Official of the Year.

South Dakota Track & Field/Cross Country Meet Fee

Recommendations

A year ago our association discussed officiating fees at great length. Following that discussion, we submitted recommendations to the SDHSAA, which were then shared with Athletic Directors and member schools.

These fees are recommendations only. No school or official is bound by these recommendations, but we believe this is an appropriate fee and conditions for track and field and cross country officials. If all our membership begins to consistently request these fees, they will become commonplace, and officials will be compensated for the knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as the time they have invested.

Meet Referee, Starter & Assistant Starter (if hired)

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| | Recommended |
| Dual, triangular, quad, up to 8 schools (approx. 4 to 6 hours) | \$250/Day |

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| 9 to 16 schools or more (approx. 7 or 8 hours) | \$300/Day |
| Large Relay/Conference/Last Chance Meets, more than 16 schools | \$350/Day |
| If middle school races are included in above meets (extra fee) | \$100 |
| Middle School Meet only (4 to 12 schools) | \$250 |
| Cross Country Meet (up to six races) | \$150 |
| • Additional races | \$25 each |

Shells

Shells (32 caliber or 9 mm caliber outdoors/22 caliber indoors) must be provided by the school or purchased from the starter. Shells at retail cost:

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|---|------------------------|
| 32 caliber box (50 shells) Winchester blanks: | \$60.00 to \$80.00/box |
| 32 caliber box (50 shells) Boland blanks: | \$50.00 to \$60.00/box |
| 22 caliber box (50 shells) Winchester blanks: | \$25.00 to \$40.00/box |
| 9 mm caliber box (50 shells) blanks: | \$25.00 to \$35.00/box |

NO GATOR SHELLS—They are dangerous, with possibility of multiple shells going off at once

Mileage

State rate to driver (67 cents/mile). Each official should receive mileage, unless they agree to travel together, then rider mileage to second & third official (18 cents/mile).

Contract contents

Contracts must contain the following information:

- Date and location of meet & start time
- Number of schools anticipated/invited
- Whether the meet includes middle school events and how many
- Mileage details
- Who is providing shells

Contingencies

If additional schools are added to contracted meets, for whatever reason, ADs need to adjustment the fee consistent with the above. Officials anticipating a 6 hour or less meet, now working a 6 to 10 hour meet must be compensated accordingly.

Additional Officials

Additional officials should be recruited to serve as assistant starter, clerk of the course, and to run field events (high jump; long & triple jump; pole vault; shot put; discus and javelin). Fees should be considered for those positions, when possible, and SDHSAA officials should be hired when practical.

New Officials

Do you know someone who may be interested in becoming a track & field and/or cross country official? The SDHSAA is always looking for new officials. Be on the lookout for someone to succeed you when you retire. Have them contact the SDHSAA and register.

Next Newsletter & Contributions

The SDCCTFOA will produce additional newsletters, one prior to cross country and one prior to track season. Anyone with topics for the newsletter is encouraged to reach out to J.D. Evans, Dana Nelson or Tim Casper. We need additional input and ideas, and many of you have things you may like to share. Thank you.