



March 18, 2026

NFHS Track and Field Weekly Rule Interpretations

Pace Lights and Pacing: Pace light technology is a frequent question received in the NFHS office.

SITUATION: During a meet the coach of team A asks that meet management utilize the electronic pacing light on the track for the 3200 meter race. Meet management asks the meet referee if this is permissible and is informed it is not. **RULING:** Correct Procedure.

COMMENT: NFHS rules consider this technology a type of aid and is not permissible. Any sort of pacing device or person is not permitted in high school races unless the individual is entered in the actual race. This prohibits adult pacers as well. [4-6-5 and 4-6-6]



SITUATION: During the 1600-meter run, a teammate of A1: (a) runs a few steps toward the track shouting encouragement, or (b) runs alongside A1 for five or more strides. **RULING:** Legal in (a). Illegal in (b). **COMMENT:** It is not the intent of the rule to disqualify anyone for a spontaneous act of enthusiasm. However, running alongside a competitor for five or more strides would be considered pacing. [4-6-5]

Assistance: The assessment of a downed competitor within the competition area by a health-care professional designated by the games committee, for the purpose of determining the competitor's ability to continue without providing assistance, shall not be considered aid. [4-6-5 note]

SITUATION: A1 is finishing the last lap of the 3200. On the back straightaway, A1 passes a fellow competitor and notices that B1 is struggling to breathe. A1 slows and helps B1 by holding the fellow competitor up. A1 continues to help around the curve when a health-care provider who was assisting an athlete at the pole vault finally runs out to help. A1 finishes the race. Both competitors are disqualified. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** A competitor who provides assistance to an injured or ill competitor should not be disqualified if neither the individual competitor providing the assistance nor the team gains an advantage as a result of providing the assistance. [4-6-5]

SITUATION: In the final stretch of the 3200, A1 appears to be shaky, displaying lack of balance, and extremely fatigued. A1 then falls to the ground and attempts to crawl to the finish line. A medical official, approved by the games committee, comes to evaluate the downed runner (A1) and (a) walks alongside and talks with the athlete as the athlete crawls, (b) helps A1 to their feet and determines A1 can complete the race on their own (c) helps A1 to their feet and assists A1 toward the finish line. **RULING:** (a) and (b) Legal, even though A1 was helped to their feet for the medical evaluation, A1 did not receive aid from the designated health-care professional (c) illegal, A1 was assisted down the track toward the

finish line and completion of race. **COMMENT:** The games committee will establish appropriate health-care professionals for a meet. These individuals may evaluate a downed competitor during a race without resulting in disqualification provided no assistance is given in progressing along the course. [4-6-5]

Recording during race or trial

SITUATION: In the triple jump, the event judge notices A1 is wearing a pair of glasses that have a light on the front during warm-ups. The judge notifies the athlete that they are not permitted to wear recording (audio or visual) devices during a trial nor in restricted areas on the track. **RULING:**

Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The event judge may also notify the head field judge of the warning. If the athlete continues to wear the recording devices during a trial the athlete is disqualified from the event. [4-6-6]



SITUATION: A2 shows up to the clerk wearing sunglasses for their 400 meter race. As the clerk places each athlete in lane and notices that A2's glasses now have a light on the bridge of the glasses. The clerk notifies the athlete they are not permitted to wear audio or visual recording devices during an event. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The clerk may also notify the meet referee and starters of the warning. If the athlete continues to wear the recording devices during a trial the athlete is disqualified from the event. [4-6-6]



SITUATION: A2 finishes the 200 meter race and the meet referee notices that there is recording device in their glasses. The meet referee notifies the athlete of their disqualification. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The athlete is not permitted to wear audio or video device during a race or trial or in restricted areas. [4-6-6]