

Officiating Tips for Coaches #5

This is the third event/role-specific article. The primary focus is on **SAFETY** rather than a rules review because a **SAFE** venue, along with the appropriate application of the rules, ensures a **FAIR** competition.

In general, the keys to ensuring a safe event are 1) the steps taken preparing the venue **BEFORE** the competition starts, and 2) the officiating crew being alert for safety issues arising **DURING** the competition.

Horizontal Jumps (long jump, triple jump)

LANDING PIT

Preparing the landing area is key in preventing injuries in the horizontal jumps. NFHS rules specify the landing pit must be a minimum of 9 feet wide and 23 feet long. The sand filling the pit should be at least 12 inches deep, level with the runway and free of all debris. (**Rule 6-9, Art. 16-17**)

Sand dries and compacts over time, becoming a hard, unyielding surface. In order to provide a soft and safe landing surface for athletes, it is critical that the sand in the pit be wet down and turned over in preparation for the meet. Any debris must be removed and the pit raked smooth during the warm-up as well as between jumps during the competition. No markers should be placed in the landing area.

RUNWAY & BOARDS

The runway should be a minimum of 130 feet long and 42 to 48 inches wide (**Rule 6-9, Art. 14**), and swept clean of debris before and during the competition.

The foul line, measured from the leading edge of the landing pit to the front edge of the foul line, can be adjusted to accommodate the level/skill of the competitors. The standard/suggested distance in the long jump is 12 feet for boys and 8 feet for girls; in the triple jump, the distances are 32 feet for boys and 24 feet for girls (**Rule 6-9, Art. 17A & Table**). The take-off board should be a minimum of 8 inches wide, and may be up to 24 inches wide, extending across, perpendicular to and level with the runway (**Rule 6-9, Art. 15**).

If there is more than one take-off board, an orange cone should be placed outside the runway adjacent to the board chosen by the athlete prior to taking a jump.

The official judging the take-off should stand exactly even with the foul line; even the slightest variation in this position, closer to or further from the landing pit, will result in an inaccurate call, fair or foul.

In the triple jump an official needs to verify that the athlete's first step after take-off is with the same foot ("hop"), followed by a step with opposite foot ("skip") prior to jumping.

Everyone needs to be ALERT for people, animals or objects crossing the runway and competition area during warm-up and competition.

MEASUREMENT

Measurement is taken from the mark closest to the foul line made by the athlete (zero on the tape measure) and perpendicular to the foul line. Only legal/fair jumps are measured.

Since the landing pit is wider than the runway, it is possible for an athlete to land outside the width of the runway. Therefore, to keep the measurement perpendicular to the foul line, a straight edge (e.g. - a yardstick) can be used to extend the foul line. Measurement is made to the nearest lesser 1/4 inch.

If an item worn by an athlete (e.g. - glasses) falls off during the jump and lands separate from the athlete, it is not counted in the measurement (Rule 6-7, Art. 4).

As with the throws, ALL legal/fair jumps should be measured and recorded.