



Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union

PO Box 10348 - Des Moines, Iowa 50306 - (515) 288-9741

Iowa High School Athletic Association

PO Box 10 - Boone, Iowa 50036 - (515) 432-2011



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Dear Cross Country Coaches and Officials:

We have now had two full weeks of competition. Fortunately there is cooler weather in the forecast. The hot and humid weather caused some very difficult conditions.

Rule Book - Cross Country rules are found in Rule 9 of the National Federation of State High School Associations Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Book. We are still using the 2007 book that was mailed to schools and officials last spring.

Heat and Hydration - Hopefully the hot and humid weather is over, however, we still may have some hot and humid days ahead. There can also be concerns on days with extreme cold and wind. Both organizations have had telephone calls regarding IHSAA or IGHS AU policies for when competition should or should not be held. Neither organizations has such policies and decisions regarding competition lie with the host school and the meet management. Individual schools need to make decisions as to whether or not student athletes should be competing. In inclement conditions, meet managers can shorten the races to a minimum of two miles. **Fluids During Races** – We have shared this information with you before, but a quick review may be helpful. Rule 9-7-4(Note) says: “Providing liquids during competition is not considered to be an aid or assistance.” If the meet host has aid stations set up, that is the only fluids athletes are allowed to receive during the race. If the meet host has not set up aid stations, then fluids may be provided by **members of that team**. By rule, team members are coaches, contestants, managers and trainers. Fluids must be provided and used in a manner that does not interfere with other competitors.

Uniforms - Neither organization has had uniform concerns, however, with cooler weather more questions will be asked about undergarments, hats and gloves. Please remember, like relay runners in track, when more than one member of a team chooses to wear undergarments, those undergarments must all be the same single, solid color, unadorned except for a single manufactures logo/trademark or school name/emblem. The length of undergarments does not need to be the same, but the color must be. Rule 3-2-4(o) gives the game committee (host school) the authority to “restrict the wearing of items which are worn in excess of the school uniform.” National rules and both IHSAA and IGHS AU regulations prohibit all jewelry (except watches worn on the wrist), and restrict the wearing of hats and gloves unless conditions warrant their use. Other items like sunglasses, head bands and wrist bands can be controlled by the management of each meet. Anything allowed by a local meet still must be in accordance with National Federation rules. For example, hats must be still be a single solid colored unadorned except for a single manufactures logo/trademark or school name/emblem appropriately sized. It is customary for most meets to allow these items to be worn.

Junior High Meet Limitation – There has been some confusion caused by a misprint in the IHSAA Junior High Manual. The meet limitation rule for junior high boys was changed last year. Both junior high boys and girls are allowed to compete in seven (7) meets.

Races Involving Elementary Students - We are still receiving calls regarding “fun runs” for elementary students prior to cross country meets. Please be reminded that Iowa Department of Education rules prohibit interscholastic competition below the seventh grade. Member schools should not be entering or transporting students below the seventh grade to this type of event.

Hair Devices - Hair devices for girls must be soft and unadorned (no pictures, initials, numbers, polka dots, etc). The color may be multi-colored and may vary from athlete to athlete. Nothing hard may be worn in the hair (including barrettes, bobby pins, beads, etc). Hair devices do not have to be the same color for all athletes. Headbands, however, must be a single solid color and must be the same color for all runners who choose to wear them.

Pet Policy– Be reminded that the I.H.S.A.A. and the I.G.H.S.A.U. have policies in place governing pets being allowed at the district/regional and state meets. This policy does not apply to local events unless the local school district has adopted a similar policy.

Assistance During the Race - Both organizations have had calls and emails regarding contact between competitors and fans during the race. Some of this is innocent “high 5’ing” between competitors and spectators. This contact is not illegal by rule, however, this type of contact creates questions as to whether or not the competitor is receiving assistance. Although not illegal, it is our recommendation that coaches instruct their athletes to avoid contact with spectators during the race. Have your student athletes concentrate on their running form and competition, and not make contact with spectators. We want to remind you of our interpretation of “**pacing**.” “Pacing” is a when someone runs beside an athlete in competition. The question is often asked who far can a person run beside a competitor? Although the rules do not prescribe a specific distance, anyone running beside a competitor for more than 10 meters faces the possibility of the competitor’s disqualification. Pacing falls under rule 9-7-4 which states: “. . receives assistance from any other person.” Coaches, please help your parents, family members, friends and fans understand that they can cause a runner to be disqualified. Stepping up to the running lane to offer encouragement and information is fine, however, doing so while running beside the competitor will lead to disqualification.

District/Regional Assignments and Scoring - We have already posted the sites of the district/regional meets on our websites. Early in the week of October 1 we will post the actual assignments. Please check either www.ighsau.org or www.iahsaa.org for those assignments. We will be using displacement scoring at the district/regional and state meets this year. Displacement scoring was recommended by the Cross Country Advisory Committee and will be used. Displacement scoring means that “if fewer than five competitors of a team finish, the places of all members of that team shall be disregarded and the team scores re-ranked.”

If you have any cross country questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

David Anderson
Assistant Executive Director

Mike Dick
Associate Director