

## Pole Vault Meet Management and Coaches Expectations

### **MEET DIRECTORS/MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITIES: Legal and safety issues**

Prior to warm-up, the head field judge, meet director/manager, host coach and the head field event judge shall inspect each venue to ensure it is safe and legal for competition. Meet directors/managers are required to supply event officials with proper forms for attesting to and verifying compliance with NFHS pole vaulting rules. CHSAA has provided a sample check-in/inspection form for event judges, however, any form may be used to notate the above expectations. Such forms will have a place for the referee or head field event judge (a certified official) to sign verifying that the athletes have been weighed and all poles have been inspected before competition. **If a certified scale is not available, the pole vault event will not be conducted.** Following the competition, meet management shall keep all forms on file with the meet results.

### **MEET MANAGEMENT:** provide pole vault officials with the following equipment:

Compliant landing pad, standards, base pads and ASTM box collar	Certified scale
100' tape measure	Two Bar lifters (to raise crossbars)
25' steel tape measure	Stop watch
Three pole vault crossbars (they will break)	Flags (red, white and yellow)
Two Standard extenders (to jump at lower heights)	Clip board and pencils
Accurate vertical measuring device (to measure beyond 17')	Broom
Bungee (Elastic crossbar)	Level & Plumb bob with line
Duct tape	

### **COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES: Emphasize safety**

Prior to practices and competitions:

- Landing pads must be legal and properly maintained. Pads that are too soft need to be repaired or replaced.
- The standards must be checked for proper placement, condition and padding.
- Adequate padding must cover hard surfaces surrounding the landing pad, including the vaulting box and the standards.
- The ASTM F2949-18 box collar is mandatory and must be anchored to the ground or inner walls of the plant box.
- Poles must be checked regularly for cracks and scratches and to ensure they are legal, which includes a legible manufacturer's top handhold numerical weight rating. The tape at the top of the pole must be uniform.
- Proper supervision must be provided at all times. Vaulters should not be allowed to vault without a coach present.
- Make sure the vaulters land in the Preferred Landing Zone (PLZ) and under control.

Coaches are required to verify each vaulter's weight, the weight rating of the poles being used and the legality of the poles to be used for both warm-up and competition throughout the season (NFHS Rule 6-8, Article 14, 15, 16, 17).

**Altered poles** – poles that have been cut or are improperly marked -- are illegal. Occasionally, the markings on the top handhold band are not legible rendering the pole to be illegal. Hand written weight ratings do not meet the requirement of the rules (See Case Book 6.8.14, 6.8.15 A & B, 6.8.16 A & B). Recommend measuring the length of each pole to verify that it has not been cut. Verify that the etchings/engravings/embedded information at either the top or bottom of each pole matches the weight rating above or below the top hand hold band. Replacement labels are available from most manufacturers. Some companies may recertify a pole for a nominal fee.

## Pole Vault Safety and Set-up Considerations

**Run backs are not allowed during warm-up or competition! Rule 6-2, Article 7.**

**All pole vault coaches must have proof of NFHS Course; Coaching Pole Vault: Successful Skill Development. Send certificate to Audra Peterson Cathy at [apetersoncathy@chsaa.org](mailto:apetersoncathy@chsaa.org). A list of coaches who have submitted a valid certificate to the CHSAA office can be found by going [HERE](#).** (The course is free through [NFHS](#))

Athletic Directors and coaches need to inspect their track equipment and venue on a regular basis to ensure safety and compliance with NFHS and CHSAA rules and guidelines. Prior to every competition, the host school coach, meet director, meet referees and event officials must inspect the venue to ensure it is safe and set up properly. Most pole vault accidents are attributed to things that are controllable, and thus, preventable.

**Runway:** The recommended minimum length of the runway is 130 feet.

**Landing Pad:** Is the landing pad legal size (minimum 19'8" wide by 20'2" deep)? Is the pad too soft and is there a common top cover or pad extending over all sections of the pit? Is the leading edge of the landing pad no more than 3" from the inside edge of the top of the back of the plant box (zero line)? Consider the location of the landing pad. Is the landing pad too close to the track? Is it possible that poles or crossbars could land on the track and hit a contestant during a race? If so, the pole vault event may have to be conducted at a separate time, either before or after running events. (See NFHS Rule 6-9 Articles 26 and 27)

**Standards/Uprights:** Are the standards properly aligned with the zero indications? Is the width between the standard pins more than 13'8" and less than 14'8" apart? Crossbars are between 14'8" and 14'10" long. Are the pegs tight and level? Will the crossbar remain on the pegs for all heights and standards settings with the end pieces in the correct position? If the crossbar does not remain on the pegs, the standard bases may be too close or too far apart, or the equipment being used may be from different companies. It is not appropriate to tape the end pieces to the crossbar or to slide the end pieces in or out to fit on the pegs. Is the crossbar level? The ground may not be level between each standard and markings on the standards may not be accurate. Are all exposed portions of the standard framework padded? Are the standards anchored or weighted to prevent them from tipping over? Are there any gaps that need additional padding between the standards and the landing pad? (See NFHS Rule 6-9 Articles 29 and 30)

**Hard Surfaces:** Concrete, metal, wood or asphalt that extend from under the landing pad or between the planting box and the landing pad shall be padded with a minimum of 2 inches of dense foam or other suitable material. (See NFHS Rule 6-9, Article 28, 33, 35). Although polyurethane, rubberized surfaces or even hard/frozen grass surrounding the pole vault pit are not addressed, CHSAA recommends padding these surfaces. How far should one place additional padding out from the pole vault pit? In most cases, three to four feet of additional padding may be sufficient.

**Planting box:** The front edge of the planting box shall not extend above the grade of the runway surface. **Plant box padding meeting the applicable ASTM Specification Standard is required.** (See NFHS Rule 6-9 Articles 31, 33 & 35). **The ASTM F-2949-18 box collar padding shall be anchored to the ground or inner walls of the plant box and the leading edge of the collar shall be no less than 22" and no more than 23" apart. Please check "Pole Vault Box Collar Installation" under a separate tab.** The CHSAA track committee requests that coaches, officials, and meet directors understand the proper installation of the plant box padding.

**Illegal Poles:** Cut poles, incorrectly labeled poles and pole labels with hand written numbers are illegal. Coaches are responsible to understand what constitutes a legal pole and to ensure their athletes are using a legal pole. Poles with a weight rating below the vaulter's weight are not allowed in warm-ups or competition. Officials will inspect poles prior to and during competition. (Please see pole inspection requirements in the **Pole Vault Officials Pre-Meet Guidelines tab**. (See NFHS Rule 6-8 Articles 14, 15, 16, 17 and Rule 3-10 Article 1)

*Note: Typically, 3 to 4 poles are found to be illegal and subsequently disqualified each year at the state meet. Everyone needs to be aware of what constitutes legal poles.*

**Please visit the USATF Best Practices Library for additional information: <https://www.flipsnack.com/USATF/pole-vault/full-view.html>**

**Please note: Adherence to the NFHS rules may not eliminate all possible injuries. However, we must continually strive to reduce the potential for injury relating to the sport of pole vaulting.**

## Box Collar Installation - Pole Vault

Pole vault box collars are used to reduce the risk and severity of injury in and around the plant box area.

Officials should inspect box collar positioning prior to an event and constantly during warm-ups and competitions, repositioning whenever misalignment is detected.

To be effective and compliant, the box collar needs to be installed in accordance with the ASTM Designation F2949-18 "Standard Specifications for Pole Vault Box Collars". Detailed information regarding ASTM 2949-18 terminology, performance requirements, dimensions, and impact testing can be found at the following link: <https://www.astm.org/Standards/F2949.htm> Further details of the standard follow:

- 1) **Minimum dimensions** of the box collar - A pole vault box collar shall be **at least 122 cm (48 in.) wide and 146 cm (57 1/2 in.) long.**
- 2) **Width of the cutout at the front** of the box collar - At the box collar's uppermost surface, the horizontal distance from left to right across the leading edge of the box collar cutout **shall be no less than 56 cm (22 in.) and no more than 58 cm (23 in.).**
- 3) **Maximum thickness** of the box collar - A pole vault box collar **shall be no more than 10 cm (4 in.) thick.**
- 4) **The body** of the box collar **shall extend rearward at least 30 cm (12 in.) and shall extend laterally at least 15 cm (6 in.) under the front buns** of the pole vault landing system.
- 5) Installation **shall not impede the bend of the pole.**
- 6) The box collar **shall be fixed to the ground or the inner walls of the planting box.**

If the box collar is not positioned correctly or is not properly anchored to the ground, it may move under the landing pad, creating potentially dangerous situations where the size of the plant box opening is reduced (if the leading edge of the box collar wings move closer together, or the size of the bend cavity opening is reduced, preventing the pole from rotating in the plant box).

## Pole Vault – Officials Pre-Meet Guidelines

**Recommend arriving 90 minutes prior to the competition to prepare the venue -- Landing pad, standards, check-in location for weigh-in and pole inspection.**

**Upon arrival, contact the Meet Director and Head Field Referee to obtain to following information:** will there be an officials' meeting, location of the coaches' box, use of electronic devices, excused athlete procedure, where to pick up and return event sheets, what are the starting heights and increments, spike length and type limitations, windy conditions considerations, meet and state records. For state record attempts, the Head Field Referee must measure the height with a certified measuring device before each record attempt if the crossbar has been touched.

**EVENT JUDGE RESPONSIBILITIES: Provide a safe and fair competition (do not make up a rule)**

**Venue Preparation:** Prior to every track meet, the *Head Field Referee and the Head Pole Vault Judge* will inspect the venue to ensure it is safe and compliant with NFHS rules. Items to be inspected include pit dimensions, standards (padded, aligned correctly, and anchored), the ASTM F2949-18 approved box collar in place and anchored to the ground, hard surfaces padded around the landing pad, the planting box is level with or below the runway surface and all objects (chairs, benches, and poles) are moved at least 15 feet from the landing area. Refer to **Pole Vault Safety and Set-up Considerations for specific information under a separate tab.** (See NFHS Rule 6-9, Articles 24 through 35).

**Weigh-In Procedures:** Prior to warm-up, the Event Judge will weigh each athlete (with their shoes) on a certified scale. **If a certified scale is not available, the pole vault event will not be conducted.**

**Pole Inspection Procedures:** The Event Judge will inspect each pole to be used in the competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment (NFHS Rule 6-8, Article 17 and Rule 3-10, Article 1).

1. Every vaulting pole has a safe hand hold zone, a one-inch circular top handhold band, which is located at the very top of the pole (Gill, Essx, and Altius) to about six inches from the top of the pole (UCS Spirit). (NFHS Rule 6-8, Article 15).
2. The manufacturer's weight rating on each pole shall be a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch numbers in contrasting colors located either within or above the top handhold band. The weight rating numbers must be legible and verified with the etchings/engravings/embedded information and labels on each pole. Etchings, engravings or embedded information, although containing pole characteristics for the manufacturer, shall not replace the requirement for the manufacturer's weight rating label. Sometimes, the top handhold weight rating labels are not readable which will render the pole illegal. Coaches may order replacement labels from the manufacturers. Be aware that replacement labels have been placed on the wrong pole. If there is a discrepancy between the numbers on the etchings/engravings/embedded information, labels or the top handhold band, the pole will be illegal, unless a letter from the manufacturer explains the discrepancy. Homemade marks placed on the pole are not acceptable. (NFHS Rule 6-8, Articles 15 & 16).
3. The length of each pole must be verified (suggest using a tape measure) to compare the pole length with the etchings/engravings/embedded information and labels (NFHS Rule 6-8, Article 16).
4. The tape at the top of the pole must be of uniform thickness (NFHS Rule 6-8, Article 14).

Once the poles have been verified by the official as being legal equipment, it is the responsibility of the coach, vaulter, and the event judge to ensure that only a properly rated pole is used. During warm-up and competition, a designated official will verify that a legal pole will be used for each attempt and that the athlete's weight is below the pole's rating. Officials may mark the poles so that it is obvious that they have been verified for this meet. When marking poles, do not cover up any etchings or labels with tape which could slow down pole inspections at subsequent events. Warming up without the contestant's coach or event official could result in a disqualification.

**Check out possible athlete briefing items under Pole Vault Officials Briefing Considerations under a separate tab.**

**Officials' Personal Equipment (minimum):**

25' Steel tape measure (just in case)

Level

Plumb bob and line

Metric conversion chart for pole inspections

Stop watch

Pole inspection marking supplies (sharpies and tape)

Duct tape and athletic tape

Current NFHS Rule Book and Case Book

Pencils and clip board

Suggested Tools (wrenches, shims, WD-40, clamps)

**Minimum equipment that Meet Management needs to provide pole vault officials:**

Compliant landing pad, standards, base pads and ASTM box collar

100' tape measure

25' steel tape measure

Three pole vault crossbars (they will break)

Two Standard extenders (to jump at lower heights)

\*\*Accurate vertical measuring device (to measure beyond 17')

Bungee (Elastic crossbar)

Certified scale

Two Bar lifters (to raise crossbars)

Stop watch

Flags (red, white and yellow)

Clip board and pencils

Broom

Level and Plumb bob

**\*\* Resting a pole against the crossbar is not an accurate measuring device.**

**Please visit the USATF Best Practices Library for additional information: <https://www.flipsnack.com/usatf/pole-vault/full-view.html>**

## POLE VAULT Official's Briefing Considerations

Brief athletes upon arrival: Run backs are not allowed during warm-up or competition!

Confirm all athletes have been weighed and poles checked prior to the start of warm-ups. **See Pole Vault Official Pre-Meet Guidelines under a separate tab.**

Confirm starting heights and standard placement for each athlete during warm-ups.

Make certain that uniforms are legal as pertains to the uniform rule---school issued or approved uniform. Foundation garments (undergarments) are not subject to uniform restrictions. Waistband logos are not subject to size requirements.

Electronic devices are not allowed in the competition area. Videos or pictures may be viewed, but only outside the competition area or in a designated coaches' box.

At every height change, call out everyone jumping at that height. Keep athletes jumping at that height on the runway and in order.

Confirm standard placement while "On Deck" (range 18"-31.5").

Once called, athletes will have one minute, or the prescribed time limit, to initiate your trial. Passing a trial, must be confirmed before being called for that attempt.

Athletes competing in other events: Athletes must check out and check in with the event official and the times will be recorded on the event sheet. The Games Committee shall determine the procedure for excused athletes (Rule 3.2.3.a and Rule 6.2.3 and 4). Recommend the following procedure at local and qualifying meets to prevent long delays waiting for athletes to return to the competition. "After checking out to compete in another event, an athlete will have 10 minutes to return. If the athlete does not return within the 10-minute excused time limit, the competition will continue in the athlete's absence. All efforts shall be taken to allow the athletes to jump out of order, either before or after being excused, to preclude delays.

A competitor who has passed three consecutive heights after the competition has begun, and has not attempted a jump, is permitted two minutes for warm-up jumps without the crossbar in place. Competitors must take at least one attempt at that height and the warm-up jump must be taken at a height change.

Number of athletes competing at the start of the round**	Individual Events			Combined Events		
	HJ	PV	Other FE	HJ	PV	Other FE
More than 3	1	1	1	1	1	1
2 or 3 remaining	3	3	1	3	3	1
1 remaining	5	5	1	5	5	1
Consecutive trials*	2	3	2	2	3	2

\*Consecutive trials are within a height or at a height change.

\*\*Time limits are based on the "Number of athletes remaining in the competition at the start of a round".

# CHSAA Pole Inspection Procedures

**Weigh each athlete on a certified scale.** Athletes must be weighed, with shoes, prior to every competition. Annotate the athlete's exact weight next to the athlete's name on the start list. During the weigh in, also check the athlete's uniform (logos, colors, and compliance), excessive jewelry, and spike length. Undergarments are now called foundation garments and are no longer subject to logo, trademark, or color restrictions.

**Inspecting poles:** Officials should take a **reasonable approach to inspecting poles**, but need to adhere to the following rules:

**NFHS Rule 6.8.15, Note 2.** Each state association shall determine its own procedure regarding coaches' verification.

**NFHS Rule 3.10.1,** The field referee or head field judge shall have jurisdiction over all judges in all field events; shall oversee the measuring, weighing and inspection of the implements and apparatus, including vaulting poles; check records; and see that the field events start on time and continue without delay.

**NFHS Rule 6.8.17,** Prior to warm-up, the field referee or the head field judge shall inspect each pole to be used in competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment, per **Rule 6.8.15. and 3.10.1**

—Some officials are disqualifying poles based on their personal interpretations and concepts while other officials do not inspect poles. Using the following guidelines prior to every competition should help ensure they use a legal pole on every jump and to protect the officials from any liability implications.

## What makes a pole illegal?

**NFHS Rule 6.8.16, Note: Altering the pole in any fashion renders it illegal.** All poles, no matter how old they are, have either etchings, engravings, tags, or permanent embedded information indicating the length and weight rating when shipped from the manufacturer. If this information is not on the pole, it has been altered. Older poles that might not meet the specifications of today's rule can be recertified through the manufacturer.

Officials will check the following four specific items: pole length, pole weight, top hand hold band, and tape at the grip end:

### 1. Pole Length

All poles must be measured to determine if they have been altered (cut). Some poles are marked metrically, some have English/Imperial markings; and some have both. The chart below may be used to verify length and weight conversions from metric to English. At times a coach may have to file rough edges off the bottom of the pole to prevent further splitting to prolong the pole life. So, there could be a slight disagreement of one to two inches between the actual length and what is etched or embedded on the pole; this is considered reasonable. *If a pole has been cut or altered beyond the reasonable considerations, the pole is not legal.*

### 2. Pole markings - NFHS Rule 6.8.15 Note 1: Etchings, serial numbers, etc. that may appear on poles shall not replace the requirement of the manufacturer's pole rating of the minimum 3/4 inch marking in contrasting color on each pole.

The etchings, engravings and serial numbers are used to verify the information on the top hand hold band. Sometimes the weight rating etching, engraving or embedded information may not match exactly to what is located on the top hand hold band. This is primarily an issue with Gill poles. In 2003 the Gill Company recalibrated the weight ratings on some poles which changed weight ratings by 5-10 pounds. When replacing worn out or unreadable top hand hold bands/labels on older poles, the weight rating on the new band/label may not match with what is etched on the pole. In this case officials need to understand that weight ratings etched on the Gill poles manufactured in 2003 and earlier may differ by as much as 5-10 pounds from the information on the new top hand hold bands/labels. According to the Gill Company, these poles have not been altered, just recalibrated and should be allowed for warm up and competition. Gill has published a letter reflecting these issues. This is also considered reasonable. If the manufacturer's weight rating is no longer visible or recognizable on or above the top hand hold band, the top hand hold band must be replaced. Using a magic marker or sharpie to write the weight rating on a top hand hold band does not satisfy this requirement. *If the original weight rating label or the replacement weight rating label does not otherwise match the etched/engraved information on the pole, with respect to the information above, the pole is not legal.*

### 3. Labels - NFHS Rule 6.8.15, The manufacturer must include on each pole: the pole rating that shall be a minimum of 3/4 inch in contrasting color located within or above the top hand hold position; a 1-inch circular band indicating the top hand hold position with the position being determined by the manufacturer.

The placement of the top hand hold band varies with manufacturers, from approximately 6 inches from the top of the pole to the very top of the pole. The top hand hold band placement does not need to be an exact placement, *just reasonable*. Manufacturers have either engraved or embedded pole information at the top or bottom of each pole. Some manufacturers include pole information on the top hand hold bands/labels. You need to become familiar with how each manufacturer labels poles so you know where to look and how to find this information. When labels need to be replaced, encourage coaches to place the new label in a location that does not cover up the etched/engraved information and ensure the labels are placed on the correct pole. *If the manufacturer's top hand hold band is missing or unreadable, the pole is not legal.*

### 4. Tape - NFHS Rule 6.8.14, The pole may have binding layers of adhesive tape of uniform thickness on the grip end.

Simply check to make sure the tape at the grip end of the pole is uniform/smooth and provides no unfair advantage to the athlete.

## English versus Metric Pole Length and Weight Comparisons

### Length Comparisons:

#### Gill Products

Imperial	Metric
10'	310
10'6"	325
11'	335
11'6"	350
12'	360
12'6"	375
13'1"	400
13'6"	415
14'	425
14'6"	440
15'	460
15'6"	470
16'1"	490
16'5'	500
16'9	510

#### UCS Products

Imperial	Metric
10'8"	325
11'6"	350
12'4"	370
13'4"	400
13'7"	415
14'1"	430
14'7"	445
15'1"	460
15'7"	475
16'1"	490
16'5"	500

### Weight Comparisons:

Pounds	Kilograms
80	36
90	41
100	45
110	50
115	52
120	54
125	57
130	59
135	61
140	63
145	66
150	68
155	70
160	73
165	75
170	77
175	80
180	82
185	84
190	86
195	88
200	91
205	93

Gill poles that are 10' long have a different rating scale

1 equals 70 pounds, 2 equals 90 pounds

#### Gill 10' poles

Number	Pounds
1	70
2	90
3	110
4	130

## State Meet Pole Vault Competition Information 2024

### General Info:

Start heights: 6 inches below the lowest qualifier for 2A through 5A, 12 inches for 1A.

Progressions: 6 inches until there are 3 athletes' remaining (at the start of a new height), then 3 inches.

Warm-up bungee height settings: determined by officials.

Run backs are not allowed!

Pole vaulters should have priority entering the facility at 7:15am through the North East gate at Jeffco.

Scarves and hats are not permitted.

Coaches are not allowed inside the fence (competition area) except to momentarily, bring in or takeout pole bags.

### Check-in procedures:

Check-in at the West end of the runway. Athletes may check-in early on their competition day, official availability permitting.

Weigh-in: competition uniform, with shoes.

Spikes: 3/16 inch or less will be checked.

Pole inspection location: next to the weigh-in location.

Poles will be measured to ensure that they haven't been cut. Labels must show the entire weight rating. Labels and etchings/bar codes will be compared to confirm pole weight rating. Tape may have to be removed to check etchings. Tape at the top of the pole must be uniform, no notches.

**Warm-ups:** a countdown clock will display the time when warm-ups will end, which is typically 4 minutes prior to the competition start time.

**Athlete and Coach briefing:** Coaches and athletes will be given a briefing explaining how the competition will be conducted.

**Coaches box:** A cordoned off area located outside of the fence near the takeoff area.

**Electronic devices** (phones, iPads, etc.) are not allowed inside the fence. Coaches may take videos from anywhere outside the fence, athletes may view videos next to the fence under the scoreboard.

**Changes to standard settings:** Any changes to standard settings must come from the athlete.

**Runway markers** (2) will be available to each athlete. Chalk and shoes will not be allowed on the runway. A tape measure will be taped to the edge of the runway.

**Athletes will be polled** during warm-ups to obtain starting heights and standard settings.

**Athletes competing in multiple events simultaneously during their pole vault competition:** Athletes will not leave the pole vault area any earlier than **10 minutes** prior to the scheduled track event they are competing in. Competitors must check-out with the flight coordinator before leaving to compete in another event. If they leave to participate in a track event, they are expected to check back in with the flight coordinator within **five minutes** of the completion of that competitor's heat or final. If they leave to participate in another field event, they are expected to check-in and out at each event within **three minutes** after taking an attempt at the previous event. If the athlete does not return in the allotted time, the competition will continue during the athlete's absence. Upon arrival, the athlete will re-enter the competition at the current height. Event judges will make every attempt to facilitate the competitors' needs; however, the athlete is expected to be available in a timely fashion to take their attempts in order.

**Weather contingencies:** Officials may suspend the competition for safety reasons: rain, lightning and snow. A final decision will be made by the Referee or Games Committee (GC). Warm-ups following a substantial delay will be determined by the Referee or GC.

