



Attached, you will find:

1. Safety considerations
2. Pit specifications
3. Procedures to be used by pole vault coaches and meet officials.
4. A pole vault verification and pole inspection checklist to be used by head pole vault judges.
5. Pole vault verification cards – to be completed by coaches prior to each pole vault event and presented to the head pole vault judge at each meet if on site weigh-in is not possible.
6. A sample pole vault event sheet to be used by the head pole vault judge.

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE POLE VAULT

To diminish the potential for injury in the sport of pole vaulting, the rules now require the vaulter to use a "pole rated at or above the vaulters' current body weight." Since the inception of the fiberglass pole, manufacturers have indicated that vaulters should not use poles rated below their body weight. However, in the opinion of the rules committee, there has been an increasing tendency for vaulters to use softer poles (poles rated below the vaulters body weight), which may increase the potential for injury.

Every pole has a safe hand hold zone, which is usually located six inches from the top of the pole. Several manufacturers produce poles with a safe top hand hold position less than six inches from the top of the pole (Gill certifies their poles to the very top of the pole). The rule requires that the manufactures must include on each pole: the pole weight rating that shall be a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in contrasting color located within or above the top hand hold position; a one inch circular band indicating the maximum top hand hold position with the position being determined by the manufacturer. Failure to have the manufacturer's  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch contrasting color weight rating on or above the top handhold position renders the pole illegal for use in competition. Etchings, serial numbers, etc., although containing pole characteristics for the manufacturer, shall not replace the pole rating manufacturer's mark. To minimize the risk, a pole that has been altered in any fashion renders the pole illegal for competition (including warmups prior to competition). An altered pole most specifically applies to a pole that has been cut, so the length of each pole must be verified. An altered pole also applies if the pole etchings/serial numbers do not match the markings on or above the top hand hold band. Home made marks placed on the pole are not acceptable (includes pre-1995 poles). Coaches, officials and competitors are responsible to ensure that all poles are legal.

When the vaulter holds above the safety zone it changes how the pole bends and may have a negative affect concerning the vault. Holding above the top handhold marking could cause the pole to bend excessively and, therefore, not perform properly.

It shall now count as an unsuccessful trial when the vaulter grips the pole above the top hand hold band.

It is now the responsibility of the coach to verify the vaulter's current weight. The coach must also verify that each vaulter will use the properly rated pole throughout the competition.

Each state association will determine their own procedure to comply with Rule 7-5-5. Suggested procedures might include:

1. Requiring coaches to initial the event sheet to verify each vaulters weight and acknowledgement that a legal pole(s) have been provided or;
2. State association certification form signed by proper school officials or;
3. The weighting in of all competitors prior to competition. Also, require the coach to initial the event sheet to acknowledge that a legal pole(s) have been provided;
4. Or any other method developed and approved by a state association that complies with Rule 7-5-5.

Prior to and during competition, the head pole vault judge should inspect each pole to be used in the competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment. See event judge responsibilities for inspection requirements.

Competitors, who use a pole during warm-up or competition with a pole that is either improperly marked, altered or rated below the vaulter's weight, will be considered to be using illegal equipment and shall be disqualified from the event. If a vaulter attempts to use an illegal pole, the individual will not be allowed to compete until a legal pole is secured. If during competition a vaulter is discovered using an illegal pole, the vaulter shall be immediately disqualified from the event.

We know that coaches understand the need to improve the safety of this event and will continue to work toward that end. The committee is also confident that coaches will instruct the vaulter as to the proper use of the pole to include not using a pole rated below the vaulters weight or gripping the pole above the safety zone. Coaches in other sports are asked to verify that their athletes are wearing or using legal or proper equipment, so this is certainly not a new procedure.

Regarding hard or unyielding surfaces, it is mandated that concrete, metal, wood or asphalt that may extend out from under the landing pad be cut away and removed or pad these hard surfaces with a minimum of two inches of dense foam or other suitable material(s). Although polyurethane or rubberized surfaces surrounding the pole vault pit are exempt from this rule, CHSAA recommends padding these surfaces. We have been asked how far should one pad out from the landing pad? The size of the landing pad and length of poles being used by the vaulters is certainly a determining factor. When using a larger landing pad (larger than 19'8" by 20'2"), three to four feet of additional padding should be sufficient. However, when using the mandated landing pad, and using longer poles (14' or longer), it may be necessary to pad out a further distance. In other words, pad out as far as the longest pole can carry the vaulter on an errant vault. Another question frequently **asked is, when** the landing pad is located next to the asphalt track, how can you pad the curb or track and conduct running events? You cannot. We suggest that the pole vault event begin much earlier so there is no interference with the running events.

The adoption of rules 7-5-3 and 7-5-7 may not eliminate all possible injuries, but the adherence to these rules should reduce the potential for injury. We all must continually strive to reduce the potential of injury relating to the sport of pole vaulting and the adoption of these new rules is certainly a positive step in that direction.

### **Other Recommendations to Help Promote Safety in this Event:**

1. Landing pads be maintained, reconditioned or replaced when extended use or exposure to the elements affect the density or load capabilities of the pad.
2. Proper supervision should be provided at all times. A vaulter should not be allowed to vault alone. The landing pad, standards and poles must be checked prior to participation.
3. By rule, all exposed projections on the base of the standards or uprights must be padded or covered. Adjustment knobs should be located on the outside of the standards.
4. It is recommended that only a non-metal, circular crossbar be used.
5. Vaulting poles should be continuously inspected for cracks, dents or scratches, which can reduce the original stress level of the pole.
6. Special clinics emphasizing safety procedures and appropriate teaching techniques should be offered for coaches who do not have a strong background in vaulting.
7. Because of the complexity of the event, as well as important safety considerations, pole-vaulters need a significant amount of diversified conditioning before they should be allowed to vault for height.
8. Although the vaulter is in the position to be the best judge of when he/she may not get into the landing pad and therefore must abort the attempt, coaches need to emphasize how the vaulter arrives at this decision.
9. The first rule for terminating an attempt after becoming airborne is to hang onto the pole and look for a safe place to land, then release the pole if over the landing pad, or ride the pole to the safest landing area.
10. If smaller or minimum depth landing pads are in use, caution should be urged where 14' poles or longer are used.
11. It is advised that the vaulter should be able to vault his/her handgrip before raising the grip. A higher grip may magnify any technique flaws.
12. The space between the stop board and landing pad must be covered by wrestling mat material or similar padded material.
13. Correct alignment and safe pole penetration is urged at all times.
14. With a large bend and deep penetration a stronger pole should be used. With a small bend and deep penetration a higher grip, not to exceed the top safety zone, could be used. With a large bend and poor penetration, a lower grip should be used. With a small bend and poor penetration a softer pole, not below the body weight, should be used. (A large bend would be defined as 90 degrees or more).

# POLE VAULT PROCEDURES

## COACHES

Coaches are expected to monitor their vaulters' weight and be able to attest to their weight at any time during the season both during practices and at competitions. Their vaulters should always be using poles that are rated at or above each individual vaulter's weight.

At competitions, 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 (altered poles or poles that have been cut are illegal).

Coaches and vaulters may verify and/or use more than one pole during competition; however, all poles should be kept in the competition area (impounded). If a pole is broken during competition, a replacement pole may be submitted for certification.

The CHSAA shall supply forms for certification, but certification can be made on any form.

Coaches are responsible for ensuring that their contestants have been weighed and their poles have been inspected before warming up or competing on the runway. Warming up without the contestant's coach or event official could result in a disqualification.

## MEET DIRECTORS/MANAGERS

Meet officials are required to supply coaches and officials with proper forms for attesting to and verifying compliance with National Federation pole vaulting rules. Prior to warm up, the field referee, head field judge, or assigned inspector of implements shall inspect each pole to be used in competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment.

1. The competitor's weight shall be at or below the manufacturer's pole rating. The manufacturers must include on each pole: the pole rating that shall be a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in a contrasting color located within or above the top handhold position; a 1-inch circular band indicating the maximum top hand-hold position with the position being determined by the manufacturers. The length of each pole must also be verified. Inspectors will check for proper binding of not more than two layers of adhesive tape of uniform thickness. Prior to competition, the coach must verify that all of the schools' pole vaulters meets these requirements.

**NOTE:** All poles certified for a specific meet may be marked for that meet for easy identification by event judges.

2. A competitor shall not use a variable weight pole, a pole which is improperly marked, altered, or a pole rated below his/her weight during warm-up or competition.

**PENALTY: Disqualification from the event.**

Meet management shall have forms available (the CHSAA will supply such, but any form may be used) to notate the above expectations. Such forms will have a place for the referee, inspector of implements, or head field event judge (a certified official) to sign verifying all poles for competition.

Meet management shall keep all forms (the officials' verification and the coaches' attest cards) on file with all meet results.

## **EVENT JUDGES**

Prior to warmup and competition, the head pole vault judge should weigh each athlete and inspect each pole to be used in the competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment. Poles that have been submitted and approved for competition should remain in the event area. Items to be checked include the placement of the manufacturer's top hand hold band, the numerical pole rating with a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch numbers in contrasting colors located either within or above the top hand hold band, and that there are no more than two layers of adhesive tape of uniform thickness at the top of the pole. The length of each pole must also be verified. 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 competition, a designated official will verify that a legal pole will be used for each attempt. Officials may mark each pole so that it is obvious that they have been verified for this meet. Warming up without the contestant's coach or event official could result in a disqualification.

It is extremely important that pole vault officials make precise measurements each time the bar is raised to a new height or a new crossbar is used (indications on the pole vault standards are sometimes inaccurate).

## **PENALTY**

During competition, the event judge needs to know the weight of each vaulter as attested to by the coach or verified by on site weigh-ins. When a vaulter steps onto the runway to attempt a vault (during warm-up or competition) he/she shall show the event judge both the weight limit indicated on the pole with a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch numbers and any mark the meet has approved to indicate that it has been verified. In this way, the judge knows that the pole may be used by this vaulter and that it is legal for use in this meet. (It also serves as a double check that a vaulter has not picked up the wrong pole.)

Q1: May a vaulter submit more than one pole for competition?

A1: Yes, provided all poles are legal and have been verified for use in the meet.

Q2: Do all poles have to be submitted for verification prior to the start of the pole vault competition?

A2: Yes, the games committee may set time limits for verification even as it establishes procedures for the weigh-in of other implements.

Q3: If the games committee establishes such a time limit, and a pole breaks during competition, may a replacement pole be submitted at that time for verification?

A3: Yes, provided the games committee has not stated prior to the meet that such a procedure would not be permitted.

Q4: May a vaulter compete with a teammate's or opponent's pole?

A4: Yes, provided it is legal for that vaulter. (Ensure that the vaulter's weight does not exceed the weight limits of the pole and the pole was verified for use in the meet.)

## **PENALTIES**

Attempting a vault with a pole certified below a vaulter's attested weight or attempting a vault with an illegal pole (one that does not have proper markings, is altered or one that has not been verified for use in this meet) either during warm-up or competition shall result in the disqualification of the vaulter from further participation in the event and in the remainder of the track meet.

**SITUATION:** Vaulter A1, who won the high jump in the first session of a meet is competing simultaneously in both the pole vault and the long jump during the meet's second session. The vaulter has completed two legal jumps in both events. Between vaults, he/she brings a new pole into the area that has not been certified. After completing a successful vault, the judge exams the pole for this meet's mark and discovers that it was never certified for use in this meet.

**RULING:** Vaulter A1 is disqualified from the event and may not score any points in the vault even if his/her first two legal attempts are good enough to score. Also, he/she is disqualified from the remainder of the track meet; however, if his/her jumps in the long jump are good enough to score, such attempts shall stand. His/her victory in the high jump will also stand.

**COMMENT:** This situation points out the severity of the penalty for the new rules governing the Pole Vault event. Non-compliance with the rule must be dealt with firmly and consistently for the health, safety, and welfare of all participants. Could the entire incident have been avoided if the event judge had checked the pole prior to the vault? Yes, and event judges are encouraged to do so both to avoid this kind of disqualification and also to protect the vaulter from inadvertently using an incorrect pole.

When a vaulter attempts a vault with his/her hand above the highest allowable handhold, he/she will be penalized with a missed trial. However, repeated violations of this rule may be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and result in a meet disqualification.

**Colorado High School Activities Association  
Pole Vault Verification Card**

Vaulter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vaulter's Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Pole Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that this weight information is accurate and current and that the equipment being used by this vaulter in this competition is legal and meets all rules specifications as outlined in the National Federation Track and Field Rule Book. (This card is to be submitted to vaulting judges at the start of all vaulting competitions).

Coaches Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Colorado High School Activities Association  
Pole Vault Verification Card**

Vaulter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Vaulter's Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Pole Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

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Coaches Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



