

**2026 UPDATED INFORMATION
FOR HS POLE VAULT OFFICIALS**

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT IN THE
SECTION 'TOPICS FOR ATHLETE
BRIEFING,' THE BRIEFING ITEM ON
'RUN THROUGH'S' NO LONGER
APPLIES. IT HAS BEEN REPLACED BY
PAGE 6 OF THIS DOCUMENT.**

High School Pole Vault Venue Preparations & Athlete Instructions

Pre-meet preparations: Review the rule book/case book to refresh knowledge of the rules the day before the meet.

Equipment Needed for the Event: Find out what will be provided and bring anything missing: level, steel tape measure, a plum bob, measuring device, stop watch, flags (red, white, and yellow), cone, lifters, extenders, athletic & duct tape, shims, tape measure – 100' to 150', chairs, rule book and case book, performance & standard placement boards, clipboard & pencil, broom, electronic scale, marking implements for certifying poles.

Meet with the Field Referee: Arrive early enough to obtain any special instructions from the Referee/Meet Management before going to the competition site. Items to be aware of: where to pick up and return event sheets; are bibs/numbers required; starting heights and progressions; meet and state records; adjusted start time; time limit for athletes excused to compete in other events; max spike length; coaching boxes; restricted areas and authorized activities in the restricted/coaching areas; how to contact the Head Field Judge or Referee; and will athletes be allowed to wear warm ups during competition in cold weather.

Prepare check-in location: Officials need to start setting up the venue 90 minutes or more before the start time (this provides 45-minutes for venue set up and 45 minutes for athlete check-in and warm-up). Place a cone or chair on the runway to prevent athletes from using the venue until it is ready for competition. Determine a location to weigh athletes and inspect poles. Keep the runway closed until the athletes have been weighed and poles inspected unless additional officials/volunteers are available and briefed to monitor the warm-ups or check-in athletes. Prior to warm-ups, the Field Referee or the Head Judge shall inspect each pole to be used in competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment. Rules 3.10.1, 6.8.17. See USATF Best Practice "High School Pole Inspections".

Check the Venue: Inspect the pole vault area and pit to ensure the venue is legal and safe and properly aligned. The minimum size of the landing pad is 19'8" wide and 20'2" deep. All hard surfaces immediately surrounding the pit must either be removed or covered with at least two inches of dense foam padding; this includes items that extend from under the landing pad or between the planting box and the landing pad. Padding is also recommended for polyurethane, rubberized surfaces, or even hard/frozen grass around the pit. Potentially dangerous objects (benches, chairs, hurdles, lifters, fences, etc) should be at least 10' from the pit. The standard bases must also be padded. A box collar must be in place that meets ASTM 2949-18 specifications (anchored to the ground and at least 23 inches wide at the opening of the collar - see USATF Best Practice "Box Collar Installation". The standards should be parallel to the runway and parallel to each other. Rule 6.9.26, 27, 28, 29.

Venue Preparation:

1) **Check each crossbar** used in the competition (recommend 3 crossbars). The greatest sag should be on the bottom of the crossbar. Place each end of the crossbar (just inside of each end piece) on a hurdle. Determine the greatest sag and align the flat side of the end pieces with the sag. Place the end pieces on each hurdle; at the center of the bar try to wiggle or rotate it. If there's movement, make minor adjustments to align the end pieces until they don't wiggle. Mark each crossbar end piece "L" for left side and "R" for right side - to ensure it's always placed on the pegs the same way. Draw a short thin line connecting the inside edge of the end piece to the crossbar - to help realign the end pieces if they twist. Draw a circular line on the crossbar around the inside edge of the end piece to identify the placement of the end piece. Measure and mark a point on the bottom center of the crossbar - used as an aim point for height measurements. Do not tape the end pieces to the crossbar. Rule 6.9.30.

2) **Verify the distance between the pegs** from one standard to the other – must be between 13'8" (4.16m) and 14'8" (4.48m). Place a crossbar on the pegs; if it doesn't fit on the pegs, moved the standards to the specified range. If it still doesn't fit, there may be a compatibility issue with mixing manufacturers' standards and landing pad, or you may have a high jump crossbar. Make sure that the base pads covering the bottom of the standards fit snugly against the landing pad. Rule 6.9.29.

See USATF Best Practice entitled "Zeroing Standards and Pit Set Up" for the next two items.

3) **Verify the standards are vertical in two axes, are parallel to the runway, parallel to each other, and move freely.** Level the standards vertically in two directions (front to back and side to side). Some standards have adjustable leveling devices while other standards need shims. Make sure your crossbar remains on the pegs as you check movement of the standards from 0 to 31.5" at the starting height and again at 16'. If the crossbar fails to remain on the pegs, you have to make further adjustments.

4)
Establish a zero line. Extend the zero line (inside edge of the top of the back of the box) on the ground beyond the outside of the padded area as a reference point. Align the standard frames so that zero on the frames is aligned with the zero line on the ground. Place a crossbar on the pegs at starting height. With the standards set at zero, drop a plumb bob over the front center of the crossbar (side facing the runway) at the starting height, and again at 16', to confirm the standards are set at zero. Make minor adjustments to the standard frames (forward or backward) so that the plumb bob is directly over the zero line. Move the standards from 0 to 31.5 inches with the base pads in place to make sure that the standards can reach the desired setting. The pit and standards may move away from the zero line during warm-ups and competition. Periodically check to ensure the

distance between the pit and inside edge of the top of the box does not exceed 3". The competition may have to be stopped periodically to realign the pit and standards as needed. If you are pressed for time, a reasonable zero line can be made by laying a crossbar on top of the pit in alignment with the zero line. Rule 6.9.31, 32 and Figure 14.

5) Verify height markings on the standards are accurate. The scale on the standards may not be accurate due to the different amount of sag between crossbars, the ground not being level (may slope down on one side) or inaccurate markings on the standards. Put a crossbar on the pegs. Place a level on the crossbar and adjust the standards as necessary to ensure the crossbar is level (raise or lower either or both standards). If the crossbar is too high to reach, tape a level to the center of the crossbar and place it on the pegs. Check the actual reading on the scale on each standard and make a note of the difference (plus or minus--offset) from the indicated height on the standard. Set the crossbar at the starting height and confirm this height with a measuring device. Every time the crossbar is raised to a new height or a crossbar is replaced, an accurate measurement must be confirmed with a measuring device (*holding a pole up against the crossbar does not satisfy this requirement*).

Warm ups:

Warm up jumps may not be conducted unless a pole vault official, and preferably each athlete's coach is near the takeoff area to ensure a safe environment at all times. Officials should confirm the vaulter's weight and pole weight rating before every jump -- during warm-ups and in competition. Check the athlete's uniform (logos, colors, and compliance), excessive jewelry, and spike length. Undergarments are foundation garments and not subject to uniform restrictions. Establish and announce an end time for warm-ups and a start time for the event.

If you don't have a countdown clock, periodically announce how much time remains in warm-ups. The Flight Coordinator obtains starting heights and standards settings from each athlete. Stop warm ups 5 minutes prior to the start of competition; conduct a short briefing. Have the pit crew set up the pit and verify the starting height during the athlete briefing.

Competition:

When athletes are On Deck for each jump, have them show the Flight Coordinator/Recorder the weight rating and the day's mark from the pole inspector. Compare the weight rating of the pole to the athletes' weight (may be written on the event sheet) to verify that each vaulter is using a legal pole. After each bar height, the Recorders and Flight Coordinator compare misses and makes for that bar height. The Flight Coordinator then tells the Pit Boss what height to raise the bar to. The Pit Boss repeats the new height to confirm the new height. The Pit Boss shall inform the pit crew what height to set on each standard. The Pit Boss shall measure and verify the height with an accurate measuring device.

Post Competition:

Close runway – place cone or chair on runway (practice at the venue after the competition is over is prohibited)

Record places - have 2 officials verify results, sign the event sheet, and give it to the Head Field Judge

Clean-up - remove previous competition runway markers and competitors' poles, and clean up venue

Subsequent competition - If another competition is scheduled, quickly repeat process of checking in athletes.

Crew debriefing – discuss problems, suggestions for improvement, evaluate crew, statistics

Planning - 9 to 10 athletes per hour. Goal - average 60 seconds per jump.

Topics for Athlete Briefing (tailor to your needs)

Brief athletes on the following items:

Any changes to starting height

At every height change - announce everyone jumping at that height

Flight Coordinator's calls: Up, On Deck, On Hold

When on deck, show pole label to the inspector to verify proper weight rating & confirm your standard setting

Standards: 18 - 31.5 inches (45-80cm). Changes: tell us before being called up. Changes after being called up is on your time.

Passes – must be made before being the clock starts

Time limits: 1, 3, 5 min; consecutive – 3 min within a height or at height changes; yellow flag or call out at 15 sec

Time starts when bar & standards are set, verbal signal to athletes or step off/remove cone from runway

Five-alive: in effect or not (call out everyone in rotation)

Electronic devices: Prohibited in competition area, athletes may view video in designated areas area (coaches' box - location), some restrictions apply

Run throughs: Announce the height that run-throughs will start. Each athlete gets 2 minutes, combine times for multiple athletes, must make one attempt at that height

Tape on the fingers or hands, as well as gloves are not allowed.

Excused athlete check out procedure: (The Games Committee should provide a procedure at the coaches meeting.) If competing in other events you must check out with the Flight Coordinator before you leave and check back in when you return. If excused, you will not be called up. You will be given the opportunity to jump out of order prior to being excused or after you return. When you return you will be put back in the rotation at whatever height the bar is at when you return.

Protests: Make known immediately - to get resolution before bar is raised.

Optional Items: Leaving ground in an aborted run-up vs. aborted attempt, breaking the plane, releasing the pole, tailwind conditions, steadying the crossbar, top hand hold; catching pole to prevent it from dislodging the crossbar

Pole Vault Pole Label Replacement Contact List (2025)

Altius, *Altius Vaulting Poles*, Based in Jacksonville, TX, Jeff Erickson, 1-800-374-7653, www.altiuspoles.com Send self-addressed stamped envelope with the poles, length, weight and flex number to: PO Box 1168, Jacksonville, TX 75766. There is a \$5 charge per label. Routine shipping will be free.

Big Stick, *On Track and Field*, Based in Simi Valley, CA, 1-800-697-2999. Big Stick poles have been discontinued and labels are limited at this time. Go to the web site: <https://www.ontrackandfield.com/big-stick-vaulting-pole/>. Click on the link "Message us" highlighted in red, on the right side of the page. Send a list of poles that need labels, including length, weight and serial numbers.

Cata-A-Pole, *Maxima 4 Vaulting Poles* **are no longer in production and replacement labels are not available. Rocket vaulting pole labels are not available at this time.**

ESSX, *ESSX Vaulting Poles*, Based in Ft Worth, TX, 1-877-367-3779, Customer Service. To request a new label, go to the ESSX web site: www.ust-essx.com. Select the "Contact Us" link. Complete the required information on the page to include your **Name**, **Email Address**, **Subject line**: Pole Replacement Label, **Location**: home address, and **Message**: provide the pole's length, weight and serial number. Labels for poles older than 10 years may not be available. Labels are approximately \$5-\$10 and FedEx shipping is approximately \$15.

FiberSport, Based in Bedford, Tx, Bruce Caldwell, 1-817-819-1472, Send digital photos of the length, weight and flex number (engravings at the top of the pole) or digital photos of the old label to: bruce@fibersportusa.com. Each label will cost about \$30 which includes shipping. For more information regarding FiberSport poles visit: <https://fibersportpoles.com/about-weight-labels-%26-why>.

Gill Athletics, the following poles have been discontinued but you can still get labels for these poles: **Carbon FX, Pacer FX, Carbon Mystic, Mystic, Skypole Carbon and Skypole**. The new line of poles are the **Pacer Composite, Pacer FXV and the Pacer One**. Based in Champaign, IL. 1-800-367-3090. To obtain a new label send an email to customerservice@gillathletics.com. For poles manufactured in prior to mid-2003, include the poles' length, weight, and date which are engraved in the fiberglass near the top of the pole. Newer poles, late 2003 to present, will have a serial number and bar code embedded in the fiberglass, located within the top eight inches of the pole. For example, serial number 202300530 -- the first four digits of the serial number is the year the pole was manufactured, 2023. The following numbers indicate the exact numbered pole produced during that year, 00530 is the 530th pole made that year. Labels will cost \$7.50 and the cheapest shipping charge via UPS is \$13.27. The shipping charge is for as many labels as you purchase, not for each label.

Nordic Sports, *Nordic Vaulting Poles*, Based in Sweden. <http://www.nordicsport.se/> Contact Tobias Marklund, pole vault manager, at 011-46-910-76-40-03 or tobias@nordicsport.se for replacement labels. Include your name and address, along with the length and weight of the pole. Nordic will send the labels to a U.S. distributor who will send them to you.

UCS, *Spirit Vaulting Poles*, Based in Carson City, NV, 1-800-537-7117, <https://www.ucsspirit.com/vaulting-poles>. Send a clear digital picture of the pole's etchings at the top of the pole (length, weight, date -- three lines of data) to either: lane@spiritpoles.com, stevechappell@ucsspirit, or michaelc@ucsspirit.com. Make sure that the digital photo is readable. If not, rub a dry erase marker over the numbers and wipe off to highlight the numbers. Include your name, address and phone number with your request. No charge for labels or routine shipping.



Ohio High School Athletic Association

4080 Roselea Place
Columbus, Ohio 43214
(p) 614.267.2502
(f) 614.267.1677
Web Site: ohsaa.org

SAMPLE POLE VAULT CERTIFICATION FORM

Directions: Please complete all blanks and sign. This form shall be handed to the head pole vault official when the vaulter(s) report. Presenting an improperly completed form or if no form is presented will result in the vaulter(s) being excluded from competition. PLEASE PRINT. Include first and last name.

SCHOOL _____ DATE: _____

COMPETITOR	NUMBER	VAULTER'S WEIGHT	POLE RATING(S)

COACH'S SIGNATURE

Updated information regarding athletes entering competition after passing heights in HJ and PV

1. In 2026, NFHS changed the in event warmup procedures for athletes passing heights in the competition. This information is outlined in Rule 6-8-6 in the 2026 NFHS TF Rule Book.
2. An athlete who has not made an attempt within **60 minutes after the beginning of the competition** shall be allowed a warmup period **at the height they are entering the competition**, without the bar or bungee cord in place.
3. For the HJ, each athlete entering the competition will be allowed 1.5 minutes of warmup **individually**; this warmup time shall not be combined for all athletes entering the competition at that height.
4. For the PV, each athlete entering the competition will be allowed 2 minutes of warmup **individually**; this warmup time shall not be combined for all athletes entering the competition at that height.
5. Regardless of event, any athlete electing to take their warmup time at a height lower than stated at check in **must** enter the competition at the height they take their warmup time and make at least 1 attempt at that height. They may elect to pass to other heights after that attempt; however, if their next attempt is 60 minutes or longer, they may **not** have another warmup period, as they have already had their warmup time.

FIELD EVENT TIME LIMITS

Athletes remaining:	4+	2 or 3	1	CONSECUTIVE TRIALS*
LJ, SP, D	1 min.	1 min.	1 min.	2 min.
HJ	1 min.	3 min.	5 min.	2 min.
PV	1 min.	3 min.	5 min.	3 min.

** Consecutive trials for HJ and PV refer to consecutive attempts in height.*