

MIAA Track & Field Facility Safety Manual – 5/2/11

Safety is everyone's responsibility in Track & Field, either when in practice or hosting a meet. Anytime a practice or a meet occurs, there is a risk of injury to all who are involved and also sometimes even to observers. Certain measures can be taken to prevent many of the accidents and injuries from happening. Our goal with this Track & Field Facility Safety Manual is to give all MIAA Member Schools a template for what should be done prior to holding practice or meets. This is being developed as a guide and while it covers many areas, there are always unique characteristics that may be overlooked and critical for success at each individual site. Please use this with that understanding and all input is welcome and this will be updated on a regular basis. Safety should start with the Administration providing adequate funding so that all site locations and equipment meet the safety standards set in the latest NFHS rule book. The Athletic Director, Coaches, Trainer and Custodial Staff, should have a walk thru at the beginning of each Outdoor Season to identify risks and precautions a school can take in preparation. Implementing a procedure plan so all are on the same page to safety will prove very beneficial to all involved.

Athletic competition has an inherent risk of injury for the competitors, as well as those involved with the competition, including officials, venue personnel, media and spectators. Some injuries are not preventable, while others are. Following the recommendations made in this manual provides the best opportunity for avoiding these injuries.

A. General Recommendations:

1. Walk thru of facility-inspect all applications of facility in use:

- a. Inspect High Jump Mats.
- b. Inspect Pole vault Mats.
- c. Inspect Hurdles.
- d. Jump pits-adequate sand? Board level. No outside board protruding from the ground?
- e. Inspect stands for fans.
- f. Inspect track surface

2. Develop Emergency Plan:

- a. Minor Injury - How to notify trainer.
- b. Major Injury - Contact 911, point of access.
- c. Record/Document Inspections - keep record on file and document all corrections.
- d. Plan of action – process for each coach to follow with any and all injuries/accidents.
- e. Preseason Meeting with parents & student athletes - talk about inherent risk of participating.

B. Recommendations for Host/Officials:

1. Referee and Host AD/Coach Walk thru of facility – Lay of the land

2. Considerations:

- a. Access of clerking area.
- b. Warm up area.
- c. Flagged areas of field events.

- d. Coaches boxes.
- e. Potential interference – crossing competition areas.
- f. Inspect starting Blocks.
- g. Crossbars in HJ/PV.
- h. Athletic trainer/Medical personnel.
- i. Radio communications/Announcer.
- j. Lighting Plan.
- k. Space issues.

3. Referee then meets with officials - Gives direction to approve:

- a. Safety check of area.
- b. Inventory of equipment.
- c. Organize others working the meet and review safety in their area.
- d. Competitors briefed, set warm up and throws procedures during competition.
- e. If an accident occurs, report, document, be specific, file a report with meet management, stay calm, and let the professionals handle the situation.
- f. Be alert! Never turn your back on a thrower!

C. Events:

1. The Start

Those working the start of a race have the responsibility to be sure that those starting can do so without coming in contact with another person. The responsibility for this would fall on the official/starter responsible for the start. The standard for the official who has this responsibility is could a reasonable person have foreseen someone coming on the track in front of the runners starting that would result in collision.

2. The Finish

The finish line of a race has similar responsibilities imposed on the official or officials responsible for it comparable to those at the start of the race. The competitors must be assured of a finish line that is unobstructed by individuals who are not competing in the race. At least one official has responsibility for the finish line.

3. Discus

The discus venue, which includes the cage, the ring, the area surrounding the cage, the sector, and the area next to the sector lines, must be checked for any hazard prior to any competitor being permitted to come into the venue. Any hazard must be addressed before competitors are allowed into the venue. During the warm-up time and during the competition, no individual should be allowed to have their back to the throwing ring where a discus could reach the individual. All individuals working in the sector or along the sector lines must never turn their back on the throwing area when an athlete is in the cage with a discus. It is preferable that individuals be beyond the reach of a throw.

- a. Inspect Discus Cage, netting should be loose, not taut, no holes.
- b. Inspect the surface of the ring.

- c. Ring should be swept clean and area around raked clean, so debris can be limited on competitor's shoes.
- d. Area needs to be roped off to prevent spectators from walking in the line of thrown discus.
- e. Look for areas that may cause unusual bounces, i.e. rocks, holes, & wet grass causes skidding.
- f. Inspect any implement that has come in contact with any hard surface, ring, post, & rocks for damage.
- g. No one warms up or throws without supervision of an official or coach.
- h. No warm ups outside the throwing area.
- i. Cone should be placed in the circle when warm ups are over.
- j. All implements should be carried back, not thrown back.

4. Shot Put

The shot put venue, which includes the ring, the area surrounding it, the sector, and the area next to the sector lines, must be checked for any hazard prior to any competitor being permitted to come into the venue. Any hazard must be addressed before competitors are allowed into the venue. During the warm-up time and during the competition, no individual should be allowed to have their back to the throwing ring where a shot could reach that individual.

- a. Inspect the surface of the circle and that the toe-board is securely fastened.
- b. Ring should be swept clean and area around raked clean, so debris can be limited on competitor's shoes.
- c. Throwing area should be smoothed with a rake. When shots are thrown onto grass throwing areas, holes can be filled with sand, or fine crushed stone.
- d. Stones should be cleared from the area.
- e. Inspect any implement that has come in contact with any hard surface, ring, post, & rocks for damage.
- f. No one warms up or throws without supervision of an official or coach.
- g. No warm ups outside the throwing area.
- h. Cone should be placed in the circle when warm ups are over.
- i. All implements should be carried back, not thrown back.
- j. Area should be roped off around and behind the circle.

5. Javelin

This venue must be checked for hazards with particular attention being paid to the running area approaching the line where the javelin will be released and, also, in the sector where the javelin is to be thrown or land. Anything discovered must be resolved prior to any competitor being given access to this venue. Particular attention must be paid to protecting a competitor approaching the throwing line that there is no interference from any individual who might interfere with the thrower.

Officials working this venue must be very careful to see that no individual is in an area that a javelin can reach, which includes outside the sector lines. An official responsible for the throwing line must prevent any competitor from throwing a javelin until those working in the sector are ready. All individuals working in the sector and those near sector lines who have responsibilities for the competition or who are covering the competition such as media must never turn their back on the

throwing line when a competitor has a javelin in hand and can reasonably be expected to throw. Individuals working in the sector or near the sector lines should not be where a javelin can reasonably be anticipated to land. As a general rule they should be further out from where a javelin can reasonably be expected to land. At no time should an individual be permitted to be in the sector or near the sector lines with their back to the throwing line while a competitor has a javelin in hand that could reasonably be expected to throw.

- a. Inspect the runway, if grass, divots, holes, mud, alternative solution/area to throw.
- b. Area needs to be roped off beyond the scope of area of competition, and away from wandering competitors.
- c. Landing area should be free of debris, including stones.
- d. Inspect any implement that has come in contact with any hard surface, ring, post, & rocks for damage.
- e. No one warms up or throws without supervision of an official.
- f. No warm ups outside the throwing area.
- g. Cone should be placed in the circle when warm ups are over.
- h. All implements should be carried back, not thrown back.
- i. Wind affects the flight of a javelin, check conditions.

6. High Jump

During the competition someone must be responsible to identify every individual who might step in front of a competitor approaching the bar and cause injury. These individuals need to be moved to a place where it is unlikely there will be interference with a competitor approaching the bar. Lastly, during this competition, the area surrounding the landing pit must be examined for any discoverable hazard which could injure an athlete coming off of the landing area.

7. Pole Vault

The responsibilities of a pole vault official are almost identical of those of an official working on a high jump venue. The venue must be examined for any hazard prior to competitors being given access to the venue. If a hazard is discovered, it must be addressed before the competitors are given access to the venue. The venue investigation includes, examining the equipment to be sure that it is not hazardous. For example, sometimes there are metal frames below the landing pit that can be sticking out that can cause an injury. The pit needs to be adjusted so that the frame is covered by the pit pads so that an athlete cannot contact the frame. The bar needs to be checked for proper flexibility and any discoverable flaws.

During the competition someone must be responsible to identify every individual who might step in front of a competitor approaching the bar and cause injury. These individuals need to be moved to a place where they are not likely to interfere with a competitor approaching the bar.

8. Triple Jump and Long Jump

The first responsibility that the law places on an official for these jumps is to check the venue for any hazard. This means the runway, the landing area, and the area adjacent to both of these must be checked for hazards before giving access to this venue. Any hazard must be eliminated before permitting access to the venue. For example, if the landing area has a metal grating around it, as some landing areas do, the grating must be checked to be sure that it will hold a person's weight in

walking on it. If this grating has been compromised were an injury could occur, it must be repaired or covered so that no injury can be caused by it.

Competitors must also be protected by reasonable precautions to be sure that no one steps in front of them in running down the runway or is at the end of the pit in the event that the athlete should have to run through it. This means being aware of those who might inadvertently come on to the runway or persons being in the area at the end of the landing area if the athlete had to run through the landing area.

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