

Track and Field & Cross Country  
Rules Changes - 2020  
By NFHS on July 09, 2019 Track &  
Field/Cross Country

A Quick Summary

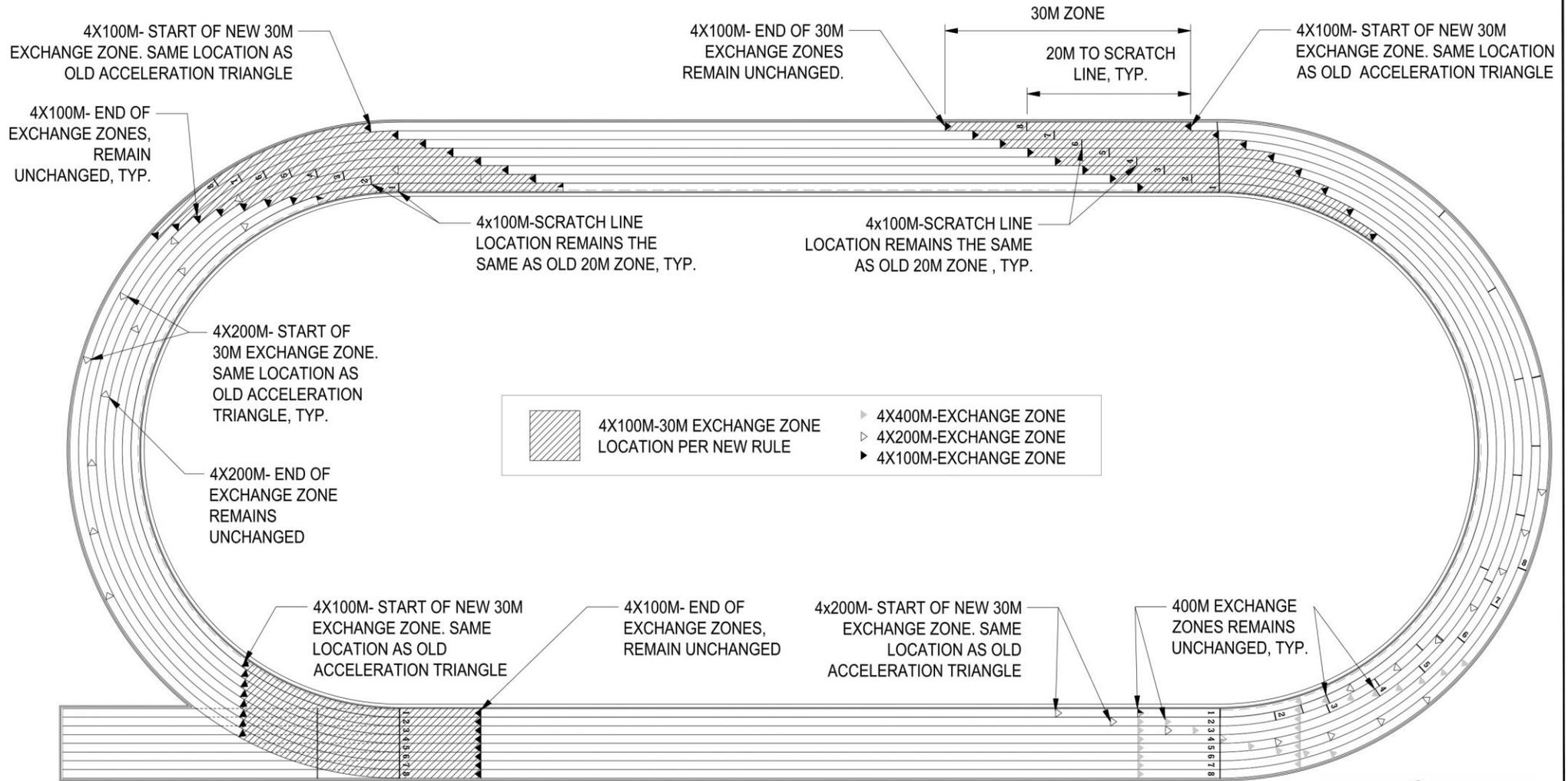
## Change(s) to 4-6-5g, 8-6-1e:

- Clarifies that a competitor should not be penalized for helping another competitor who is distressed or injured when no advantage is gained by the competitor who is assisting.
- **Rationale:** The committee believes when no advantage is gained by a competitor helping a distressed or injured competitor, the competitor assisting should not be penalized for exhibiting good sportsmanship.

## Changes to: 5-3-3 & 4, 5-10-6 thru 11:

- Clarifies that in the 4x100-meter relay and 4x200-meter relay, and other relays with legs of 200 meters or less, **each exchange zone will be 30 meters long**. All exchange zones for races in excess of 200 meters will remain at 20 meters.
- **Rationale:** In the 4x100-meter relay and 4x200-meter relay, and other relays with legs of 200 meters or less, each exchange zone will be 30 meters long. All exchange zones for races in excess of 200 meters will remain at 20 meters.

# NEW 30M EXCHANGE ZONE LAYOUT



# How is it set up on existing track markings?

- The beginning of the 30 meter zone would already be marked at the spot where the acceleration (“FLY”) zone began under the old rule.
- On tracks where relay exchanges are denoted with inward triangles the width of a lane, it is a small inward pointing triangle marked in the center of the lane ten meters before the “old” exchange zone.
- Tape or a painted line is allowed to make it more visible if need be. If athletes are standing forward of the little triangles, they are in the 30 meter zone.
- On internationally marked “fishhook” painted zones, there are usually 2-3 short hashmarks delineating the old “fly” zone that would start the 30 meter zone.

# What about the *INDOOR* 4 X 200 m Relay ?

- To the NFHS, indoor track is still somewhat of a novelty only enjoyed in the Northeast and Midwest. Consequently, rules are written considering outdoor venues and are not indoor specific.
- Julie Cochran, the NFHS Rules editor for Track & Field stated this past month that in indoor competition State Associations for safety reasons in tight quarters can still employ past practice and use only the 20-meter exchange zone.
- As of Friday, the NYSPHSAA has opted to continue their past practice of using just the 20 meter exchange zone without permitting any acceleration zone ahead of it.
- The Indoor Committee meets this week. If there is any change you will hear about it ASAP.

## Major Change – Rule 6-2-6:

- Clarifies that ***it is illegal to run backward*** or in the opposite direction (non-legal direction) on a horizontal jump, pole vault or javelin runway.
- **Rationale:** This change promotes a more organized and efficient warm-up period.
- This change has been coming for a few years for reasons of ***SAFETY*** as well as efficiency.
- **The Rules Committee passed this UNANIMOUSLY after two years of being proposed.**

# Coaches and Officials *MUST* be aware of this rules change early and often!

- **Strict enforcement of this early in the indoor season (especially indoors) will get the word out fast.**
- Athletes and coaches can do this all they want in practice sessions, but no longer in a competitive venue. It is patently unsafe to others there. ***Practice at HOME; not at the meet!***
- It is suggested that Games Committees secure a tape measure going from the scratch line toward the start of the runway adequate enough to accommodate all the jumpers so that they have a sense of their required steps.

# Changes to Rule 6-3-2-b-4-a:

- This change provides metric measurements for tie-breaking jump-offs for vertical jumps.
- **Rationale:** The committee established appropriate metric increments for tie-breaking jump-offs in the vertical jumps.
- Two states are now using metric measurements in field events, so these were included in the rules should anyone else begin to employ metric measurement.

## Change to 6-9-5: *A clarification of 2019 rule*

- The length of long jump and triple jump pits **constructed after 2019** shall be at least 23 feet (7 meters).
- **Rationale:** Clarifies the language of the 2019 rule change for long jump and triple jump pits and ensures pit measurements are within industry standards for safety.
- The rule change of last year was to apply to ***NEW CONSTRUCTIONS*** and now this language makes this abundantly clear.

# Change to 8-1-1: (Cross-Country)

- Clarifies cross country course markings.
- **Rationale:** The reorganization of the rule states that a course should be clearly marked with *any or all of the methods listed* in the rule.
- Now the course creators have more choices to clearly mark the flow of the course.
- With all these options nobody needs to be lost on a course.

## Change to: 8-1-3: (Cross-Country)

- Clarifies cross country course layouts
- **Rationale:** This rule change will not eliminate courses that may be used for smaller meets with limited numbers of participants. The additional language provides a recommended minimum distance for straightaways at the start of all meets.

## 2020 Editorial Changes – Rule 5-11-1:

- A relay team shall pass their baton in accordance with the rules.
- **Rationale:** Clarifies that a team finishes the race with the same baton that it used at the start of the race.

## Other Editorial Changes --

- Rules 5-1-5, 5-11-1 (just discussed), and 6-8-10d
- These are indicated by being highlighted in gray shading you will see in the 2020 Rules Book.

# 2020 Points of Emphasis

1. Meet Administration – A greatly detailed explanation on page 75. Important and frequently forgotten items of things that should be on any Games Committee’s “check list” to encourage good planning
2. Exchange Zone – On page 76. This explains and alleviates fears related to the incorporation of the old “acceleration zone” into the new 30 meter zone.
3. Assisting Injured Athletes – On page 76. A thorough explanation of the letter, intent, and spirit of the rule.

Further questions or clarifications are now entertained . . .

- First, let's deal specifically with the rule changes for 2020.
- Then we can answer any other questions that anyone has.

Thanks for all that you do to make this sport thrive in New York State!! Thanks to:

- Our NYSCOTFCC certified officials.
- Our Sectional Coordinators in Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Outdoor Track.
- The wonderful supportive staff of the NYSPHSAA.
- The hundreds of dedicated coaches.
- The thousands of dedicated student-athletes all over this great state that thrive because of all our mutual love of this the “purest” of all sports!