

High School Pole Vault Venue Preparations & Athlete Instructions

Review the rule book/case book to refresh knowledge of the rules the day before the meet.

Obtain special meet instructions from the Head Referee 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.

Officials should arrive at least 90 minutes prior to the start time to prepare the venue before warm-ups begin. Place a cone or chair on the runway until the venue is ready for competition. Inspect the pole vault area and pit to ensure the environment is legal and safe. 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 15' from the pit. The standard bases must also be padded. A box collar must be in place that meets ASTM specifications. Keep the runway closed until an official has weighed the athletes, inspected the athletes' poles, and is present at the venue. Determine a location to weigh in athletes and inspect poles.

Officials should have: a 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, electronic scale, marking implements for certifying poles.

Prior to opening the runway, officials must:

1) **Check each crossbar** used in the competition (should have 3 crossbars). The greatest sag should be on the bottom of the crossbar. Do this by placing 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 it doesn'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 or slide the end pieces away from the very end of the crossbar.

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. *Sliding the end pieces in or out to make the crossbar fit on the pegs is not acceptable.* Make sure that the base pads covering the bottom of the standards fit snugly against the landing pad.

3) **Verify the standards are level vertically in two axes, are parallel to the runway, 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) **Verify the zero line** on the standards agrees with the zero line on the ground (top inside edge of the back of the box). With the standards set at zero, suspend a plumb bob over the *front* center of the crossbar (side closest to the runway) at the starting height, and again at 16', to confirm the standards are set at zero. Minor adjustments may have to be made to align the plumb bob with the zero line. Mark a point on the ground along the extended zero line outside of the padded area as a reference point. The pit may move away from the zero line during the 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 as needed. For an extremely accurate placement of the standards with the runway and landing pad, refer to the Best Practice entitled "*Zeroing Standards and Pit Set Up*". If you're pressed for time, align a crossbar along the inside edge of the top of the box (zero line) and set the standards to zero.

5) **Verify the 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 or the ground not being level (may slope down on one side). Put a crossbar on the pegs. Place a level on the crossbar and make adjustments to ensure the crossbar level

(raise or lower either or both standards). Check the actual reading on the scale on each standard and make a note of the difference (plus or minus--offset) from the measured height. Set the crossbar at the starting height and confirm this height with your 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 logo, trademark, or color restrictions. Establish and announce an end time for warm-ups and a start time for the event. 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 round, the Recorders and Flight Coordinator compare misses and makes for that round. 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 verifies 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
Crew debriefing – discuss problems, suggestions for improvement, evaluate crew, statistics
Goal - average 50 seconds per jump

Topics for Athlete Briefing (tailor to your needs)

Prior to warm-ups: Announce warm-up end time & event start time; weigh each athlete and record on event sheet, inspect & mark poles

During warm-ups: Flight Coordinator gets starting heights & standards; runway marker limitations (Games Committee decision); no chalk or shoes; before each jump show pole label to inspector when on deck

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

No warm-ups on runway after competition starts; exception: when an athlete has passed 3 heights – at entry height, 2 min per athlete, combine times

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

Before each jump show pole label to inspector when on deck to verify proper weight rating & confirm your standard setting

Standards: 18 - 31.5 inches. Changes: tell us before I call you up; changes after I call you up are on your time.

Passes - you must tell us before I call you up

Time limits: 1, 3, 5 min, consecutive attempts – 3 min (within a ht, 1 min at ht changes), yellow flag at 15 seconds

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

Explain rules regarding: leaving ground in an aborted run-up vs. aborted attempt, breaking the plane, releasing the pole, tailwind conditions, steadying the crossbar, top hand hold; and catching pole to prevent it from dislodging the crossbar

Check out procedure if competing in other events. You must be excused -- make sure you tell us when you leave and when you return. If excused, you will not be called up. If you leave without being excused or return after the excused time limit, you will be called up, when time expires record a pass. When you return you will be put back in the rotation at whatever height the bar is at when you return.

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

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

Announce starting height and progressions

At every height change—announce everyone competing at that height