

# Officiating the Pole Vault, *Safely*

Revised and Updated  
Winter - 2026

*A more detailed version of this presentation is available from the OTFCCOA and  
at [www.ohiopolevultsafety.org](http://www.ohiopolevultsafety.org)*

# Developed by: Marty Dahlman, Retired Track Coach (current Track Official)

- BA Denison University (History/Political Sci), MEd Ashland University (Sports Science)
- Track Coach – Watkins Memorial High School – 1978 to 2017 (40 Years)
- Hall of Fames - Ohio Capital Conference, Licking County League, Watkins Memorial High School
- OAT-CCC Fred Dafler Career Track Coach– 2001
- OHSAA Sportsmanship and Ethics Award - 1998
- Ohio Pole Vault Safety, OAT-CCC – Since 1990 (37 YEARS!!!)
- Men 's Pole Vault Coach - Team Ohio, Midwest Meet of Champions (2009 - 11)
- ASTM Pole Vault Sub-Committee member – since 2014
- Ohio HS Track Official 1978-2001, since 2019 –
  - Regional PV (2021, 22, 23, 24, 25), State PV (2022, 23), Head State PV Official (2024, 25)
- USATF Master and NCAA Track Official

## • Best Vaulters (Coached at Watkins Memorial)

•	SP – STATE PLACER, SQ –STATE QUALIFIER	IQ – STATE INDOOR QUALIFIER	
•	Kyle Burns SP-2 15-4	Pat Walton SP -6 14-6	<u>Some of the friends helped from other schools</u>
•	David Hill SP-2 15-3	Scott Haden SP -6 14-6	Jesse Oxley – BU – DIII State Champion
•	Mike Huston SP-3 15-0	Chris Koon SP -4 14-4	Boone Troyer – LV – DII SP 2
		Troy Rhoades 14-3	Blake Mormon – LU – DII SP 4
•	Sammi Miller SQ 11-8	Doug Payne 14-0	Jimmy Kovatch – FU – DII SP 3
•	Rebecca Ollish IQ 10-6	Chris Dennis 14-0	Zion Park – Capital Univ – OAC Champion
•	Michelle Robbins SQ 10-6	Dusty Rhoades SQ 14-0	Watkins Alumni
•	Rachel Arnott IQ 10-6	Wayne Ratliff 14-0	
•	Taylor Amrine SQ 10-6	Austin Jackson SQ 14-0	
•	Theresa LaGreca 10-4	Cameron Johnson 14-0	
•		Mitchell Novotni 14-0	
		Jarod Worcester IQ 14-0	
		Austin Ballenger 14-0	

# Pole Vault Officiating

**Mandate** – This is What We Are Paid For as an Official (in this order)

**SAFE, FAIR, CONSISTENT, TRANSPARENT, EFFICIENT**

**Safe** – facility for , athletes, officials and workers - protect from injury

**Fair** – every athlete has the same opportunity for a fair/measured jump

**Consistent** – a miss is a miss, a good jump is good – same call and process each time

**Transparent** – Use Flags for make/miss – call out heights for spectators, Clear instructions on heights, uniforms, check-out, technical rules.  
Let coaches see results sheets often!!

**Efficient** – expectation that this is NOT the only event for “your” athletes  
Be considerate about other events needs  
Efficient is fast – but doesn’t *feel* rushed

**Give athletes their best experience and their best chance for success.**

**WE are doing this FOR THEM!!**

# High School Pole Vault



*Kyle Burns – Watkins HS School Record*

A legal Pit: (6-9-26)  
19'8" across the back

20'2" total length (front to back)

16'5" from the back of the box (the "0" mark) to the back of the pit

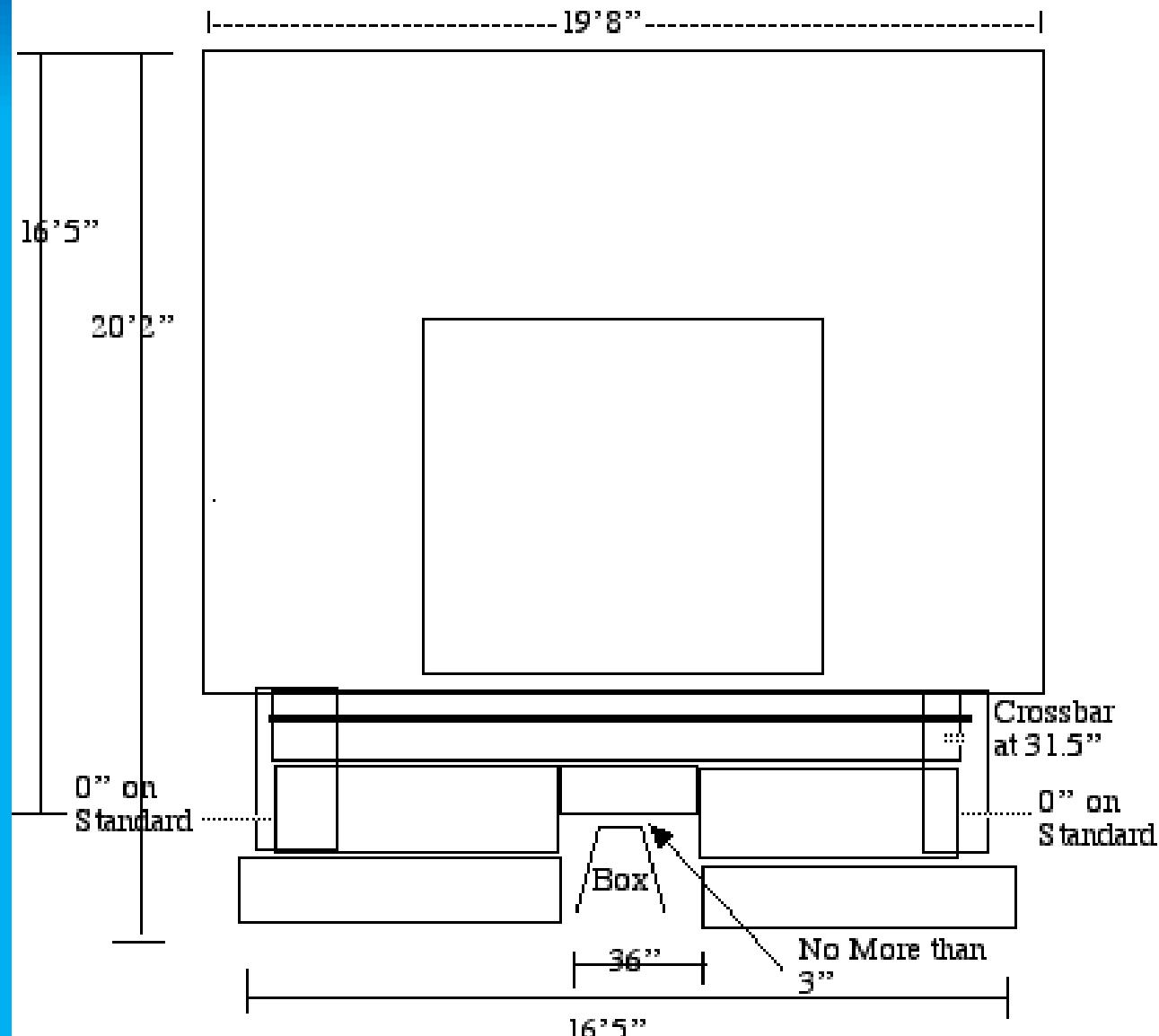
19'8" wide behind the "Standard Cutouts"

No more than 36" opening at the box

No more than 3" from the back of the box to the front edge of the landing pad (still padded by collar)

Should have a sloped cut out behind the box to allow the pole to bend

## Pole Vault Pit - Legal Measurements



*Rule of thumb – if it looks small – measure!*



*A legal (and big) PV Pit – on grass (not hard/unyielding)*

*Thanks – Alan Roark, Amherst Steele*

# Walk On - Inspection

- *Walk on the pit – there shouldn't be any holes*
- *If there are holes where vaulters could land and “bottom out” - that needs to be fixed*
- *It may be just a matter of pushing the pit together and tightening the straps, Velcro, or belts that hold the sections together*
- *If that doesn't work – holes must be resolved before warmup/competition begins!!*

# The “Errant” Vaulter

- There are two “danger zones” for pole vaulters. The first is the box area, discussed later in this section.
- The second is the area just outside the pit, where an “errant” vaulter might land, or roll off the pit onto from a “bad” vault.
- Protecting the “errant” vaulter is done by clearing the area of obstructions and padding hard zones around the pit
- *As the Pole Vault official – these are the areas where WE (and meet management) assume the most liability. They are also the easiest to “fix”.*

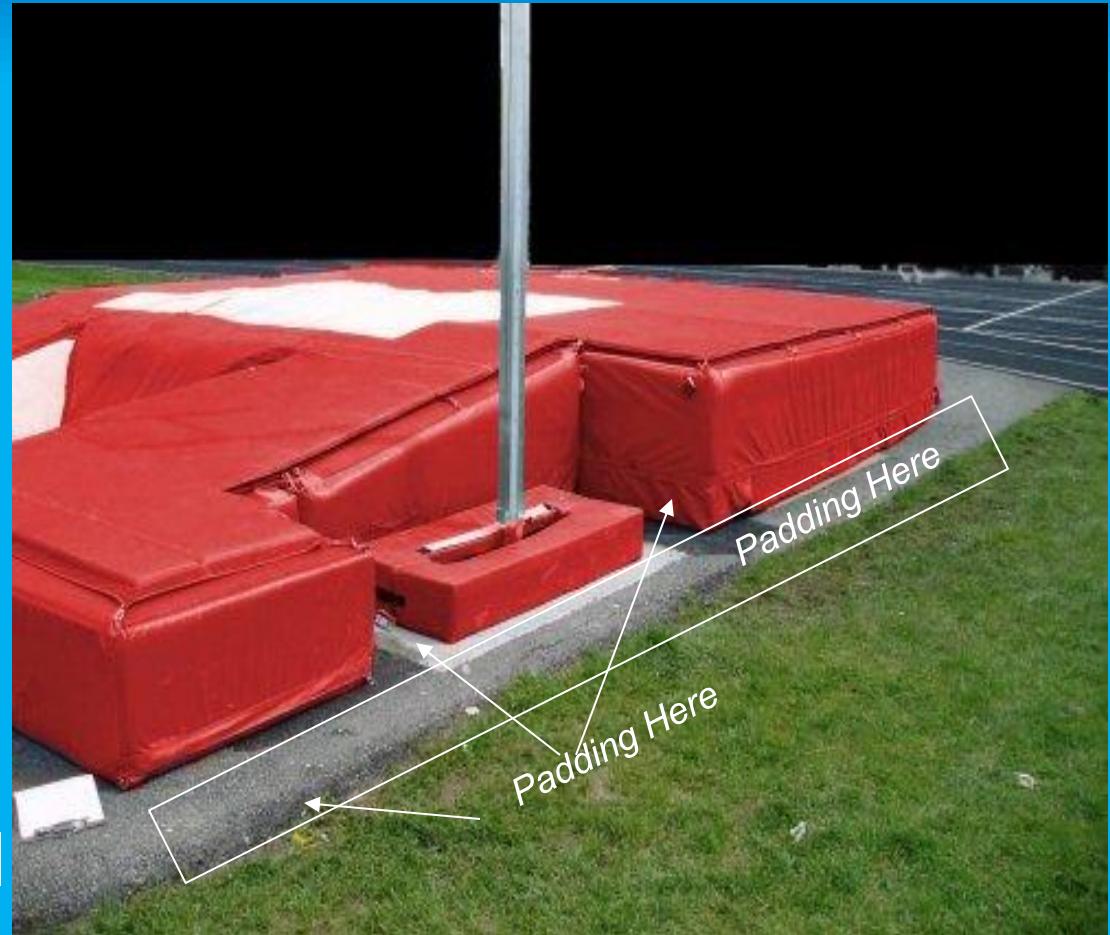
# Good Pit - Bad Asphalt

## Hard surfaces must be padded around pit



Pit is ILLEGAL  
NOW  
It Could be legal  
WHEN -

- Exposed asphalt is padded
- Area around standards is padded as well



# What's hard and unyielding???

- Asphalt - Posts (fence)
  - Box and Concrete where the standards would set if pit was set up for the opposite runway (one local HS...)
  - BEHIND THE PIT!!!!
  - Concrete wall of a field house in indoor facilities
  - Water Spigot for the football field (really, another local HS...)
- How much should be padded?
  - At least 3' beyond the legal pit
- What's Not???
  - Grass – Artificial Turf? – padding – track surface
  - Your concern:
    - If a vaulter misses the pit - what does He/she land on??

# Walk Around - Inspection

- Walk around the pit and remove:
  - The cinder blocks, hurdles and other stuff used to hold the cover on
  - The posts holding flags, streamers, or other crowd control devices too close to the pits – also pole “racks” and height indicators
  - The rake someone dropped off from the long jump
  - *Whatever else that could possibly impale, break, concuss or otherwise hurt an errant vaulter*

# A Legally Installed ASTM Box Collar



# ASTM Box Protectors

- One major concern about the ASTM box protector, is **that it can move**, and therefore interfere with the bend of the pole. Officials need to **MAKE SURE** that the **“bend cavity”** – the area near the back of the box which is cut out to allow the pole to bend – does not slide towards (and under) the pit and therefore not allow proper pole bend!!!!

*Watch Pole  
rotate into the  
Bend Cavity*



*If the pad slides under the pit – the pole will hit the edge instead of going into the cavity. Also Note – the pole can also rebound back into the bar on a good vault*

# Where is ZERO??

- Zero – is the point where all measurements are made
  - Standards – start at ZERO – Vault from 18" to 31.5" Back
  - Crossbar – Top of center of Bar is measured from ZERO
  - Runway Markings – All measured from ZERO
  - **ZERO IS THE TOP OF THE BACK OF THE BOX**  
Nearest the Pit, Farthest from the Runway



## Triangulate the Crossbar to Zero – if there is no “zero” marked for standards

1 – crossbar is set with front edge directly above the zero mark  
(use plum bob or measure stick and level)

2 – keeping center of crossbar at zero mark –

- measure from each standard to a center point 15' up the runway  
from zero

- if the two measurements are equal – then the standards are  
**ZEROED**

You've made a triangle with two equal legs

- if the measures differ – then move the standards

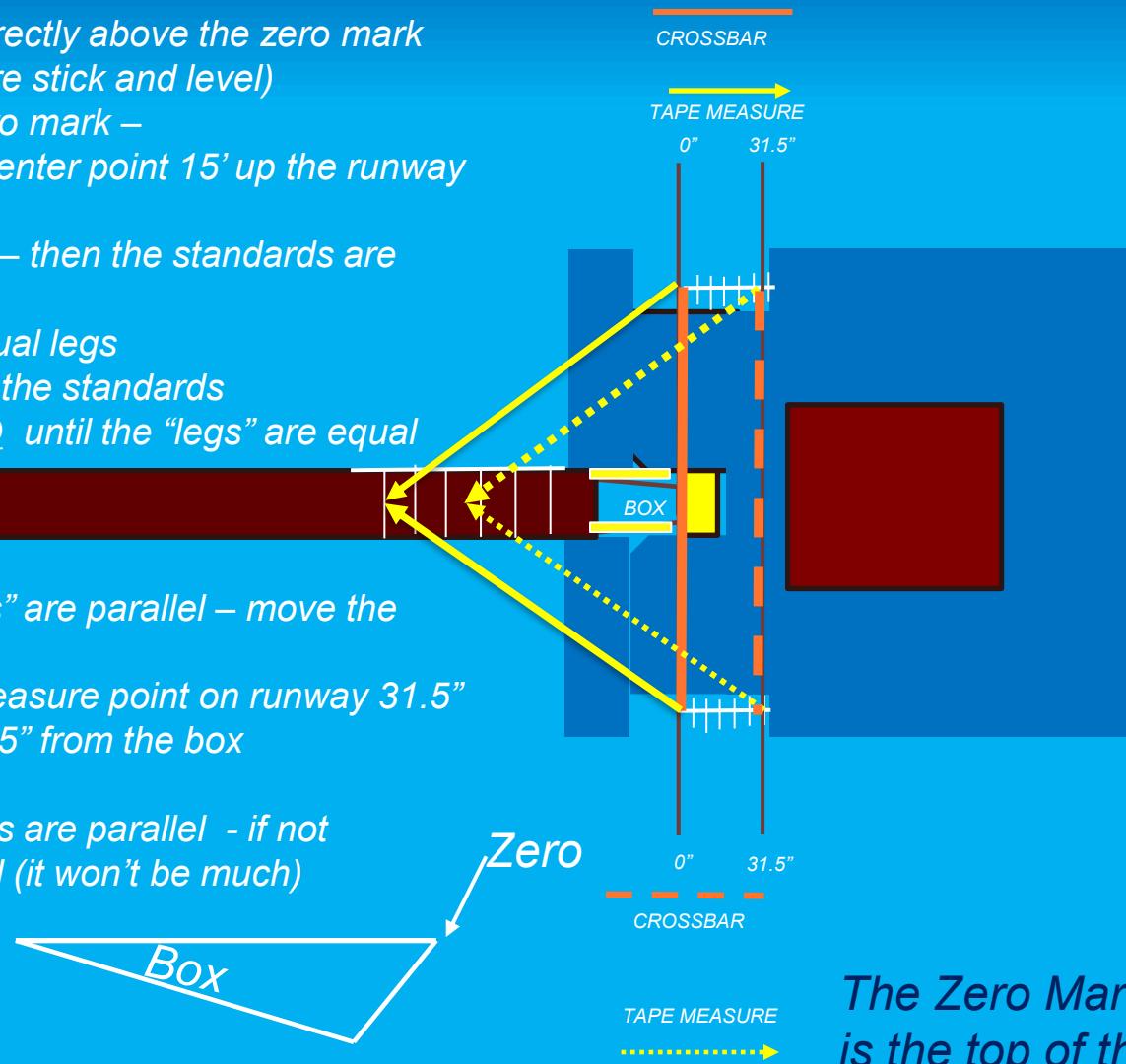
PIVOTING THE CENTER ON ZERO until the “legs” are equal

3- To make sure the standard “tracks” are parallel – move the standards to

31.5 inches “back” – move the measure point on runway 31.5”  
forward – towards the box to 12'5.5” from the box

If the “legs” are still equal – the tracks are parallel - if not  
adjust the tracks to make them equal (it won't be much)

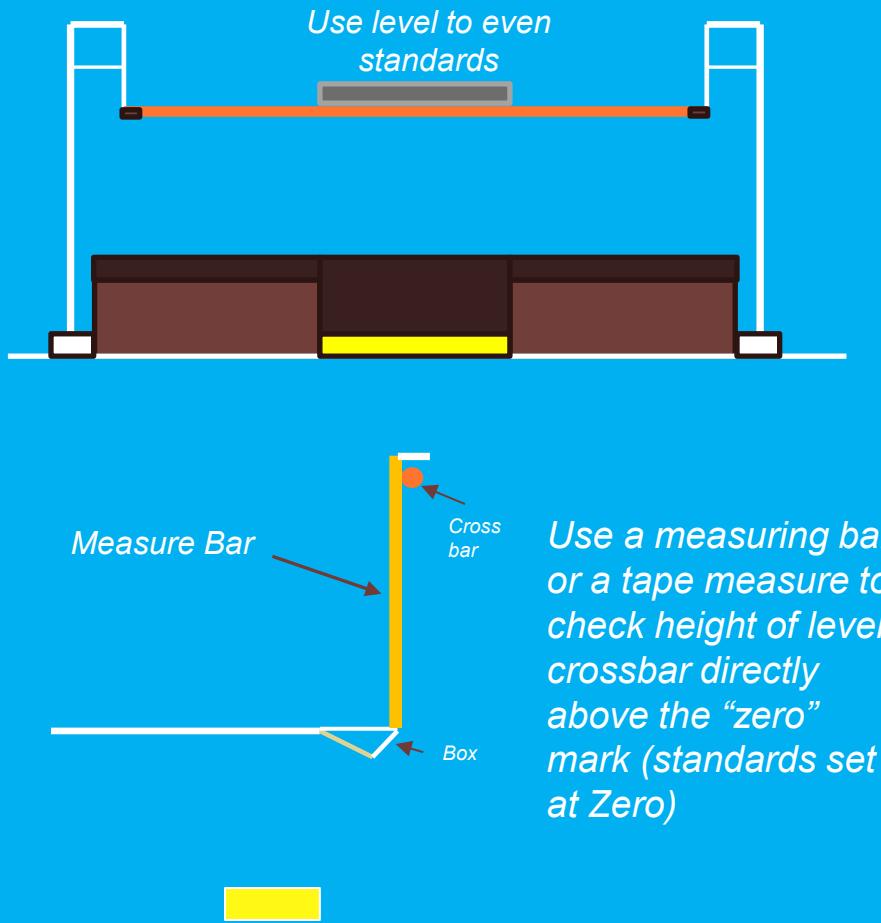
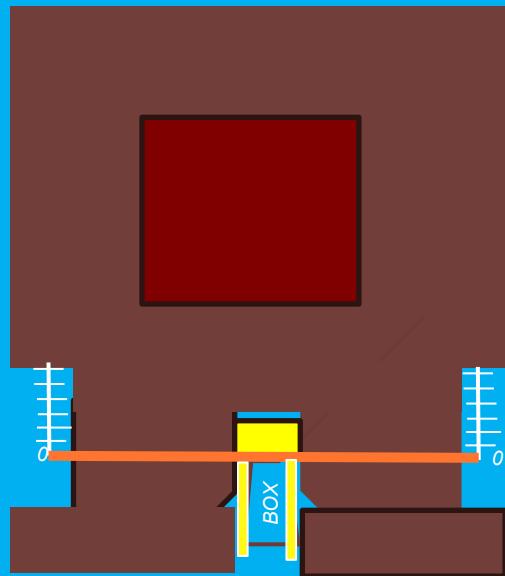
For my Geometry Teacher friends, the measured  
legs would be 16'8.75” – if everything is flat. But  
I'm measuring over the pads, so my starting point is  
usually at 5' up the standards – and the  
measurement is longer. It doesn't matter – as long  
as the measurements are equal.



Note: the yellow represents the required ASTM Box Collar

The Zero Mark  
is the top of the  
back of the box

## Measuring the Crossbar



Yellow is the ASTM Box Collar

## Tools of the Trade

*Tapes  
Cones  
Flags  
Push-Pins  
Plum Bob  
Level  
Clipboard  
Measure-  
Stick*



# Measuring the Bar Height

- To accurately measure the bar, the standards should be moved to the “zero” setting, and the bar should be measured from the top of the back of the box (actual “zero”) to the top of the middle of the crossbar.
  - Buy a laser measuring device (\$1500?!?!)
  - Accurate measuring - use a measuring “stick”
    - *OnTrackandField.com* – (\$228!!)
  - Use a measured bar and tape (\$40 plus tape measure)
  - Use a measuring tape doubled back to the box
    - Hold the tape zero at the box, then put the measuring tape over the bar and back to the box, subtracting for the diameter of the bar ( 1") Note – NOT AN “OFFICIAL” Measurement

# Check Marks

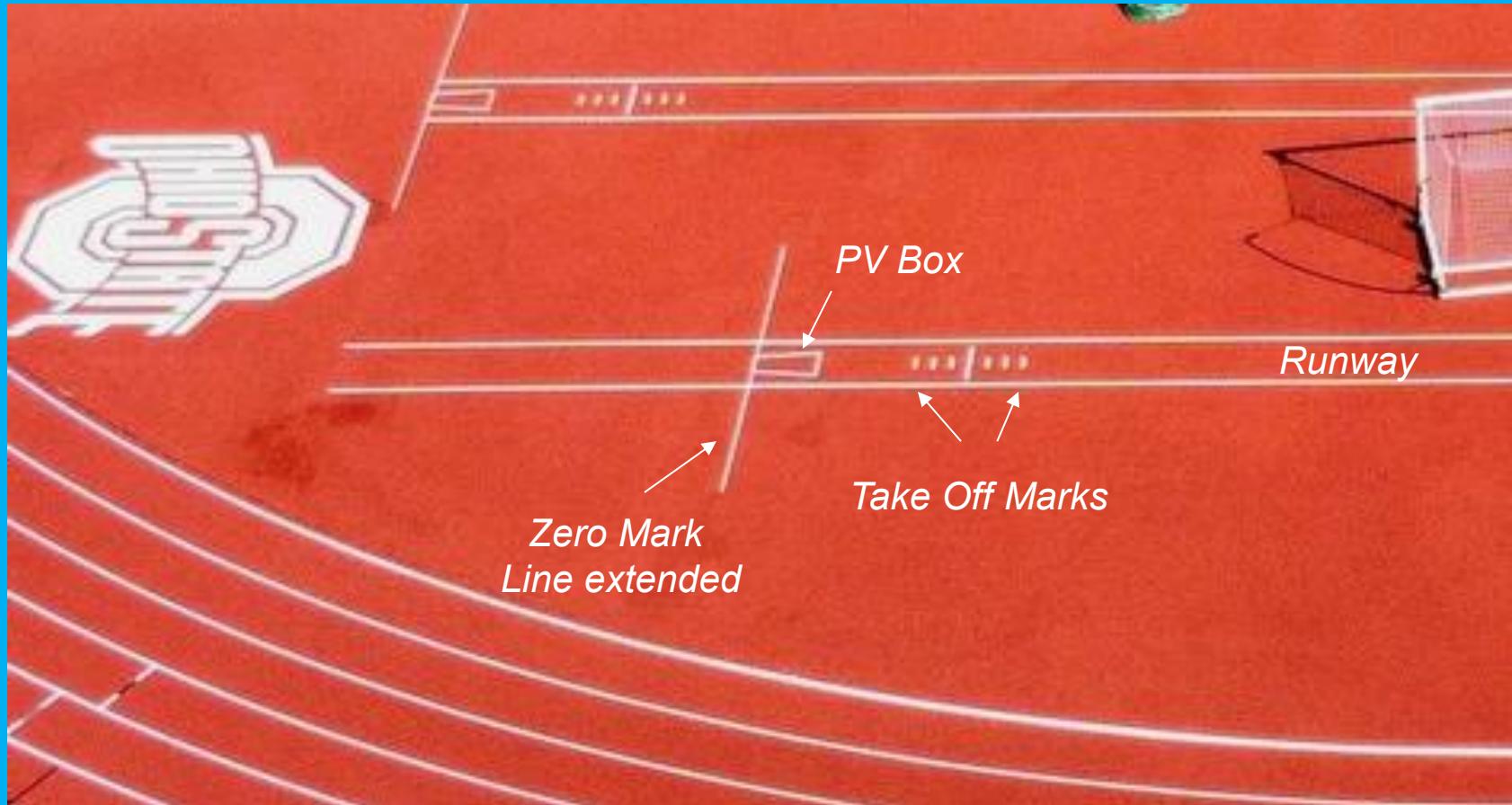
- Takeoff Marks are the single most important tool that athletes and coaches use to insure a safe vault.

*Good preventative officiating is for the vault official to put down plant marks every 6" from 5' to 13' if not already there.*

The placement of these marks by the official does NOT prevent the athlete from placing marks beside (not on) the runway (the Games Committee can determine the number of those marks)

# New Ohio State Track

## Aerial View



*Lines already painted on facility!!!*

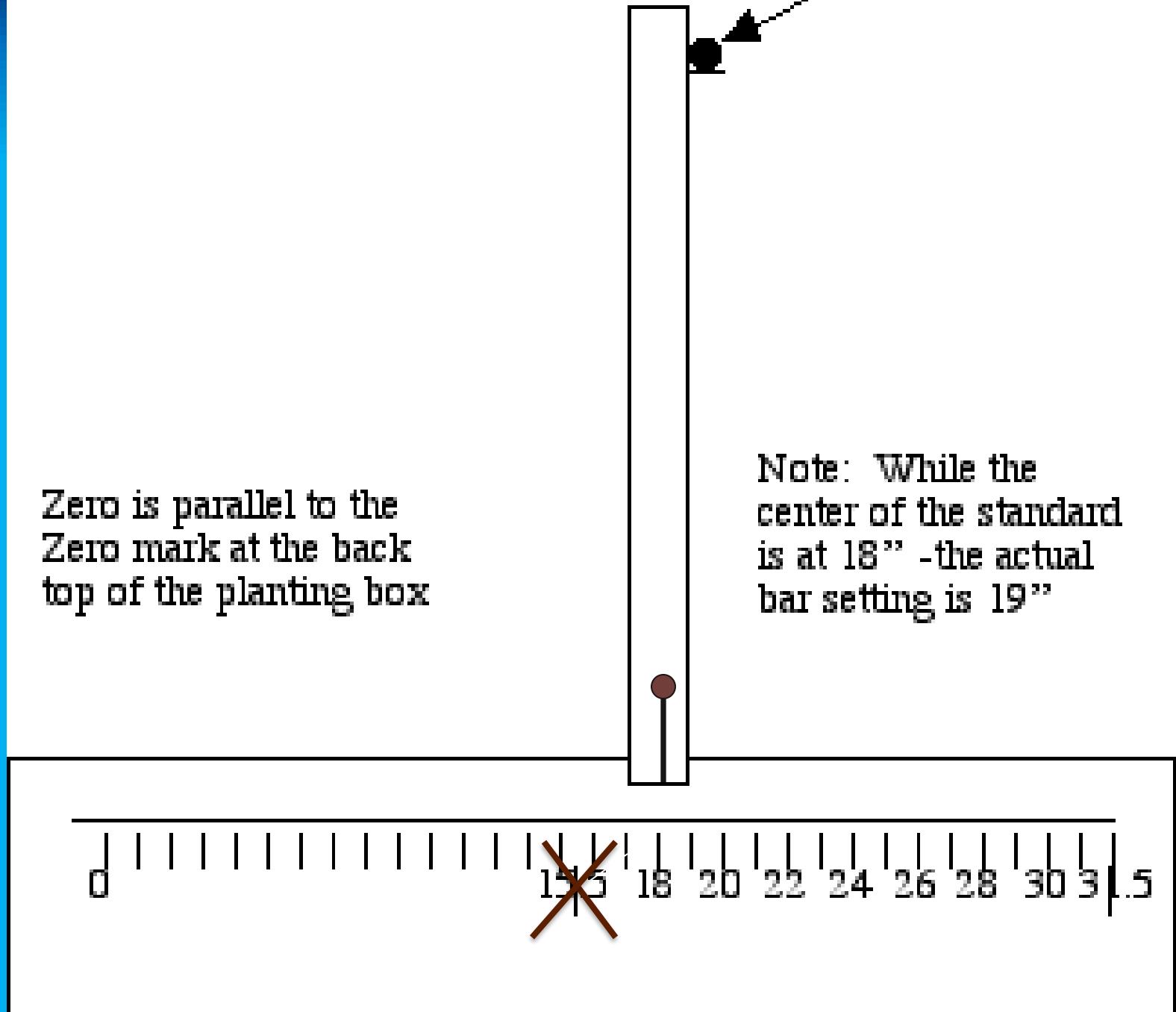
# Standards

## Standards (hold up the crossbar)

- Must move from 18" behind zero to 31 1/2" (45cm to 80cm). *They also need to be able to be “zeroed” for the purpose of measuring the crossbar.*
- Standards must be secured, anchored or weighted so that they will not tip over
- Standard Terms:
  - Pins – hold up bar – must face away from runway
    - Must be smooth, no tape to interfere with bar movement
  - “Back” – farther from Zero & Runway “back to 31.5”
    - “All the way Back”.
  - “Forward” – Closer to Zero & Runway “forward to 18”
    - “All the way Up”
  - *Note: College facilities - the pins are shorter than HS rules allow: HS- 3”, NCAA 2.16”. NCAA are legal for HS – but in District/Regional/State competition should be HS pins – not collegiate*

# Standards

- The deeper a vaulter jumps into the pit, the safer the vaulter is likely to be. Therefore it is critical that standards can be set the full range from 18" to 31 1/2" inches.
- The measurement should be made from the position of the crossbar. Therefore the crossbar should be lined up (not some other part of the standard) at the appropriate mark when setting the standards.



# Section 2 – Poles and Vaulter Inspection



*Bill McAvoy – the “OG” Watkins Vaulter - 1979*

# Pole Inspection

- **POLE WEIGHT RATINGS**
- **6-8-15** The competitor's weight shall be at or below the manufacturer's pole rating. The manufacturer must include on each pole: the pole rating that shall be a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in a contrasting color located within or above the top handhold position; a 1-inch circular band indicating the maximum top handhold position with the position determined by the manufacturer. ...
- **In OHIO – officials accept the coach's “word” as to the vaulter's weight – by their signature on the entry card. The liability for falsifying weight and/or using underweight poles falls on the coaches – not officials. (note – USATF Youth Rules – athletes are weighed as an implement)**

# Pole Inspection

- National High School Federation rules state that reading the weight *etched* into the pole by the manufacturer is **NOT** a legal way to certify a pole. The pole **MUST** have the manufacturer's label. In the past coaches could make their own labels for poles made prior to labeling. As of 2009 - this is no longer allowed.
- *Note - coaches with poles without labels (or legible labels) can get new ones from the manufacturers*

## UCS – Spirit Poles – Weight Label is 6" from top of pole



What are the “Etchings” – on Spirit Poles? (example)

Top - metric length/metric weight	430/84
Middle – standard length/standard weight	14'1"/185
Bottom – year made – flex # - month, day made	06-13.2-12-7

- Poles Manufactured by Gill
  - Pacer, Skypole, Mystic
- Hand hold closer to top of pole - weight marked on handhold mark.
- Also - flex# and weight on label on top of pole
- Finally newer poles have a barcode label in the pole –
- But only the pole label is “valid” officially to certify the pole for competition
- 



# NO “Variable Weight” Poles

- Some “variable” weight or training poles are still around. They are weighted to a “range” (ex: 100-120) and ARE NOT ALLOWED IN HIGH SCHOOL OR USATF RULES COMPETITIONS.
- Such poles are marked as “training” or marked with a weight range rather than a maximum vaulter weight.
- I DQ’ed one at the Regionals in 2025

# Pole Inspection

- If the pole is obviously altered - then it should be disallowed for competition. If there is a question about “relabeling” - then the pole should be disallowed. If the official cannot read the label because it is worn out – then the pole should also be disallowed.

*Once I inspect a pole – I mark it near the bottom with a distinctive Vinyl tape – or, at the State Meet – we use “State Labels”*

*My “mark”  
from the 2025  
Track season*



# Gripping the Pole

- The RULE – There is no “number of layers” rule for hand hold tape anymore – simply that tape must be **smooth and of uniform thickness** – any kind of tape is legal
- In practice – poles should be taped from the lower end of the pole to the upper to avoid ridges. Taping from the top will be smooth at first, but ridges will appear in competition.
- Vaulters may use adhesive sprays (even auto gasket sealer), or chalk
- Any amount of tape is allowed at the bottom of the pole to protect it from wear-rubbing against the box
- (In NFHS rules – gloves are not allowed)
- No tape allowed on Hands – unless covering an open wound
- (Tape IS ALLOWED on wrist)

# Vaulter Check-in

- A typical vaulter check-in card would allow for the information needed and would create an easy “check-off” for each pole inspected

*USATF Note – in non-youth USATF competitions there is NO pole label/weight requirement*

# Sample Vaulter Check-in Card

## Pole Vault Check In

**Meet** \_\_\_\_\_

**School** \_\_\_\_\_

**Boys**

**Girls**

**Vaulter 1 – Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Weight** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pole/s (list by length/weight)** 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

*If more poles are being checked in – list them on back – NOTE - ALL POLES TO BE USED MUST BE CHECKED IN PRIOR TO WARMUP – NFHS Rule 6-8-17*

=====

**Vaulter 2 – Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Weight** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pole/s (list by length/weight)** 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

*If more poles are being checked in – list them on back – NOTE - ALL POLES TO BE USED MUST BE CHECKED IN PRIOR TO WARMUP – NFHS Rule 6-8-17*

*I certify that the above vaulters are using poles appropriate for their skill level, and rated at or higher than the vaulter's actual body weight (NFHS Rule 6 Art. 8-15) and that all of the above information is correct.*

**Coach's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# Number of Poles to Check In

- Comment: Many officials are concerned with the number of poles a vaulter checks in.
  - There is no “rule book” support for limiting the number of poles checked in. The rule does states that all poles should be checked in prior to warmup and competition (NFHS 6-8-17) Therefore, according to rule:
    - a vaulter can check in as many poles as they wish
    - a vaulter SHOULD check in ALL possible poles in order to follow the appropriate rule

# Section 3

## Conduct of the Pole Vault



*Jimmy Rhoads from Liberty Union – guess what year?*

# Conduct of the Pole Vault

- Officials should arrive at least one hour prior to the scheduled beginning of the event
  - Officials should check the venue and equipment prior to the beginning of warmups (see check list)
  - My “best practice” – I arrive 90 minutes before competition – to have pit/standards ready to go at least 60 minutes before
  - Don’t “ASSUME” it’s set-up correctly!!!!

# Supervising Warmup

- Once the runway is open for warmup
- Officials MUST observe and make sure that warmup rules are followed
  - this includes
    - using legal and checked poles  
*(I look for my “special tape”)*
    - no assisted vaults (prohibited)
    - no run backs (prohibited)

# Pre Competition

- Note - Warmup in the pole vault will require a minimum of 30 minutes for even a small field. Larger field may require longer warmup times in order to assure fairness and SAFETY (do NOT allow meet time pressures to compromise safety)
- For bigger invitationals (especially 30+ vaulters) They'll need at least 60 minutes
  - Getting a takeoff step inaccurately in the long jump is a foul - but in the pole vault may cause a vaulter to be injured. Warmup is essentially a safety issue - as well as a competitive one
  - This is why it is “best officiating practice” to arrive at the meet site with enough time before warmups to have all “official” preparations completed before warmups commence (see site checklist)

# Competition

- Officials (4)
  - Flight Coordinator
    - - “Runs the Board” – check out and in
  - “Pit Boss”
    - - Calls “makes and misses” – signals with White and Red Flags
  - Cross Bar Official
    - Calls “volzing” and pole releases – notifies Pit Boss
    - Makes call if pole “rebounds” from box collar
    - Checks-supervises standard settings
    - (at least 2 Workers to set bar and standards)
  - Recorder
    - Keeps Official Board – runs clock – signals with Yellow Flag
    - Give athletes and coaches access to Board

# Competition

*Pit Boss's Responsibility – Your Workers*

athletes, parent/volunteers

Instruct them about how to do their jobs:  
setting standards and placing bars

AND - You owe them a “duty of care”

Make them aware of PV “dangers”

Your workers are in “range” of errant vaulters, crossbars and  
poles

They need to be alert all the time!!!

NOT looking at their cell phones

Sitting on the pit or in chairs where they could be hit

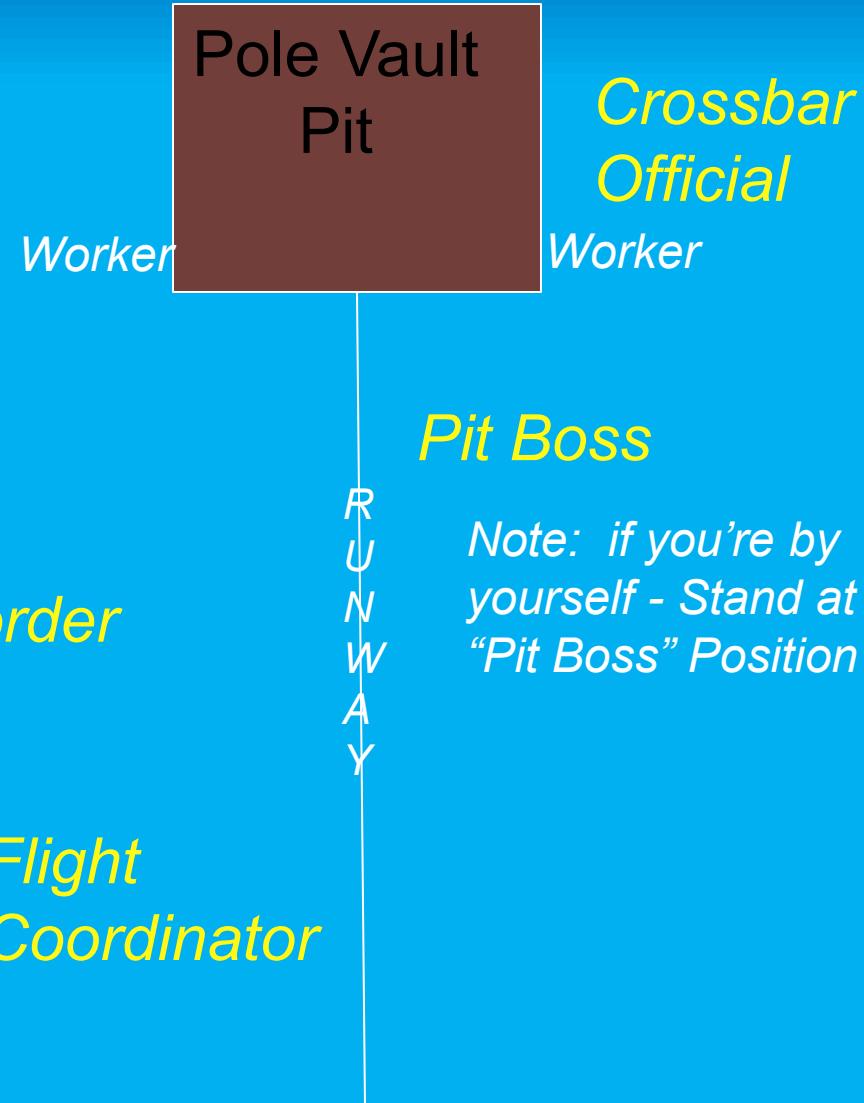
# Positions

Flight Coordinator- midway down the Runway

Pit Boss- In position to see back of box and bar clearance

Crossbar Official- In position to see pole release and bar clearance (hand/arm steadyng bar)

Recorder – on a table on the same side as athletes and coaches



# Pre-Comp Meeting - Example

Welcome to the Division II competition here at Muskingum University

1. Your Officials are honored to be here – Mike Beam (PB), Bob Koch (Rec) and Marty Dahlman (FC)
2. You may only use the poles that we've checked in today – no additional poles
3. The top four will qualify to the State Meet on the Jesse Owens Track at OSU next Saturday – also the next two highest Regional vaulters statewide
4. The Top Eight will medal today. As you complete your vaults – please check with Bob who is the recorder to find where you placed. The top 8 should stay here until the end of the competition
5. Uniforms – legal top and bottom – We'll try to remind you if you forget something
6. Check Out for other events – let me know early and we will try to get jumps in
7. Standards – I'll ask each time that I call you up
8. Time Limit – after the standards are set – I'll say “you're up” and start a timer  
You have 1 minute to start your approach  
When 15 seconds remain – I will raise a yellow flag – you must be moving Before 1 minute expires
9. Questions??? - Good Luck Today!!!

1. Coaches – (establish coaching area – remind coaches to make changes and suggestions through ME not to the pit crew – weather issues???)
2. I want things to go right – if you see a mistake – let ME know!!!!
3. Fourth Place tie breaker –  
IF APPARENT – FOURTH ATTEMPT IN COMPETITION –  
UNRESOLVED - JUMP OFF AFTER  
NOT APPARENT – JUMP OFF AFTER COMPETITION

# Competition

- Flight Coordinator - Running The Board
  - In competitions where there are 9 or more vaulters at a given height - the vault may be conducted using “5 Alive” (Games Committee decision 6-8-2).
    - *Not using 5-Alive and going down the list is called vaulting “straight through”*
  - The idea of “5 Alive” is that each vaulter will have no more than 5 vaults between their attempts (allowing them to stay warmed up while still getting some rest time between attempts)

# 5 ALIVE!!!!

Here's 2024's Stingel Invitational Board

16 vaulters at opening height

Number 1 thru 5 for first “flight” in the “five column”

Vaulted thru first five as they all went out –

As 1 finished – scratch his “1” and add a new 1 below. Continue numbering, then follow the number order 1-5 until completed

Note: Lines with “–” pass this height.

At conclusion of height – erase the 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5's and start over for the next height

So here's my entry sheet for the Stingel.

Name/School	Entry Ht	Five	10-0
Zion Henson - Chillicothe	0	-	X X X
James Russell - Pick Central	0	-	- - -
Coretni Owens - Wayne	0	-	X X X
Josh Naess - Bloom Carroll	0	-	X X X
Dominic Knapp - Bloom Carroll	0	-	X X X
Casey Carlos - West North	8.6	-	X X X
Simon Kulina - T Worthington	9	1	X X X
Ty Sommer - Pick Central	10	2	X X O
Lukas Dean - Centerville	10	3	X X X
Matthew Keaton - West North	10	4	X O -
Tyler Calvert - Marysville	10.6	5	X O -
Tyler Della Rocco - Olen Orange	10.6	6	O - -
Caleb Hirschler - Chillicothe	10.6	7	X X X
David Martin - Watkins	11	8	O - -
Wyatt Krutsch - Lancaster	11.6	9	X O
Will Jackson - Olen Orange	12	-	- - -
Aidan Johnston - Watkins	12	10	O - -
Benjamin Rhodes - Worthington	12.6	11	X O
Noah Stowell - Marysville	12.8	-	- - -
Bas Fahrer - Lancaster	13	-	- - -
Hunter Long - Canal Winchester	13.6	-	- - -
Peter Zhong - Pick North	13.6	-	- - -
Julian Amabile - Canal Winches	13.6	-	- - -
Ethan Ireland - Centerville	14.6	-	- - -
Panashe Chavi - Pick North	14.6	-	- - -
Eric Pugh - Wayne	14.8	-	- - -

# Time in the Vault

- Vaulters have 1 minute from the time the standards are set to initiate a vault to completion.

This applies to the first vault no matter when they enter the competition

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- When there are 3 or fewer vaulters, time is 3 minutes

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When the winner is left it's

5 minutes

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If a vaulter has consecutive trials – 3 minutes

- Note – that 3 minutes includes across height changes
- if vaulter is “back to back” – last and first
- The only “2” in High School rules is the 2 minute warmup period

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# Time in the Vault

Vaulters have a time limit to vault after the standards have been set. Pit Boss should signal that they are ready “Standards Set”

The rule states that the vaulter must initiate an attempt that goes to completion within the time limit (2014). Therefore, as long as they start down the runway on a vault that is completed - it is a good vault.

If however, they stop and go back after the time expires, or do not start prior to the expiration of time - then it is a miss.

# Time in the Vault

- The timer (Flight Coordinator or Recorder) gives a visual signal (**Yellow flag**) with 15 seconds remaining. Visual countdown clocks are fine, but should not have audible alarms
- (*A vaulter may be coming down the runway to complete a legal vault when the “alarm” goes off, and that could create a distraction to the vaulter making it an unfair situation – guess which now retired Coach had that happen at a Regional*)

## *Warmup NEW RULE – 6-8-6*

- The new rule reflects the current NCAA rule.

A vaulter earns a 2 minute warmup time if their starting height has not begun within the first 60 minutes.

It no longer matters how many heights they pass (other than the first height).

Officials MUST NOTE the Event Starting Time

All warmups are to be taken the beginning of that vaulter's entry height

## *Warmup NEW RULE – 6-8-6*

Example: the vault opens a 7'0" starting @ 10:03 am

Vaulter B is entering the competition at 9'0"

The bar change from 8'6" to 9'0" takes place @10:55 am

Vaulter B does NOT get a warmup vault

Vaulter C passes to 9'6". The bar change takes place @11:06.

Vaulter C GETS a 2 minute warmup without crossbar before competition begins at 9'6".

*“...this time is not aggregated for the group.”*

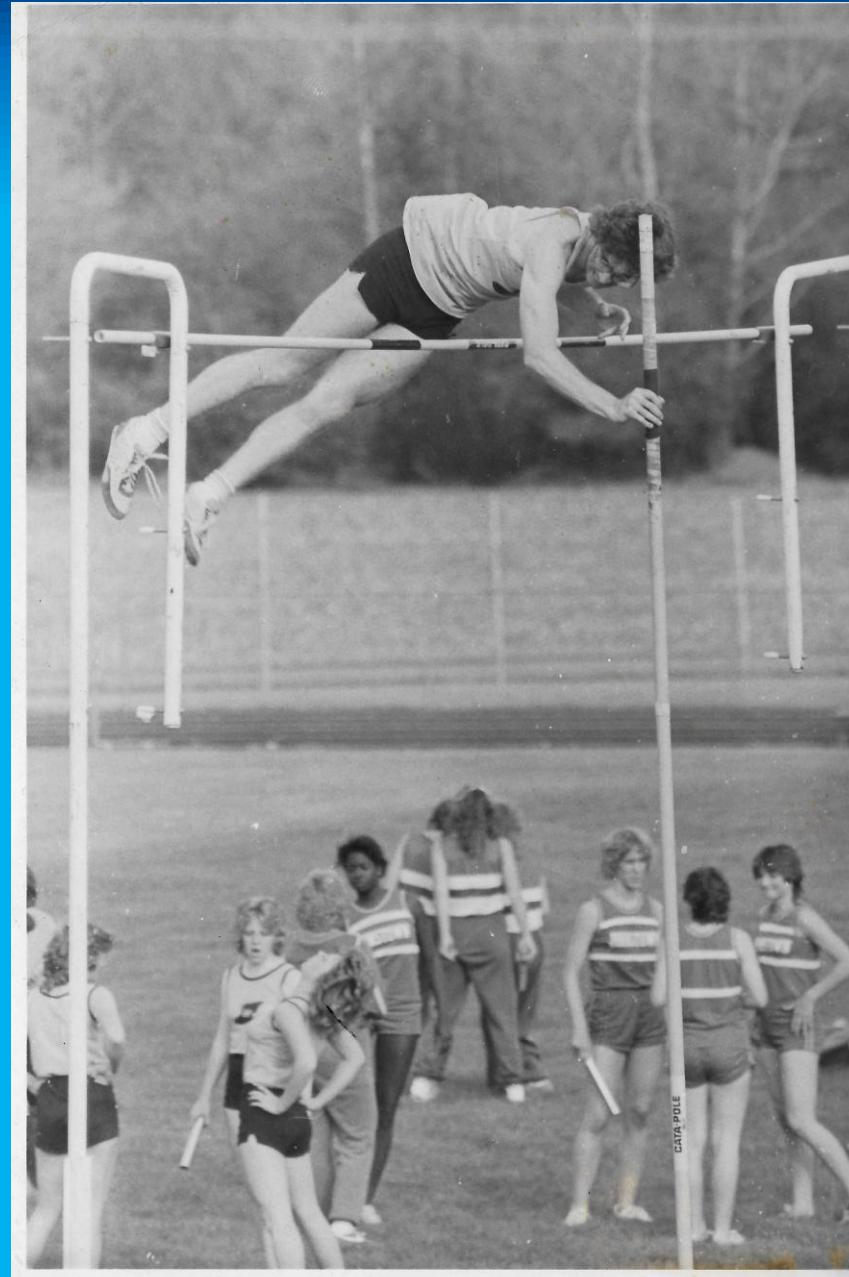
By Rule, each 2 minutes must be taken individually, NOT AS A GROUP ADDED TOGETHER (unlike previous rule).

# Section 4

## Competition

## Rules and

## Practices



*Joe Rider – State Placer - 1983*

# Making the Call - Vault or No

- It is primarily the Pit Boss's job to determine whether an attempt occurs.
- An attempt occurs when the vaulter
  - Touches any part of the pit with body or pole beyond the “zero” mark without clearing the bar
  - Leaves the ground in an attempt to vault

# What is an attempt?

## Under National Federation Rules

An attempt is when a vaulter leaves the ground in an attempt to clear the bar (a jump) *NOTE : whether a vaulter “made an attempt” or simply came to a “jump stop” is an official judgment call;* or

When a vaulter’s body or pole touches any part of the pit or runway beyond the “zero” mark without clearing the bar

## Under USATF Rules

An attempt is when a vaulter’s body or pole touches any part of the pit or runway beyond the “zero” mark

*(the difference – a vaulter could jump – stall, land on the runway and still NOT have made an attempt in USATF)*

# What If the vaulter...

Comes down the runway, then at the last minute puts his pole in the box and stops – **does not attempt to jump and time remains, no attempt**

Stops, and both feet leave the ground in what clearly IS NOT an attempt to jump - **As long as time remains, no attempt**

Does not put the pole in the box, but misses the box and hits the box collar or pit beyond the “zero mark” - **Counts as an attempt**

Drops the pole and runs into the pit beyond the zero mark  
- **If part of the vaulter’s body touches beyond zero mark, an attempt**

Drops the pole and runs onto the front bun, but does NOT go beyond the zero mark - **As long as time remains, not an attempt**

# What if the vaulter...

Puts the pole in the box and jumps, but does not touch any part of the pit beyond the zero mark, landing back on the runway

- In High School an attempt, in USATF, if time remains not an attempt

Does not put the pole in the box, but holds it up, over the pit (and beyond the zero mark) but DOES NOT touch any part of the pit beyond the zero mark

- As long as they “back out” and time remains, not an attempt

# Pit Boss

- You are the primary event official - you are making the call on the vault. Make sure you pay attention to the complete vault, until it is clear that all actions (pole falling away from the bar, bar shaking, etc) are finished. WAIT – until all the action is done!!!! . Then clearly make the call White Flag (good) **Red Flag (miss)**.
- *Note: there is no “rush” to call a vault “good”, but there is a lot of hassle changing a “mistaken” call*

# Crossbar Official - needs to make the call:

- Vaulter is gripping above the handhold band – (may grip on the band - but the top of the band must be visible) (***Penalty – missed attempt***)
- Vaulter vaults on pole NOT checked in or inspected – *make sure inspection mark is identifiable* (***Penalty – disqualification***)
- Vaulter “regrips” higher on the pole with top hand after leaving the ground (***Penalty – missed attempt***)
- *Crossbar official needs to notify Pit Boss of infraction – only Pit Boss has White, **Red Flag** to avoid confusion*

# Calls on the Bar



## Calls on “the bar”

- “Volzing” is the vaulter steadyng the bar with hand(s) or arm(s) during the attempt. If the vaulter touches the bar with a hand or arm *in an attempt* to steady it, it should be a miss.
- The biggest call Crossbar Official will need to make is the “properly released pole”

# What if the pole...

1. *Falls into the bar - knocking it off, and the vaulter made no effort to push it back - miss*
2. *Falls into the bar - knocking it off, after the vaulter pushed it away and it traveled to vertical, then fell back to the bar*  
- *official's judgment – could be a good vault was it “a properly released pole” (6-8-24)??*
3. *Goes under the bar, either hitting or not hitting the standard - but not dislodging the bar - good vault*
4. *Comes to rest on the crossbar, and the crossbar stays up*  
- *good vault*
5. *The vaulter clears the bar, then jumps up and catches the pole that is about to hit the crossbar*  
- *vaulter interfered with released pole – miss*

# Calls on the “bar”

- *What about the “pole resting on the crossbar” scenario?*
- *It is up to the Pit Boss to determine whether the vault has concluded and the bar is “up”.*
- *If the Pit Boss signals a “good vault”, then the location of the pole no longer matters.*
- *Taking a resting pole off of a steady crossbar IS NOT part of the vaulting attempt.*
- *Who “takes it off” the bar makes no difference.*
- *If there is a question as to whether the pole will knock the bar off because of contact -- wait to make the call!!!!*

# The Falling Pole

- Once a vaulter has released the pole - the pole cannot be interfered with by anyone (“pole catchers”) including the VAULTER - until it comes to rest. A vaulter who comes out of the pit to “save” a falling pole from hitting the crossbar should receive a “miss”.
- *Note: I had to make this call just recently. The Vaulter didn’t know – but did say I wondered why no one else did this!!!!*

# Calls on the Bar

- For a good vault - the bar must remain on the pegs upon which it originally rested – even if it bounces
- Therefore - if the bar is not on the pegs where it started - it is a failed attempt
  - *Either up or down, or the top of the standards*
  - *But – the bar could “flip over” and still be on the same pegs – that’s a “good vault”*

IF there is an equipment failure during the vault (ex: standards slip or pole breaks) it IS a NO VAULT and the athlete gets a “do-over”

*Note- it doesn't matter whether the vault was clearly going to be a miss. It COULD even be a good vault if the vaulter was clearly over and beyond the bar before the equipment failure!!!*

- *Good practice – put the vaulter back in order – not back to back!!*

# Falling Crossbar

- **6-8-5:** A crossbar displaced by a force disassociated with the competitor after he/she is legally and clearly over the crossbar shall not be a fault.
- **Rationale:** Addresses possible influence of an outside force on the crossbar on an otherwise successful attempt.

*Note – wind forces would be the most obvious reason  
Rebound of the properly released pole off of the box  
collar might be another  
Teammates jumping on the vaulter for a new record  
could be a third  
(thanks Brian for not taking away that school record!!)*

# Setting and Measuring the Bar

- The standards height and zero should have been set prior to warmup. Officials should measure at the starting height, at each change of height, and any time the standards may have changed (standard might drop due to improper tightening).
- In non-championship competition, bar height might be measured less frequently but should still be done several times during the competition to insure accuracy

# Athlete Check-Out

- Athletes should check out for limited periods of time ONLY
- Allow athletes that need to check out to take their vaults out of order at a height (but remember, you cannot lower a bar within the competition, so they can only vault at the height now being contested)
- Remind them – games committee established time limit for them to be gone, after which they will be passed and the bar moved up (often - 10 minutes)

Check with Head Field or Referee before event starts  
KNOW WHAT THE TIME LIMIT IS!!!

- It is the coach's responsibility not to spread athletes too thin.
- 
- DO NOT PUT OTHER ATHLETES AT A DISADVANTAGE BY WAITING AN EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT OF TIME
- PASS ABSENT ATHLETES TO THE NEXT HEIGHT

# Vault Offs



*Kyle Burns – State Meet 2004*

# Breaking Ties

- When two or more vaulters are tied at a height:
  - The one who took the fewest attempts at the tied height wins
  - If a tie still remains, The one with the fewest total misses throughout the competition wins
  - If a tie remains for any height other than first - it is a tie
  - First Place - Vault Off!!!!
  - *Note: you'll hear the term “count back”. Back really, it's count back one height, then all the misses!!!*

# Event Winner?

- *NEW INTERPRETATION OF RULE*

An athlete may withdraw from a jump-off – they take the lesser place of the tie

- Example – A, B, and C tie for first place
- C chooses not to jump off - C gets third place

- If all athletes involved in a jump-off choose not to participate – then the tie remains for first place (*the Katie Moon rule!*)
  - Example – A and B are tied for first place
  - they both choose not to jump off
  - event scored as a tie for first with no second place

# Breaking Ties

Name	13-0	13-6	14-0	14-6
Walton	O	XO	XXO	XXX
Hill	XO	O	XO	XXX
Haden	XXO	XO	XO	XXX
Ratliff	O	O	XXO	XXX

Breaking the ties

Hill and Haden beat Walton and Ratliff on misses at last cleared height

Hill has two total misses, Haden has four

No "vault off" needed - Hill wins, Haden second

Walton has three total misses, Ratliff two,

Ratliff is third, Walton is fourth

# Vaulting Off for First

- Name 14-0 14-4 14-8 15-0 15-0 14-9
- Burns O XO O XXX X X
- Chia XO O O XXX X O
- 
- Burns and Chia both cleared 14-8 on the first attempt. Both had one total miss in the competition.
- Get one additional attempt at last missed height
- Vault off is by 3" increments, regardless of the increments going up (6-3-4a)
- Both missed the additional attempt at 15-0.
- Chia cleared 14-9 to win the vault-off.
- Winning Height - 14-9
  - *(Ohio State HS Championships, Div 1 Meet – 2004)*

# Vaulting Off for First

Name	14-0	14-4	14-8	15-0	15-0	15-3	15-0
Burns	O	XO	O	XXX	O	X	X
Chia	XO	O	O	XXX	O	X	O

- Burns and Chia both cleared 14-8 on the first attempt and had one miss in the competition.
- Both cleared 15 on the 4th attempts (first attempts in the vault off).
- Both missed at 15-3, so the bar goes back to 15-0, Chia clears to win.
- Winning height - 15-0.

# Who is the Event Winner?

- As always - the winning vaulter is allowed to select at what height he/she will attempt. The Rule Change clarifies that the last vaulter  
**MUST BE THE EVENT WINNER.**

- Example -

	10	10-6	11-0	11-3	11-6
• Sue	0	X0	X0	P	
• Ann	0	0	X0	XXX	

While Sue is the last vaulter remaining - she must vault the next increment as mandated by the games committee

She is NOT the event winner (if she fails to clear – Ann wins on total misses)

# Who is the Event Winner?

- Example -

	10	10-6	11-0	11-3	11-6
• Sue	0	X0	X0	P	O
• Ann	0	X0	0	XXX	

- At this point Sue IS the winner - and can set the bar at any height over 11-6 for her next attempt

- Special Thanks to:
- Ohio Track and Cross Country Officials Association
- Great Ohio Pole Vault Officials
  - *Especially “the Masters” : Tom Shishler, Bill Swank, Patty Mitchell*
    - As a coach I wanted them to officiate my events
    - As an official I try to follow their great examples
    - I hope I can be as good as they are!!!
- Ohio Track Coaches Association - dedicated to PV Safety
- Rob Wahl - PV Safety Chairman, Pennsylvania
- Mark Hannay - Northeast Chairman, USATF PV (*RIP my friend*)
- Watkins Memorial High School Pole Vaulters
  - We experienced every possible rule question for 40 years

# Questions and Information

- Pole Vault Information is available at:  
[www.ohiopolevaultsafety.org](http://www.ohiopolevaultsafety.org)  
[www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)  
Questions - email – [dahlman@aol.com](mailto:dahlman@aol.com)

Even more detailed version of this presentation  
available at [www.ohiopolevaultsafety.org](http://www.ohiopolevaultsafety.org)