NFHS News
National Federation of State High School Associations
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Field Event Safety: Tips for Shot Put, Discus and Javelin Officiating

High School field events like shot put, discus, and javelin add excitement to track and field competitions. However, they also come with inherent risks. Proper safety protocols ensure a secure environment for athletes, officials, and spectators. As an official, your role in enforcing safety measures is critical. Here are key safety considerations for officiating these events.

1. Establish and Enforce Safety Zones

- Meet management should clearly mark restricted areas where only authorized personnel and competing athletes are allowed.
- Officials should inspect cages, stopboards, sectors and areas are sectioned off for safety.
- Ensure spectators, coaches, and non-competing athletes remain outside the restricted areas and behind designated barriers.
- Position officials strategically to oversee different event zones while maintaining a safe distance from potential impact areas.

2. Warm-Ups

- Warm-ups are not permissible unless the event is open and supervised by event official or contestant's coach.
- NFHS Officials Manual has suggested warm-up techniques to utilize at field events.

3. Control the Competition Area

- Allow only one athlete at a time in the throwing circle or javelin runway.
- Prohibit unnecessary movement behind throwers, ensuring a clear and focused environment.
- Ensure athletes retrieve implements only when the field is clear and an official signals it is safe to do so.

4. Maintain Constant Awareness and Communication

- Use whistles, flags, or verbal commands to control the flow of competition and signal when it is safe to proceed.
- Ensure all event officials are in communication to manage unexpected situations swiftly.
- Remind athletes to wait for the official's signal before retrieving equipment or leaving the designated throwing area.

Shot put, discus, and javelin are thrilling events, but they require strict adherence to safety protocols. By enforcing **clear safety zones, maintaining control over the competition area, and staying vigilant**, officials play a crucial role in preventing accidents and ensuring a safe, fair, and enjoyable competition for everyone involved.
Let's commit to making **safety the top priority**—because a well-officiated event is a safe event!

If you have a topic, you would like me to address in my NOC newsletter article, please reach out to me: jcochran@nfhs.org.