



2026 USATF South Carolina Association Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships Coaches Information



This is a USATF event. [2026 USATF Competition Rules](#) will apply, particularly the Youth Rules (Rule 300-303, Rule 306).

The rules provided in this document are either rules the Games Committee has either defined parameters for, or are rules the Games Committee feels are particularly important. Relevant rules providing justification for the Games Committee's decisions are also included.

3-8-3 Format

In Field Events, except vertical jumps (High Jump and Pole Vault), each competitor will be given three (3) trials. The top eight (8) competitors will move to the finals, be re-ordered, and will be awarded three (3) additional trials. The finalists shall be ordered in ascending order, beginning with the lesser (shorter) performance. NOTE: In the event there are eight (8) or fewer athletes in the preliminary competition, those athletes shall be awarded six (6) trials each, with no re-ordering.

Awards

Gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded for first, second, and third places, respectively. Fourth through eighth place will receive a ribbon.



Awards will be available at Implement Inspection after 4pm on Friday, and after 2pm on Saturday, and Sunday. Also note that awards are not available until after the final results have been posted for the event and after the 30-minute protest has ended.

Combined Events - Multis

Combined Events are not contested at the USATF South Carolina Association Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships. However, athletes are required to register for Combined Events at the Association meet in order to be advanced to the Regional meet.

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Excused to Participate in Another Event

- All athletes must check-in at the field event venue at least 30 minutes least-to the start of the event, and must also request to be excused by the lead Official of that event.
- A High Jump or Pole Vault competitor may be excused for up to 10 minutes to participate in a running event. If the competitor fails to return in the allotted time, and all other remaining competitors have passed, failed, or cleared the existing height, the crossbar shall be raised to the next height and the judge will automatically pass the excused competitor to the new height. Under no circumstances shall the bar be lowered. If the competitor has failed to return and the competition has otherwise concluded, the judge shall automatically pass the excused competitor and only raise the bar once to the next height before using the forfeiting procedure in Rule 181.6.

Rule 181.6

If a competitor is not present when all other competitors who are present have completed the competition, the Referee shall deem that such absent competitor has forfeited the right to continue in the competition once the period for one further trial has elapsed.

- A Horizontal Jumps or Throws competitor may be excused for up to 10 minutes to participate in a running event. The competitor must return before the conclusion of all other preliminary attempts if excused during the preliminaries, or before the conclusion of all other final attempts if excused during the finals. In both the preliminaries and the finals, the head event judge may allow attempts to be taken in succession before a competitor is excused, and make-up attempts may be taken in succession and out of order upon legally returning to the event.

Electronics, Infield Events

- The use of electronics (Video, Audio, or Communication Devices) by athletes in the competition area is strictly prohibited at all times. This includes during warm-up and competition.
- Athletes competing in an event on the infield may not, during the competition, cross to the outside of the track

Warm Ups

- In all age divisions of the High Jump and Pole Vault an athlete may be assisted by a designated person (with field-of-play credentials issue by meet management, i.e., Coaches Credentials) in establishing the location of that athlete's marks prior to the start of competition.
- One hour shall be allocated for Pole Vault warmups in events where there are 10 or more competitors. Otherwise, up to 6 minutes per competitor shall be allocated, rounded up to the nearest 5-minute mark. *(For example, 40 minutes would be allocated for 6 competitors.)*
- Long Jump athletes in the 8 and Under and 9-10 Age Divisions may be assisted by a designated person (with field-of-play credentials issue by meet management, i.e., Coaches Credentials) in establishing the location of their marks prior to the start of the competition



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- One hour shall be allocated for High Jump warmups in events where there are 12 or more competitors. Otherwise, up to 5 minutes per competitor shall be allocated. (*For example, for 7 competitors, up to 35 minutes would be allocated.*)
- The Games Committee has mandated the flight-specific warm-up period for horizontal jumps and throws events shall be 15 minutes, or up to 20 minutes if more than 12 competitors in a flight.
- Warm-up approaches in the long jump, triple jump, javelin and pole vault may only be taken in the direction in which the event is contested. Running in the opposite direction either on or adjacent to the runway during warm-ups is forbidden.

Poles and Throwing Implements

- All implements are required to be inspected prior to the start of warm-ups.
- **All implements must be submitted at least one hour prior to the start of the event. Implements submitted less than one hour prior to the start of the event will not be inspected and will be impounded until the event has ended.**
- Only inspected legal implements are allowed in the competition area.
- **A competitor using an illegal implement or equipment in a field event shall be disqualified.** All records, performances, or points scored with the use of such implement or equipment shall be null and void. An implement or equipment is deemed illegal if: the competitor uses an uninspected implement or equipment, or uses an implement or equipment that has been illegally altered after having been officially inspected.
- Not more than two implements may be submitted by a competitor for any throwing event. No additional implements may be taken to the area for competition or practice
- A competitor may take no more than two practice trials or throws for each turn in line at the competition area.
- The competitor's weight shall be at or below the manufacturer's pole rating. It is the responsibility of the coach or parent to verify the competitor pole rated at or above his/her weight. **All Pole Vaulters will be weighed, holding spikes in hand, 10 minutes prior to warmups.**
- There shall be two take-off boards for Long Jump between 1m and 4.5m from the edge of the landing area.

Assistance

- In all age divisions of the High Jump and Pole Vault an athlete may be assisted by a designated person (with field-of-play credentials issue by meet management, i.e., Coaches Credentials) in establishing the location of that athlete's marks prior to the start of competition.
- Long Jump athletes in the 8 and under and 9-10 Age Divisions may be assisted by a designated person (with field-of-play credentials issue by meet management, i.e., Coaches Credentials) in establishing the location of their marks prior to the start of the competition.
- Only an individual specifically identified by the Starter may assist in setting a competitor's starting block.



Field Access

All field events, including all throws events, are contested inside of the track. There will be throws events conducted simultaneously from both ends of the track. Consequently, the infield will be a congested area and a very dangerous area. The only people allowed in the infield are USATF Officials and athletes competing in the current event or warming up for an upcoming event. **There is no field or in-field access allowed, except for those specifically authorized to assist athletes in getting/setting marks. Anyone in the infield (except those assisting with athlete marks) will be given a warning and asked to leave the in-field.**

- **Those with coaches credentials that are allowed to assist athletes in getting/setting marks must exit the in-field immediately after marks are set. Failure to leave after marks are set will be given a warning and asked to leave the in-field.**
- **Failure to leave the infield when asked to leave will result in that person being asked to leave the venue. Failure to comply will result in Meet Management engaging security (Florence Police Department) to have the non-compliant person escorted off the property.**

Advancement

This is addressed in the Meet Information on the USATF South Carolina Website: usatfsc.org. By rule, the top 12 individuals and relay teams in each age division shall advance from each Association to the Region4 meet. However, the Region has the option of increasing this. Region4 has agreed to advance the top 16 in 2026.

Running Events

- **All participants on a relay team shall wear a top of the same color.**
- Athletes in the 15-16 and 17-18 year old divisions are required to use starting blocks and a crouch position for all running events of 400 meters or less, and in the first leg of all relays where the first leg is 400 meters or less. In all cases, only a competitor or an individual specifically identified by the Starter may set a competitor's starting block. Any other assistance is prohibited.
- **The use of personal starting blocks is not allowed.** All competitors using blocks shall use only the meet-provided starting blocks.
- If the number of competitors reporting for an event makes preliminary or semi-final heats unnecessary, the event shall be run as a final at the time the prelims are scheduled for.
- In Association and Regional meets where all rounds are held on one day, and the competitors in the 100, 200, or hurdles advance directly to a final, the final may be run at the time of the scheduled preliminary.
- False starts are called on individuals, not on the field. For the 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12 and 13-14 year old divisions, for a first false start by a competitor, a yellow and black (diagonally halved) card will be raised in front of the respective competitor(s), and when lane markers are being used, a corresponding indication should be placed on the respective lane marker(s). For a second false start, the respective competitor(s) shall be disqualified.



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- False starts for 15-16 and 17-18 year old age divisions are charged to individual competitors. A red and black (diagonally halved) card shall be raised in front of the charged competitor(s), and the competitor(s) will be disqualified. When lane markers are being used, a corresponding indication should be placed on the respective lane marker(s).
- Competitors shall be placed at the finish in the order in which any part of their bodies (i.e., the “torso,” as distinguished from the head, neck, arms, hands, legs, or feet) reaches the finish line.
- Hurdle heights for 13-14 Boys is now 36”. (Effective January 2025.)
- In all running events, except relays, no competitor may place any mark or marker upon the running surface or alongside it for his/her assistance. When all or the first portion of a relay race is being run in lanes, a runner may place one check mark on the track within his/her own lane, by using self-adhesive tape, maximum 5cm x 40cm, of a distinctive color which cannot be confused with other permanent markings. In sprint relays, the outgoing runners may place a single piece of self-adhesive tape, maximum 5cm x 40cm.
- Each competitor is required to run in a direct line after entering the final straightaway in all races of two or more turns unless there is another competitor in his or her path.
- Any competitor or participant responsible for jostling, running across, or obstructing another competitor or participant so as to impede his or her progress shall be liable to disqualification in that event. The Referee shall have the authority to:
 - order the race be re-held, excluding any disqualified competitor(s), for competitors seriously affected by jostling or obstruction
 - allow such competitors to compete in a subsequent round of the race
 - advance one, some or all competitors seriously affected by jostling
- Beginning in 2025, Mixed Gender Relays are contested in the USATF Junior Olympics for the 15-16 and 17-18 age groups. [Rule 301](#).
 - Mixed Gender Relay events contested are the 4x100, 4x400, and 4x800
 - Each teams must consist of two males and two females
 - All team members must be from the same age group (15-16, or from 17-18)
 - The relay legs of the 4x100 will alternate between genders (F-F-M-M). The first two leg shall be run by a female runner. The last 2 legs shall be run by a male runner.
 - The relay legs of the 4x400 and 4x800 will alternate between genders (M-F-M-F). The first leg shall be run by a male runner. The anchor leg shall be run by a female runner.
 - Per [Rule 302.3\(c\)](#), Mixed Gender Relays shall be conducted in the following order: 4x800, 4x400, 4x100.

Field Events

- All distances and heights will be measured in meters, rounded to the lowest centimeter.
- In Field Events, all competitors in all flights will receive three trials (attempts). Athletes with the top 8 performances across all flights will advance to the finals. These top 8



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athletes will be reordered from lesser performance to greater performance, and receive 3 additional attempts (trials).

- Per Rule 302.5, and beginning in 2021, all privately owned implements are now exempt from loss of identity, meaning there is no common usage. No athlete may use another athlete's privately owned implement without that athlete's express consent.
- Per Rule 301, beginning January 2026, the 9-10 age group will throw the new Aero Javelin - 250g.

NOTE: TurboJavs (Mini Javelin) will continue to be thrown by 8 and Under age group.

Vertical Jumps - Opening Heights

At the Association meet, open heights for High Jump and Pole Vault will be determined by querying the competitors that have checked into the event. NOTE: Opening heights are defined for the Regional and National meets.

Vertical Jumps - Increments

In the High Jump, the bar shall be raised in 5cm increments.

In the Pole Vault, the bar shall be raised in 15cm increments.

Vertical Jumps – First Place

If two or more competitors tie for first place, there shall be a jump-off to break the tie. Unless there is no jump-off to inclement weather, darkness presenting a safety concern, or all athletes simultaneously agreeing to jump further. If not all athletes qualifying for the jump-off decide to cease jumping, these athletes opting to retire from the event forfeit their claim to a higher place. If only one athlete qualifying for the jump-off has agreed to jump and all other athletes qualifying for the jump off have opted not to jump, that one athlete is automatically declared the winner.

2026 USATF Competition Rules

RULE 181 - HIGH JUMP AND POLE VAULT

Placing - High Jump and Pole Vault:

9. (d) If it concerns first place, the competitors tying shall jump-off, described as follows, unless otherwise decided either in advance according to the Technical Regulations applying to the competition, or before the start of the event by the appropriate Referee. If no jump-off is held, including where the relevant competitors at any stage decide not to jump further, the tie for first place shall stand. This rule shall not apply to the Combined Events.



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- i. Tying competitors must make a trial at every height until a decision is reached.
- ii. Each competitor has one trial at each height.
- iii. The jump-off shall start at the next height, determined in accordance with Rule 181.1, after the height last cleared by the tying competitors.
- iv. If no decision is reached, the bar shall be lowered (if all have failed) or raised (if two or more have cleared) by 2cm in the High Jump and 5cm in the pole vault.
- v. A competitor who does not jump at any height automatically forfeits any claim to the higher place. If only one other competitor remains, that competitor is declared the winner regardless of whether that height is attempted.