



Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union
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Iowa High School Athletic Association
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January 9, 2026

The 2026 Track and Field season is quickly approaching. As we prepare to start the season, we want to share some information with you as athletic administrators and coaches.

START DATE – Practice begins on Monday, February 23. The first competition date is Monday, March 9.

MEET LIMITATION – Just a reminder that there is a 16 meet limitation for each level within a school. For example, a school could schedule 16 varsity meets, 16 JV meets, and 16 freshman meets. No individual can participate in more than 16 meets regardless of level of the meet. The Drake Relays, state qualifying and state meet do not count towards this meet limitation.

ONLINE RULES MEETING - The online track and field rules meeting will be available for viewing on Monday, February 23. The rules meeting will be available until March 27. Please remember that all head coaches are required to view the online rules meeting. Failure to do so will result in the head coach not being able to coach in the state qualifying and state meet.

CONCUSSION EDUCATION REQUIREMENT – All coaches, grades 7-12, are required to receive concussion education before the first day of practice. If any coaches were recently hired or will be hired and they have not viewed the concussion course, it is imperative that you take care of this prior to the first date of practice.

RULE BOOKS – Schools will not receive a new rules book this spring. 2026 rule changes can be found here: <https://nfhs.org/resources/sports/track-field-comments-on-the-rules-2026> and will be covered in detail during the online rules meeting.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS POLICY - Preliminary classifications will be posted by early next week on both the IHSAA and IGHSAA web site under their respective Track and Field pages. Please review your school's information to make sure it is correct. No new cooperative program will be accepted, nor will any existing cooperative program be allowed to dissolve after 5:00 pm Friday, March 20.

STATE QUALIFYING MEETS & STATE MEET – The State Qualifying Meets are scheduled for Thursday, May 14. For schools wanting to indicate their willingness to host a state qualifying meet, the form is now active under the IHSAA form section of Bound.

The State Meet is scheduled for Thursday-Saturday, May 21-23. The tentative state meet schedule can be found here: https://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/26_tentative_schedule1.8.26.pdf. We do rotate this year with Class 1A and 4A in the morning and Class 2A and 3A in the afternoon.

BOUND – We've been told the track and field portion of Bound is open for member schools. When entering your schedules, schools are only required to enter the meets they **host**; however, they will need to enter the other schools participating in the meet, so the meet will appear on the visiting teams' pages. For indoor and out of state meets, you can either create a separate host facility (Wartburg College) or enter a note in the event name of the meet's location.

COACH-ATHLETE CONTACT – We’ve received several questions regarding coach-athlete contact prior to the season. Schools are allowed to have open facility time where students may come into the facility and workout, practice, etc. During this time, coaches may only supervise the students in the facility. These coaches cannot diagnose, prescribe, evaluate or direct student learning outside of the season. What exactly does that mean in terms of track and field? During the offseason, coaches should not be working directly with their athletes on the techniques of the sport. Field event drills, hurdle drills and start drills are just some of the examples of activities that coaches cannot be conducting during the off-season. When these open facility workouts occur, the coach can only supervise activities.

The coach-athlete contact rule is gender specific. If your school has two different sprint coaches where one works only with the boys program during the season and the other with the girls program during the season, that boys sprint coach can work with the girls in the offseason and the girls sprint coach with the boys. If there is any possibility of the girls coach helping the boys sprinters during the regular season, the girls coach should not be coaching members of the boys team in the offseason. However, your boys throws coach cannot work with your boys sprinters as they are affiliated with the same program.

Both organizations interpret the coach-athlete contact rule to allow coaches to work directly with their students on non-sport specific strength and conditioning programs throughout the school. Examples of conditioning drills that are allowed include speed ladders, cone drills and plyometrics.

NON-SCHOOL INDOOR MEETS – A number of individuals have reached out about students participating in non-school indoor meets before and during the early part of the season. Students still must abide by the Scholarship Rule in these events and cannot compete against collegiate athletes representing their college/university or professional athletes. Also, the Awards Rule prohibits students from accepting a cash prize. In addition, per DE finance guidelines, school transportation or uniforms are not to be used for these activities; however, the athlete could rent the uniform from the school at a fair market value as determined by the district. After the February 23 start date, the student is supposed to have permission from his/her local district on whether or not the district allows non-school participation during the in-sport season. Non-school meets do not count toward the team or individual’s meet limitation. Please, do not hesitate to reach out if you have a question on one of these meets, and we can offer guidance on the situation.

There will be more information provided to you as we get closer to the start of the track and field season and as the season progresses. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns.

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