OFFICIALS’ CLINIC – Horizontal Jumps

“What Can Go Wrong in the Long & Triple Jumps?”

Should an attempt be ruled successful; failed; or no jump in the following circumstances?

The timer does not function properly and apparently more than a minute had elapsed before the initiation of an attempt that is otherwise successful.
The jumper begins an attempt prior to his or her name being called as “Up”
The jumper aborts the attempt during the run-up and touches but does not cross beyond the takeoff board, returning down the runway for another run-up.
Working with two board judges, one judge rules a foul and the other judge rules a successful jump.
The jumper fails to initiate an attempt within the time limit but claims there was interference due to someone or something obstructing the runway.
The jumper makes a successful jump but claims there was a major distraction during the attempt (a sudden movement or noise nearby) that caused a poor performance.
The jumper staggers on landing and steps backward inside the pit, but then regains balance and exits the pit forward - fair/foul and where do you mark?

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How do you deal with the following situations?

The pit is one meter short in length or width vs. the size specified in the rulebook.
A team is delayed in arriving at the meet; the vaulter checks in as soon as possible and asks to begin jumping.
A jumper shows up late and you now have 16 competitors in the same flight? Do you split the flight, have the competitor jump late, or run one big flight?
During the event the wind direction changes and three jumpers or coaches ask to have the runway direction reversed.
During the event rain falls and two jumpers or coaches ask to suspend the competition for safety reasons.
A jumper who has left to compete in another event has not returned, and all others are finished in the current flight.
The board judges do not observe whether a jumper makes a fair or foul takeoff, due to distraction or inattention.
A parent or a coach is assisting with the event and offering advice to the athletes.
In measuring a jump, your crew has a question about the exact placement of the measuring stick/end of tape -- is it placed: at the jumper’s actual point of entry in the sand -- where the sand fell away from the point of entry (splash mark) -- or where the jumper left any mark in the sand?

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Overall, what are the two most important factors in conducting a field event?

Key items for officials: Early arrival & event setup; instructions to athletes and to event crew; teamwork
OFFICIALS’ CLINIC – Horizontal Jumps

Answers to the question: “Should an attempt be ruled successful, failed, or no jump in the following circumstances?”

Situation 1. The timer does not function properly and apparently more than a minute had elapsed before the initiation of an attempt that is otherwise successful.

If you have no way of telling exactly how much time has elapsed then you have to let the attempt stand. The athlete must see a clock or be notified that time is running short by raising the yellow flag. If this was not done, the athlete had no way of knowing the time was approaching the limit, so we must err on the side of the athlete.

Situation 2. The jumper begins an attempt prior to his or her name being called as “Up”

If it’s possible without endangering the jumper, step onto the runway and stop the attempt. If this is not possible, then answer the following questions. Is the pit ready? Are the rakers out of the way? Are the officials in position to make a call on the board/pit? If so, then mark and measure the jump. However, if the officials are not ready, then you must rule “no jump” and make the athlete retake the attempt. This happens more often than you would think when dealing with younger athletes. This problem can be eliminated by using good mechanics and placement of the officials during the competition. The flight coordinator should step onto the runway immediately after the jumper crosses the board. If they are placed between the jumpers and the take off board, then subsequent jumpers will not start until the flight coordinator steps out of the way. The board official can also help (often you don’t have enough officials to have a dedicated flight coordinator) by standing on the runway or holding a red flag across the runway until the pit and officials are ready for the next attempt.

Situation 3. The jumper aborts the attempt during the run-up and touches but does not cross beyond the takeoff board, returning down the runway for another run-up.

This is not a problem. As long as there is time remaining on the clock, the jumper can still return and make another attempt.

Situation 4. Working with two board judges, one judge rules a foul and the other judge rules a successful jump.

You must discuss this before the competition when assigning officials to various tasks. One official is designated to make foul calls; if another is available on the board, the second judge can help on close calls, and can also make sure that the proper call is made when the lead board judge misses the attempt for any reason (cough, sneeze, blink, yawn, momentary distraction, inattention at the end of a 12 hour competition day....). The second official’s call should be subtle, and any discussion should be private. The lead official gives weight to how sure each official is in their call. A useful rule of thumb is if the foot placement is so close you have to discuss it, then give it to the athlete. Plasticine solves this issue with visible marks, but since this is often unavailable, USATF Rule 185.4b states that the foot merely has to break the plane of the takeoff line.

Situation 5. The jumper fails to initiate an attempt within the time limit, but claims there was interference due to someone or something obstructing the runway.

In all cases, it is the athlete’s responsibility to initiate an attempt within the prescribed time limit. The flight coordinator and board judge should also be watching the runway and pit area for any interference issues - other athletes crossing the runway, rakers stepping back into the pit, etc. If the officials see real interference, they can notify the athlete and restart the clock. The athlete can also raise a hand and alert the flight coordinator if there is interference. However, if the athlete does
not alert the flight coordinator, and the flight coordinator or other officials do not see any interference, then it must be ruled a foul. We can only make the calls we see, and if we don’t see any interference or none is brought to our attention in a timely manner, then we can’t call interference/obstruction for the athlete.

Situation 6. The jumper makes a successful jump but claims there was a major distraction during the attempt (a sudden movement or noise nearby) that caused a poor performance.

What was the distraction: the starter’s pistol on the opposite turn, or a pole vault pole falling next to the jumper during the run-up? You have to make a decision on the spot if the distraction is an impediment to the jumper, or if it is a normal part of a track and field meet. The starter’s pistol is a normal noise at a track meet. The only reason to hold up a competition for the starter’s pistol is for the runner’s benefit, not the jumper. In an indoor venue, the runway can be very close to the start of the race, and the jumps runway noise can be very loud and be a distraction to them when in the set position in the blocks.
If something like a pole falls next to the jumper during the run-up, the jumper can stop and request more time; this is reasonable. However, if the jumper persists in the attempt, count it; do not redo the attempt.

Situation 7. The jumper staggers on landing and steps backward inside the pit, but then regains balance and exits the pit forward - fair/foul and where do you mark?

This is a fair attempt. Measure the closest mark to the take-off board.

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Answers to the question: “How do you deal with the following situations?”

Situation 8. The pit is one meter short in length or width vs. the size specified in the rulebook.

Overall, the pit does not meet minimum standards, and you should consider declining to conduct the competition for safety reasons. That said, if the pit is one meter short, you may be able to accommodate the competition. Most jumpers are not going to approach the maximum length specified. If it’s likely they will, you could put down a tape board farther back for those jumpers, or use an alternate take-off board if one is available. If the pit is too narrow by a meter, you have a definite safety problem especially in the triple jump.

Situation 9. A team is delayed in arriving at the meet; the jumper checks in as soon as possible and asks to begin jumping.

USATF Rule 180.8 provides that if a jumper was previously entered, they can join the competition. Any missed attempts can be marked as a pass; any remaining attempts can be taken. No warm-ups on the runway are permitted. NCAA Rule 6.2.1 provides that jumpers who report after the first competitive attempt has been made may not compete in the event. NFHS Rule 4.1.3 provides that jumpers who report after the judge starts the competition may not participate in that event.

Situation 10. A jumper shows up late and you now have 16 competitors in the same flight? Do you split the flight, have the competitor jump late, or run one big flight?

USATF Rule 180.7 sets the upper limit for a single flight at 15. Before adding this person to the competition, consider how many rounds of competition have been completed, and how will adding this competitor affect the other athletes? You might just add this person to the flight if the jumper arrives during round 3. Otherwise, to avoid athletes getting cold by sitting for extended periods when the flight is too large, you may be better off splitting the competition into two flights of seven or eight with a large group of competitors.

Situation 11. During the event the wind direction changes and three jumpers or coaches ask to have the runway direction reversed.
Once the competition has begun, the direction of the runway is not changed for any reason. If the weather condition is severe, the competition may be suspended for safety reasons. See USATF Rule 180.1 (and Note), and NCAA Rule 6.1.18.

**Situation 12.** During the event rain falls and two jumpers or coaches ask to suspend the competition for safety reasons.

USATF, NCAA, and NFHS rules give the Referee the authority to suspend the competition if it cannot be continued in a satisfactory manner and in fairness to the competitors and officials. The head event judge can make the decision to temporarily halt the competition to assess the venue and effect any mitigating actions (dry the board with towels, use a leaf blower on the runway, etc). If lightning or other dangerous conditions are present, the head judge should stop the competition until the danger has passed. If there is any question, the Referee has the final decision.

**Situation 13.** A jumper who has left to compete in another event has not returned, and all others are finished in the current flight.

Rule 180.8c addresses this issue. Call the competitor’s name and wait for the prescribed time limit. Raise the yellow flag or show the clock as appropriate. At the end of the time limit, mark a pass for the competitor. The referee can rule on any “unreasonable delay” (see rule 180.8dii).

**Situation 14.** The board judges do not observe whether a jumper makes a fair or foul takeoff, due to distraction or inattention.

If the jumper made the attempt after being called “Up” or the runway was cleared and ready, then measure the jump and record it as provisional; solicit input from other nearby officials (recorders, umpires, marshals, etc) and record their view of the jump (fair or foul); contact the Head Field Judge or meet referee for a final ruling; and if necessary, give the athlete another attempt (always a last resort).

**Situation 15.** A parent or a coach is assisting with the event and offering advice to the athletes.

Here is where a combination of firmness and tact is required, especially in youth competitions. We don’t always have the luxury of an adequate number of officials at each venue, and jobs must be performed by volunteers -- coaches, older athletes, or parents/siblings. The temptation is great to help the athletes, but USATF Rule 144 clarifies this assistance. “Official communications are not considered assistance, “provided they are made available to all athletes in the competition”. Our job is to provide a safe and fair competition. It is not fair to have one “coach” inside the competition area, and keep all of the other coaches outside the completion area. You must communicate this to your volunteer help early on in the competition and nip the problem in the bud.

**Situation 16.** In measuring a jump, your crew has a question about the exact placement of the measuring stick/end of tape -- is it placed: at the jumper’s actual point of entry in the sand -- where the sand fell away from the point of entry (splash mark) -- or where the jumper left any mark in the sand?

Measure the closest mark made by the competitor to the take-off board. We do not measure the splash mark. The mark made in the sand by any part of the jumper’s body or uniform (anything they wear) closest to the take-off board extended is the measurement point.

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**Overall, what are the two most important factors in conducting a field event?**

The two most important considerations in any field event are safety and fairness. Make sure the venue and conditions are safe for the athletes and officials. Ensure all the athletes have the same chance to compete by enforcing the rules evenly across the board.