

“Musings and Other Observations”

2024 EDITION

Pole Vault participation

The most expensive event in the sport is undoubtedly the pole vault. A pit and poles can exceed \$30,000. This concerns us. We did an analysis of all schools with a population of 150+ (there are 175 of them), and find that all but 25 schools were able to field the event. For those schools without the event, one was large, two medium, two private and the rest small. 1,072 athletes cleared a height in competition this year, 448 girls and 624 boys

This high number of schools with the event is both surprising and reassuring, but eventually pits will need to be replaced as wear accumulates or new safety standards increase the dimensions and necessitate replacement. Schools should assess their projected future needs and plan accordingly, and we hope that businesses which produce this equipment might reconsider the expenses inherent in it.

Are Cross Country courses accurate?

Oregon’s tradition of outstanding distance runners continue, and with it and the expansion of the OSAA wild card we are seeing an uptick in “fast” courses. Most are legitimate 5k courses, but some – including the State Championships course in 2019 – were inadvertently short. While nfhs says a cross country course can be anywhere between 2,500m to 5,000m, if we are going to call it the standard 5k distance then we need to be certain, and correctly label the distance short is so. We strongly encourage race directors to remeasure their courses annually when setting up a course.

Metric at State TF?

Why did OSAA emphasize metric at state? We asked OSAA directly, and were told that it was because the State officiating staff requested it because that those are practices which they “were most accustomed with.” In short, the officiating staff normally does collegiate and professional meets, yet at no other high school meet in the state is metric used. It was rolled out haphazardly, and announcing in metric served to disconnect the crowd from the athlete’s performance. We are encouraging OSAA to remain with the feet/inch’s standard of the past, and if they do choose to pursue metric then they make a more intentional transition by showing feet/inches alongside metric for a few years.

Javelin

We’ve long heard that the old scholastic model of the Javelin was projected to go roughly 15%-20% farther than the current iaaf version of the implement. We wanted to test this hypothesis. We pulled the marks of every Oregon high schooler who threw the old Javelin in 2000 AND who also threw the iaaf implement in 2001, and then two years on either side of this, basically reconstructing their high school careers in the event. In our survey sample of these 169 athletes, we found that the season PR in the first year using the iaaf Javelin flew on average 1.01% (boys) and 1.04% (girls) farther relative to their prior seasons PR with the scholastic model. Specifically, 70 of the 90 girls improved and 49 of the 79 boys improved (with a net average of +6’ for girls and +2’ for boys).

We also found that rate of improvement was stymied, which was indeed the intention of the new javelin. When comparing consecutive years of the scholastic model, for girls the 2001 PR was 1.06% better relative to the 2000 season, while for boys it was 1.07% better. However, in the first year of the iaaf model this season-to-season performance curve dropped to 1.01% (boys) and 1.04% (girls) respectively. At first glance this does not seem to align with the claims of a 15%-20% reduction. However, we must remember that we’re looking at season-ending PR’s here, wherein coaches have had an entire year to make adjustments to teach kids how to throw differently.

Perhaps informative would be looking at high schoolers who threw both the scholastic and iaaf model in the SAME season. We have six Oregonian high schoolers for whom we have documented this. Of the six, only one threw farther with iaaf. Taken together, they averaged an iaaf distance only 94% of their scholastic marks in the same season, and an average 15’ mark decline.

NFHS Hall of Fame

Congratulations to Maranda Brownson (Yoncalla, c/o 2001) who was inducted into the NFHS Hall of Fame. She won sixteen non-relay events at the Oregon State Championships.

More Online Resources

A sizable volume of additional XC/TF statistics which are not included in the print publication may be found for free at the Who's Who website, online at <https://www.phoenix.k12.or.us/Page/2328>
Why are they not all in the print publication, you might ask? Simple. It is cost prohibitive to add so many pages without raising costs.

Acquiring Back Issues

Past print editions of Who's Who are available. The most recent edition is \$20, and all older editions are \$8. (Checks should be made out to "Billy Snow", NOT to Who's Who).

To acquire any past editions, please contact:

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