



October 22, 2025

NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: A cross country course is muddy from a heavy rain. The athletes have bib numbers and transponders/computerized chips on the shoes are being used to determine times in the meet. The meet also has a camera at the finish line to verify order of finish. Runner A dives across the finish line to barely edge out Runner B. The finish judges pick Runner A, because the torso clearly crossed the line first. When the official results come in, Runner A had the second fastest time but was awarded first place. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** No matter the timing system used, the order of finish is based on when the torso crosses the finish. [8-3-3, 8-4-4]

SITUATION 2: A cross country course is muddy from a heavy rain. Meet management did everything they could to mitigate the mud on the course for the athletes by adding dirt, sawdust, and turf mixture to help fill in these mud puddles. The athletes have transponders/computerized chips are on the shoes to determine times in the meet an no finish camera to verify places. Runner A loses their shoes in the race due to getting stuck in the mud and finishes the race (a) with one shoe, (b) with no shoes. The meet referee does nothing in scenario (a) and disqualifies the athlete in scenario (b). **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** In scenario (a) the athlete still had one transponder chip on their remaining shoe so a time was collected at the finish. In scenario (b), the athlete is disqualified from the race because both transponder chips were left on the course. ~~A competitor not wearing the assigned contestant number and/or computerized transponders-chips or altering such items in a manner which interferes with the recording of place finish is a rule violation resulting in disqualification from the race~~ In this scenario the athlete would need to return for their shoe(s) to finish the race. [8-3-3 Penalty]

SITUATION 3: A cross country course is muddy from a heavy rain. Meet management did everything they could to mitigate the mud on the course for the athletes by adding dirt, sawdust, and turf mixture to help fill in these mud puddles. The athletes have chips in their bib numbers and a finish line camera to verify places. Runner A loses their shoes in the race due to getting stuck in the mud and finishes the race (a) with one shoe, (b) with no shoes. The meet referee does nothing in either scenario. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Both athletes started the race in shoes and because no fault of their own lost a shoe(s) getting stuck in the mud on the course. Because the chips were in the bibs there is no violation with the transponder chip. [8-3-3]