



September 9, 2026

NFHS Cross Country Weekly Rule Interpretations

Guide Runners

The following are the guide runner instructions for a tethered guide runner. Each state association governing cross country in their state will decide if guides can be adults or must be a student.

1. Guide-runners or Assistants must be clearly identified. (e.g. wearing a distinctively colored vest).
2. When competing with a guide-runner, the method of guidance for athletes shall be the use of a tether of non-elastic material. World Para Athletic Rules dictate a maximum length of 30cm for track events and 50cm for road events.

(The NFHS does not specify the maximum length of a tether).

- a. The tether attachment shall only be established between hand(s) and/or arm(s) of the pair.
 - b. In addition, the runner may receive verbal instruction from the guide-runner.
 - c. The guide is not allowed to use a bicycle or other mechanical means of transport.
 - d. The guide-runner is not allowed to pull or propel the athlete to gain an advantage at any stage during the race.
 - e. The guide runner may not pace the athlete.
 - f. The athlete shall cross the finish line first and the guide runner behind them.
3. In the event of a breach of the rule committed by a guide-runner resulting in disqualification or warning, the accompanying athlete shall be consequently disqualified or warned.

NOTE: When considering your tether length in your state the main reason for having a maximum length in cross country is to ensure other runners have a fair opportunity to not get trapped behind an athlete and their guide.

