

## **UMPIRING RELAY EXCHANGES**

*(USATF Rules 127, 163, 170; NCAA Rules 3-5, 5-5, 5-8; NFHS Rule 5-9 thru 5-13)  
(Also see the Best Practices “Umpiring – General” paper)*

General rules pertaining to running violations apply -- stepping on or over the lane line, interference, running in lanes, etc. Reminding athletes of relay rules is preventative officiating and can help prevent infractions.

### **Each Official Should**

- Review the Best Practices “Umpiring – General” paper, and have the specified equipment
- Know their assigned area of responsibility in exchange zones and the zone markings
- Inspect and remove all old tape marks in the run-up area following each race

### **Flags**

- **NCAA & NFHS:** Raise and hold a white flag when all runners are ready
- **NCAA & NFHS:** After runners pass, raise a white flag when no violation takes place
- **All:** Raise a yellow flag if runners in your zone are not ready for the start. Raise a yellow flag to signal potential violations. Report apparent violations to the Head Umpire in writing.

### **Marks**

- **USATF:** One piece of tape, contrasting color, max 5 x 40cm; allowed only for races in lanes
- **NCAA:** Max of two 2” pieces of tape/suitable material, no wider than width of the lane; allowed only when using the International Zone
- **NFHS:** As designated by the Games Committee

**General** The baton must be carried by hand throughout the race and passed, not thrown, to a teammate. Gloves or substances on the hands are not permitted. A runner may not push or pull a teammate. Team members may run only one leg of the relay.

### **Placement of Competitors**

*For all relays* Remind runners of the exchange zone limits & markings, and that they may not step back out of the zone toward the incoming runner

*For exchanges made in lanes:*

- In the 4x100, 4x200 & other relays with an incoming leg of 200m or less, outgoing runners may start in the International Zone, no more than 10m outside the exchange zone
- In all other relays and legs, outgoing runners must be within the exchange zone

*For exchanges not made in lanes,* outgoing runners are positioned by officials:

- **USATF:** According to the order of incoming runners 200-meters out (entering the curve)
- **NCAA & NFHS:** According to the order of incoming runners as they exit the last curve
- **All:** Once incoming runners pass these points outgoing runners are set in position and may not move, regardless of shifts in the incoming runners’ positions. Once inner lanes are clear – when those runners have departed - remaining outgoing runners may move to the inside.

### **Baton Exchange**

- **All:** The position of the baton, not the athletes, governs the exchange. The baton must be in sole possession of the outgoing runner within the 20-meter exchange zone
- **USATF & NCAA:** The passing of the baton commences when the baton is first touched by the outgoing runner and is completed when it is solely in the possession of the outgoing runner
- **NFHS:** The outgoing runner shall not take sole possession of the baton while it is outside the exchange zone

### **Dropped Baton**

- **All:** In retrieving the baton, runners may leave their lane or the track, but must not interfere with or impede other runners. For exchanges in lanes, outgoing runners must exit the zone in their lane; for exchanges not in lanes they must exit the zone on the track.
- **USATF:** The runner who dropped the baton must retrieve it. In retrieving it, the distance to be covered may not be lessened; if it moves sideways or forward, the runner must return at least to the point where it was last in hand, before continuing the race.
- **NCAA & NFHS:**
  - If dropped in the exchange zone, either runner may retrieve it
  - If dropped outside the zone, it must be retrieved by the runner who dropped it

### **After The Pass** After passing the baton, incoming runners must:

- **USATF & NCAA:** Remain in their lane or established path/position until the course is clear to avoid contact with or obstruction to other competitors
- **NFHS:** Stand still or jog straight ahead and step off the track when clear