

# Clerking Essentials

Brad Garrett, OSAA Asst Exec Director  
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Thanks – appreciate the opportunity to present today.

I will not be covering the written responsibilities of the clerk of the course today – a description of clerk’s duties can be found in the NFHS Officials Manual – instead we are going to spend just a few minutes on two areas that I have identified as critical components of any successful track meet.



**The “HEART” of all track and field meets is the Clerk of the Course**

I think that most agree that the Clerk of the Course is the heart of any successful track and field meet. Inefficient and disorganized clerking leaves athletes, coaches, and spectators with an experience they would rather forget and that is unfortunate.

# Clerking Essentials

- ▶ Clerking 101
  - Personnel
  - Set-up and Staging

The focus today will be on what I believe are the two most important components of successful clerking.  
Personnel and Set-up/Staging

## Personnel

- ▶ Personable, Knowledgeable, Consistent
- ▶ Defined structure and responsibilities
- ▶ Maintaining the meet schedule

Perhaps the most important element of clerking is who you assign to the position.

The clerk's area and those staffing it are often times the first point of contact for coaches, athletes, and in some cases spectators. A welcoming smile and helpful attitude go a long way in establishing a positive first impression.

Personnel assigned to clerking duties must be ready to answer almost any question – therefore they must have a complete knowledge of not only the rules of track and field and the administrative rules related to the event but they must also know answers to questions like – where are the restrooms and is there ADA seating available? Clerk's needs to know everything about the event without letting everyone know they know everything about the event – people tend to not like the know-it-all.

Coaches and athletes like consistency and should expect that rules, deadlines, and patterns remain the same for the duration of the event. Regardless of the size of the clerking staff they all must be on the same page in regards to things like: event deadlines, uniform enforcement, and staging patterns.

It is imperative that meet administrators clearly define the clerking structure and individual responsibilities within that structure. In my experiences as a track coach and administrator I have never had an issue finding an official who thinks they are in charge. Making sure that all clerks understand their role and

having the ability to interchange the roles during the event is important.

Lastly, the most important responsibility of any clerk is to maintain the meet schedule. Issues will arise and decisions will have to be made – clerk's need anticipate potential issues and aggressively seek solutions before the problem manifests itself to the point that it interrupts the schedule of events and disrupts the entire meet.



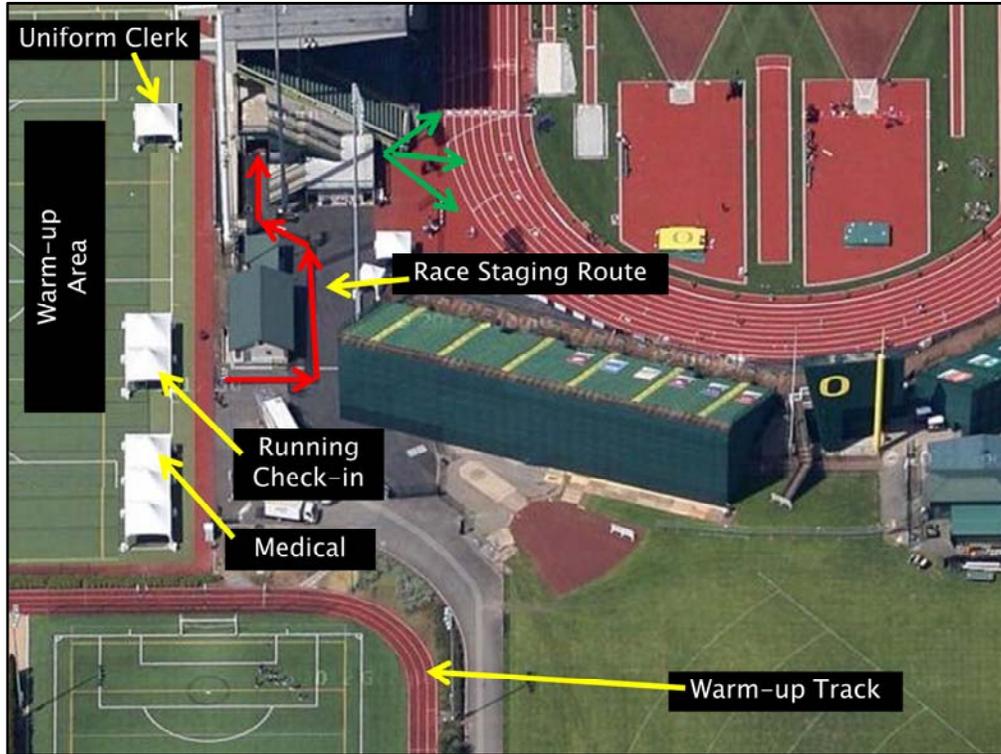
Bottom line – those individuals assigned to clerking responsibilities need to possess the ability to solve problems and not create them. We need less of what he is doing and more of what she is doing when it is related to clerking a track meet.

## Set-up and Staging

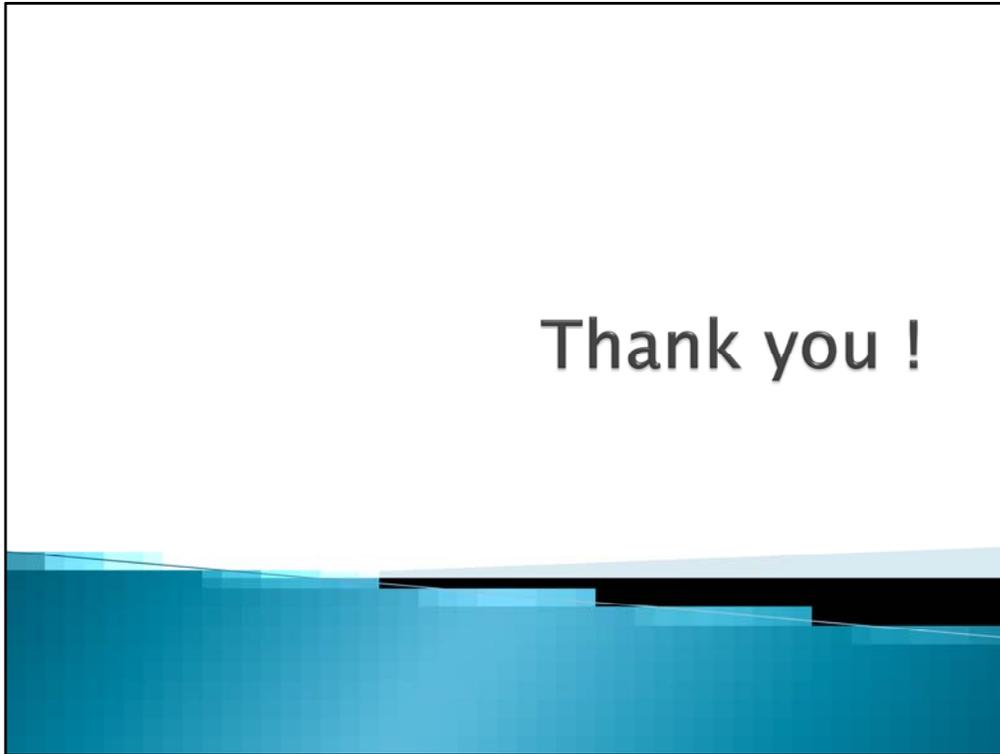
- ▶ Proximity of the check-in area to the area's listed below plays a significant role in the success of the event.
  - Warm-up area
  - Medical area
  - Staging area

The second area is set-up/staging.

Location of the warm-up area, medical area, and staging area are critical to quality clerking. Having essential services located in the same proximity allows better communication amongst all involved.



The photo you are looking at is the clerking plan we use at the OSAA State Championships – it is a mirror image (without the fluff) of the clerking procedures used at the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Trials and many other IAAF and NCAA events conducted at Hayward. Athletes appreciate the fact that all the services they may need during the event are located in the same area – it saves time, energy, and effort for everyone involved. Please note the uniform clerk tent in the photo. We added this position last year to our State Championships as a preventative officiating element. Athletes and coaches have access to this clerk at any point during the meet – the goal was to reduce incidence of illegal uniforms being clerked into the holding area and having to deal with corrective measures minutes prior to their race – it worked. Coaches' evaluations after the event indicated that this addition was well accepted and appreciated.



Summary - While I have focused on a large event the same principals hold true for any track and field meet. Those individuals you select to serve as clerks and the proximity of the services related to clerking can make or break any event.  
Appreciate the opportunity – good luck to everyone during the upcoming season.