

A key component in pole vault officiating is to make sure the competitors vaulting poles are legal for use per the National Federation of State High School Associations, i.e NFHS rules. This is the final safety check prior to warm-up/competition and prevents an unnecessary disqualification from the event.

Rules as of 2010:

(Shaded yellow were 2009 changes, and shaded green are 2010 additions or deletions)

7-5-3: *The competitor's weight shall be at or below the manufacturer's pole rating. The manufacturers must include on each pole: the pole rating that shall be a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch in a contrasting color located within or above the top handhold position: a 1-inch circular band indicating the maximum top handhold position with the position being determined by the manufacturer, Prior to competition, the coach must verify that all the school's pole vaulters and poles meet these requirements.*

NOTES:

- 1. Etchings, serial numbers, etc. that may appear on poles shall not replace the requirement of the manufacturer's pole rating of the minimum $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch marking on contrasting color on each pole (7-5-3).*
- 2. Each state association shall determine its own procedure regarding coaches' verification.*

7-5-4: *A competitor shall not use a bungee cord, variable weight pole, a pole which is improperly marked or a pole rated below his/her weight, or any other equipment that is not legal during warm-up or competition.*

NOTE: *Altering the pole in any fashion renders it illegal.*

PENALTY: Disqualification from the event.

7-5-5: *Prior to warm-up, the field referee, head field judge or assigned inspector of implements shall inspect each pole to be used in the competition to verify that the poles are legal equipment, per Rule 7-5-3. This includes checking the placement of a top hand-hold band, numerical pole ratings a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inches in a contrasting color located within or above the top hand-hold band, and the proper binding of not more than two layers of adhesive tape of uniform thickness. The binding shall not be on or above the top hand-hold band.*

See an NFHS letter at the rear of this document for an exception granted for Altius poles made prior to 2006.

(C) Gill "Pacer Mystic": weight rating of 90 lb (orange on white) label. Max hand-hold is below the 1" **orange** band. Roughly 3.5" from top as determined by Gill.

Note: HVFC label is partially obscuring the rating. Not an issue.

(B) Lady Rocket: weight rating of 125 lb and hand-hold band in **yellow** at the top of pole.

(A) UCS "Spirit": weight rating of 120 lb and hand-hold (white numerals on **pink**) band is 6" from top. There is a slight overlap of the binding material on the hand-hold... remove it.

Note: green tape is something a PV official has placed there to indicate pole was inspected.

ALL are **LEGAL** POLES..



(D): Weight rating is nearly worn away... Pole will become illegal at some point.

LEGAL POLE at this point.

(E): LEGAL POLE.

(F): Weight rating is completely worn away.

Pole is **ILLEGAL**.

Note: The “blue” tape on the outer poles was added by officials years ago on Gill poles as a pseudo hand-hold band to make it easier to rule on gripping too high. We no longer do this.



D

E

F

(G) Since 1995, this pole has been **ILLEGAL**.

While it does have a 1-inch circular hand-hold band

however ...

since there is no visible weight rating in 1-inch high numerals in a contrasting color which was the rule in effect at the time, it is Illegal.



G

(H) Beginning in 1995 up through 2008, this was how a pole was made LEGAL.

There is a 1-inch circular hand-hold band 6-inches from the top and a coach/official placed weight rating in a contrasting color in 1-inch high (in 2000, it change to minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ " high) numerals above the hand-hold band.

As of 2009. **POLE IS ILLEGAL**

Officials/Coaches may no longer place a *home-made* weight label regardless of what the pole etchings may tell you nor place a *home-made* hand-hold band on the pole



H

(I) Legal pole right?

WRONG. So why?

1) No manufacturers weight rating in $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch minimum high numerals in a contrasting color on or above the hand-hold band.

2) No 1-inch circular band indicating the maximum top hand-hold position as determined by the pole manufacturer.

Could it ever become legal again?

Maybe.. if returned to the manufacturer for inspection and possible recertification.



I

(J) Cata-pole:

1-inch Black/white/black hand-hold approximately 6-inches from the top (position determined by manufacturer).

Weight rating is in $> \frac{3}{4}$ -inch high black numerals on a silver sticker. (starting to show wear)

LEGAL POLE



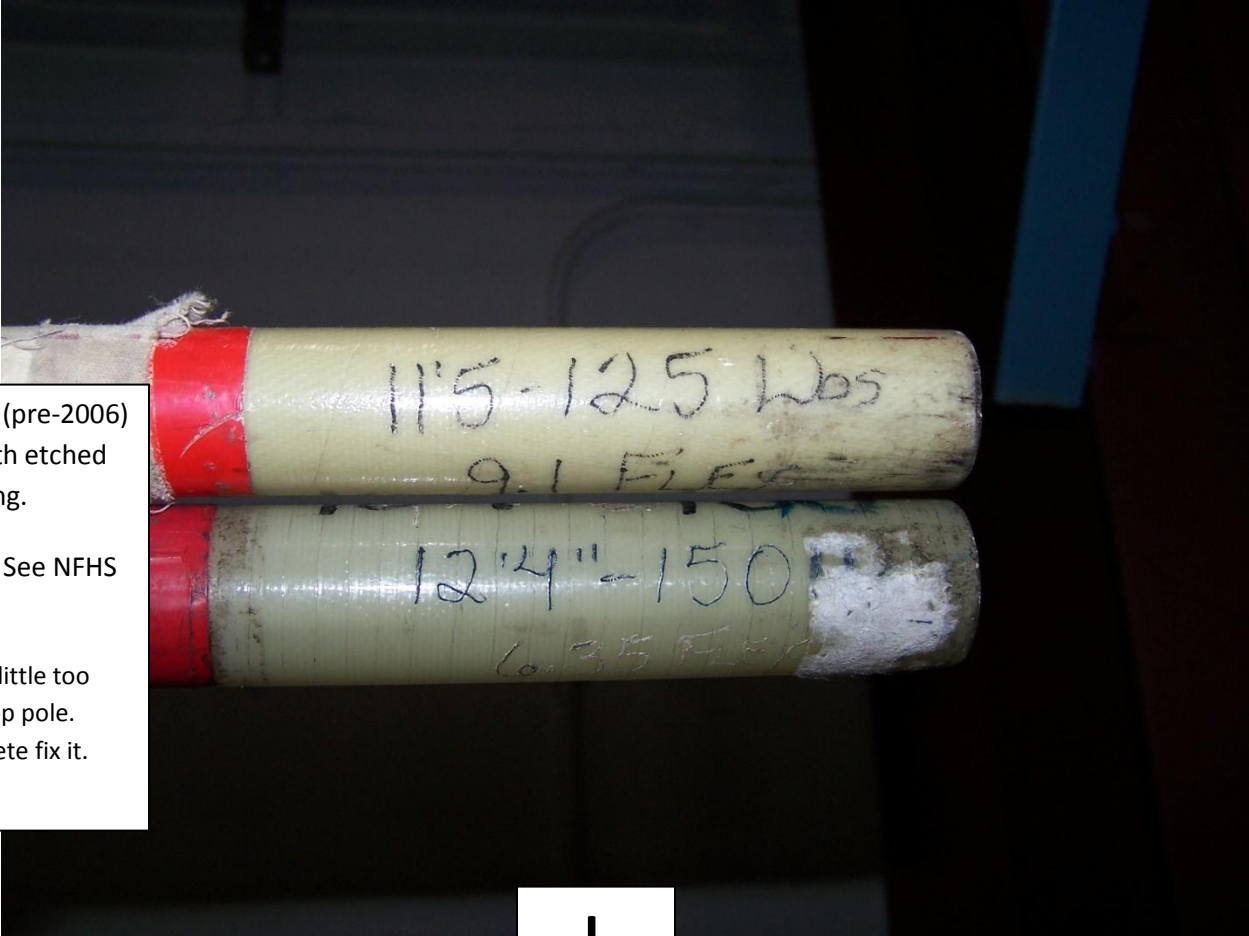
J

old Pacer pole that
has an embedded
label.

NOT Legal as is.

460/80
15 ft.
175 lbs. or less

K

The image shows two wooden poles, likely for high jump, lying horizontally. Each pole has a red band near one end. The top pole is marked with '11'5-125 Wbs' and '9.1 F.E.' below it. The bottom pole is marked with '12'4"-150' and '6.35 F.E.' below it. There is some white tape or damage on the right end of the bottom pole.

Old style (pre-2006)
Altius with etched
Pole rating.

LEGAL .. See NFHS
Memo.

Tape is a little too
high on top pole.
Have athlete fix it.

L

(note: picture is not to scale...) However, it is supposed to illustrate how an Altius pole looks with the proper weight rating label and hand-hold placement.

I am not sure that this label was provided by the manufacturer. Picture was provided to me.



M



A 2009/10 Altius Pole,
showing their new
weight labeling and
hand-hold information.

Pole still has serial number
and other etchings near the
pole bottom

N

This page is a place holder for a picture of a [O] variable-weight pole and an [P] Essex pole.

Final picture...

What about these
odd balls? Hmmm.

No problem, they
are STEEL. Don't
try to catch one of
these!!



Appendix A: (official NFHS memorandum)

Memorandum



To: State Association Executive Officers and Track & Field Administrators
From: Becky Oakes
Subject: NFHS Track & Field Rule 7-5-3, NOTE 1 – Pole Weight Rating
Date: April 17, 2009

The NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee included a new Note 1, in the 2009 Rules Book, which emphasizes the required manufacturer's marking of the weight rating for an individual pole cannot be replaced by "etchings, serial numbers, etc." Rule 75-3 states, "The manufacturers must include on each pole: the pole rating that shall be a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in a contrasting color, located within or above the top handhold position."

The language of the Note addresses various methods by which manufacturers may identify the characteristics of an individual pole. Traditionally, the characteristics of a pole were etched on the pole. These etchings were generally not $\frac{3}{4}$ in size and may or may not have been in a contrasting color to the pole or placed in a position on the pole in or above the manufacturer's legal handhold 1-inch circular band. The Note emphasizes the importance of the weight rating appearing on the pole as required in Rule 7-5-3.

The NFHS has been contacted by the manufacturer of Altius Poles, bringing to our attention that prior to 2006, the official manufacturer's placement of the pole weight rating for Altius poles was to engrave the pole rating $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in height and of a contrasting color. A label or other similar process was not used by the manufacturer in addition to the engraved pole characteristics and weight rating. Altius poles manufactured from 2006 to the present now use a labeling system, in addition to etchings.

With the inclusion of Note 1, the earlier models of the Altius poles have come into question of legality due to the manufacturer's method of engraving the weight rating in $\frac{3}{4}$ inch contrasting color.

Attached for your files is correspondence from Mr. Jeff Erickson, primary owner of Altius Poles, confirming the manufacturer's process for placing the official pole weight rating on poles manufactured prior to 2006. Although this has not been as common of a process, Altius was placing, using this method, a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch contrasting color weight rating on the individual pole.

Based on this information from the official representative of Altius Poles, it is the position of the NFHS that your state may accept these earlier model poles as legal using the engraving, providing the manufacturer's marking meets the requirements of Rule 7-5-3 and all other

requirements for a legal pole are met.

Representatives of Altius Poles and the NFHS will continue to work together on this matter, should further attention be necessary for future seasons.

BO/af Attachment Cc: Robert Kanaby, NFHS
Bob Gardner, NFHS
Jeff Erickson, Altius Poles
NFHS Track & Field Rules Committee

Mailing Address: PO Box 690 | Indianapolis, Indiana 46206 | **Phone:** 317-972-6900 | **Fax:** 317.822.5700 | www.nfhs.org

Shipping Address: NFHS Distribution Center | 1802 Alonzo Watford Sr. Drive | Indianapolis, Indiana 46202



**Altius Poles
P.O box 1168
Jacksonville TX. 75766**

**Toll Free (800) 374-7653
Fax (903) 586-0198
Cell (903) 279-6810**

Altiuspoles@yahoo.com

TO ALL IT MAY CONCERN:

Altius poles do comply with the NFHS rules:

Prior to 2006 all Altius Poles had the size engraved $\frac{3}{4}$ " tall in a contrasting color.

The Engraved portion of the weight indicator was $\frac{3}{4}$ " tall engraved and inked in to provide a contrasting image to view! This indicator was located near the top of every pole 4-5 inches down in the non-hand grip area of the pole. Most all pole hand grip area's are defined in the industry as a 12" area that starts 3-6" down on a pole, positioned and placed by the manufacturer.

After 2006 all poles have a weight label in addition to the above engraved etchings to fully comply with any NFHS interpretations.

Owner

Jeff Erickson