



Publish date: Mar 7, 2013

## **Playing rules panel approves ASTM standard for vaulting box collars**

**By Greg Johnson**

NCAA.org

### **Pole vault provisions**

The Playing Rules Oversight Panel approved a student-athlete-safety proposal from the NCAA Men's and Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Committee to require padding in and around the pole vault box collar. The new rule calls for the padding to be installed by Dec. 1, 2013, wherever NCAA competition takes place.

The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports supported the proposal for safety purposes after ASTM International, a nonprofit organization that provides a forum for the development and publication of international voluntary consensus standards for materials, products, systems and services, released a specification standard on the type of padding device that should be used in and around the pole vault box collar.

The padding must meet the most current ASTM Specification Standard and can be incorporated into the design of the pole vault box or a padding addition to an existing pole vault box. The cost is expected to be about \$600.

Previously, panel members had tabled this issue during a conference call in February.

During the comment period leading up to the approval of the new rule, oversight panel members received feedback from coaches who had reservations about adding padding to the pole vault box collar and whether it could distract competitors. Additional concerns centered on how many pole vault tests were conducted, and whether the tests included NCAA intercollegiate pole vault competitors.

After receiving information from ASTM officials regarding testing of the new standard and reviewing data and feedback from NCAA coaches currently using the new device, the oversight panel felt its concerns had been adequately addressed to merit approval of the proposal.



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

October 18, 2013

TO: Head Men's and Women's Track and Field Coaches, Directors of Athletics and Conference Commissioners.

FROM: John McNichols, chair  
NCAA Men's and Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Committee

Bob Podkaminer, secretary rules-editor  
NCAA Men's and Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Pole Vault Box Padding Rule Clarification.

This memorandum is to provide clarification to NCAA members that the NCAA's pole vault box padding rule requires all pole vault box collars to contain padding in and around the pole vault box collar, as required by the applicable ASTM specification standard (designation F2949-12), including on the part of the box collar arm that extends down the inner sidewall of the pole vault box (referred to in the ASTM specification as a "box collar wing"). Doing so will give effect to the NCAA's purpose in adopting the rule – to reduce the risk of injury to student-athletes caused by impact in and around the pole vault box.

The NCAA's pole vault box padding rule, approved in early 2013 by the NCAA Men's and Women's Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Committee ("Rules Committee") and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel ("PROP"), requires pole vault box collars to be in place by December 1, 2013. Additionally, the rule specifies that each box collar must meet the most current ASTM specification standard and be capable of being incorporated into the design of the pole vault box or serve as a padding addition to an existing pole vault box.

ASTM, through ASTM Committee F08 on Sports Equipment and Facilities (Subcommittee F08.67), adopted designation F2949-12 as the specification standard for pole vault box collars.

The NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport ("CSMAS") recommended adoption of the pole vault box padding rule for safety purposes to further reduce the risk of student-athlete injury caused by impact with the pole vault box. There is substantial evidence demonstrating that a number of pole vault injuries occur when student-athletes land in or around the vault box. The box collar padding rule adopted by the NCAA was designed to mitigate such injuries by providing as much padding around fixed and solid objects as possible to absorb the potential impact from a student-athlete.

At the time of the rule's adoption, the Rules Committee, PROP, and CSMAS determined that pole vault box collars with padding inside the box collar would provide student-athletes with greater protection from

injury than what would be provided by box collars without such padding. Additionally, the NCAA found that ASTM designation 2949-12 – which ensures padding inside the box collar through the use of box collar wings (in addition to other padding around the box collar) – adequately addresses the NCAA’s concerns about student-athlete injuries caused by impact with the pole vault box. The NCAA does not consider such padding, to be located on the part of the box collar arm that extends down the inner sidewall of the pole vault box, to be optional under the ASTM specification. Rather, the standard provides adequate specificity regarding the nature, purpose, dimensions, and need for padding inside the box, through box collar wings. This interpretation is consistent with the NCAA’s rationale for revising the rule – to enhance student-athlete safety.

In view of the foregoing, the Rules Committee hereby clarifies that its pole vault box padding rule requires the use of box collars that comply with the current ASTM standard, which specifies the inclusion of padding inside the box collar through the use of box collar wings.

The Rules Committee has no intention of changing or altering the rule, and expects all Division I, II, and III members to be compliant with the rule by December 1, 2013. However, you are encouraged to contact the NCAA if you discover that compliant pole vault box collars are not adequately available in the marketplace.

Please contact Rachel Seewald at [rseewald@ncaa.org](mailto:rseewald@ncaa.org) or 317-917-6141 if you have any questions regarding this communication.

CJT

cc: Mr. Sam Seemes  
Men’s and Women’s Track and Field/Cross Country Rules Committee  
Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP)  
Selected NCAA Staff Members