

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL
POLE VAULT

A pole vaulter is a unique athlete for any track and field team. The physical, mental and performance requirements that the individual vaulter needs to compete are demanding. The success of a vaulter is not always being first at a meet but challenging themselves to improve their skills so that they can attain personal goals. Once these goals have been achieved, the vaulter can then look back at his or her personal successes.

Additionally, it is important that each individual vaulter understand that vaulting can be a dangerous sport. When you combine the following factors, sprinting down a runway carrying a fiberglass pole that could be anywhere in length of 10 feet to 15 feet, planting the tip of the pole into a vault box, springing from the runway into the air while holding onto the pole, attempting to get over a bar that is at a variety of heights, falling to a mat from that height, landing properly on the mat and finally exiting the mat. All elements have some inherent risks. Some are minor, yet some are dangerous if proper procedures are not followed. Unfortunately, athletes have been injured, paralyzed, or even lost their lives because somewhere the proper approach was not taken. To this end, **AS VAULTERS FOR MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL SAFETY WILL ALWAYS BE PARAMOUNT.**

SAFETY:

POLES:

Each athlete will inspect **DAILY** the pole he or she will be using during practice or a meet. **NO ATHLETE WILL BE PERMITTED TO VAULT WITH A POLE THAT IS RATED UNDER HIS OR HER BODY WEIGHT.** This is an automatic disqualification in a meet, and it does not follow the safety guidelines set up by the NHSAA (National High School Athletic Association).

When the athlete inspects his or her pole, check the following:

1. Tip to see if it is worn. After continued use, it is possible for the tip to be worn to the pole edge itself. This can create a crack at the base of the pole, which in turn can spread to the length of the pole causing the pole to break at its flex during a vault. This can then create a hazardous result for the vaulter.
2. The full length of the pole for any deep scratches, spike indentions, etc. Unfortunately, many people think that a pole vault pole is okay to roll back and forth under their feet, while they are wearing their track spikes. The spikes put small indentions into the pole, which can then ruin the integrity of the pole.
3. The end (top) of the pole. At times, the pole will begin to crack at the top of the pole. This also causes the same effect as spike marks and the pole tip being damaged.
4. **BODY WEIGHT** – The vaulter will be certain that the pole is at his or her proper body weight, not lower. This will provide for safer vaults.
5. Store the poles properly in the equipment shed. **NO POLE IS TO BE LEFT ON THE FLOOR. RACKS ARE PROVIDED TO REDUCE THIS PROBLEM.**

6. When at a meet, keep the poles away from the vault pit. Since this is a high traffic area, it is too easy for someone to accidentally walk on the pole. It also is dangerous for any vaulter exiting the vault pit.
7. On meet days, store the poles in the proper traveling item. This reduces the chances of poles damage.

EQUIPMENT:

The following will be considered important equipment for vaulting:

- Pole Vault Pit
 - Pit cover
 - Vault box
 - Vault box padding
 - Standards
 - Standards box and depth cover
 - Runway
- Poles
- Pole Bag
- Bungies
- Crossbars

As members of the vaulting unit, it will be extremely important to evaluate the vault equipment daily and throughout the practice. This is OUR pit and OUR poles, so it is extremely important for EVERYONE to take pride in how the equipment is maintained.

At the conclusion of the practice, ALL vaulters will assist in getting the pit covered for the night. The standard box, poles and crossbars will be returned to be stored inside overnight.

This responsibility will fall on all grade level athletes. As a senior it does NOT give you the right to skip out on this. Instead, it gives you the PRIVILEGE to show the underclassmen how to take care of OUR pit, poles, and accessories properly.

CLOTHING:

Each athlete will be responsible for providing the proper clothing for him or her during practice and at meets.

Follow this guideline: IF YOU SEE ME IN SWEATS, YOU NEED TO BE IN SWEATS unless competing. IF I AM BUNDLED, YOU SHOULD BE BUNDLED.

Since vaulting requires a multitude of skills, the muscles need to be kept warm if possible. This will prevent strains, pulls or simply poor performance because of not being warm enough. The season usually starts cold then ends hot. Prepare to dress accordingly. Remember, it is easier to dress down than it is to attempt to dress up.

When the athlete is vaulting, he or she will be taking off from the runway or landing in the vault pit in a variety of positions. This in turn can create some uncomfortable personal concerns. With that in mind, to help preserve the desire for modesty, it is recommended that ALL athletes wear some form of leggings. Not only will the leggings keep the leg muscles warm and compressed, but it will reduce the concerns of how the shorts will adjust during a vault.

As for a shirt, for the women, a tight undershirt or secure sport bra is highly recommended. In addition, if there is fear that the shirt will rise during a vault, be certain that it is securely tucked into the shorts. For the men, the same should be considered within proper gender guidelines.

These seem like bizarre comments to discuss, but athletes have been injured adjusting clothing as they were falling to the mat.

PIT AREA:

The individual athlete will need to personally inspect his or her vault area. Look for any protruding objects from the ground, any loose or exposed items that could be tripped on. Anything that in the opinion of the athlete is unsafe. Many times, at meets, the individual supervising the vault is either unaware or does not notice the issue. Bring the concern to your coach so it can be addressed as a possible safety hazard. Falling from 12 to 15 feet in the air onto an object other than the pit is not a wonderful experience.

INJURIES:

Report, IMMEDIATELY, any injuries to your coach, even if it means there is a possibility you could be scratched from further competition. Recovering from a minor injury is far easier than adjusting to a major injury that could reduce the number of competitive days and training, or remove your participation for the remainder of the season.

PRACTICE:

It is important to attend practice sessions. The saying of "...practice makes perfect", is incorrect. It should be, "Perfect practice makes Perfect" Vaulting is a memory event. You must get your body to understand what you should do at certain times in your vault. Ex: Is the approach correct? Is the plant good? How is the take off? Am I getting inverted enough? Does my drive leg help with my vault? Am I releasing the pole at the proper time at the top of my vault? Plus, many more questions. Without practice, you will not be able to understand what you should know at various phases of your vault.

We will follow the MHS Track and Field's attendance policy. In addition, if as the vault coach I do not feel that you have met standards necessary, then participation in the meet will not take place. This is a SAFETY precaution.

MY PHILOSOPHY IS SIMPLE:

PRACTICE:

We will have practice sessions that will be designed to enhance learning different phases of the vault itself. As the skill level increases, so will the expectations of practices.

QUANTITY vs QUALITY: Sometimes in practice we will go for Quantity workouts. These will be sessions where strength development and repetition are emphasized. At other times, we will go for Quality workouts. These will be less repetition with high expectation of performance.

TRACK MEET:

All vaulters, male or female will be watching his or her teammates perform. This will provide for moral support as well as an opportunity for additional eyes onto how a teammate is performing. If the athlete is in additional events, he or she will be expected to stay aware of when they are competing and inform the coach as well as the meet judge so that his or her attempts are not hampered because of other performances.

YES, IT IS FANTASTIC IF A VAULTER IS IN ANOTHER EVENT, IN FACT IT IS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED.

My philosophy during a meet: If it is your last attempt, and if you are approaching the pit and all seems off, I would rather you finish with a scratch and NO JUMP as opposed to attempting the vault and risk injury. There is always practice where we can evaluate what needs to be corrected. After all, YOU are the one vaulting not me.

FINALLY, HAVE FUN, ENJOY AND KNOW THAT AS VAULTERS YOU ARE A DIFFERENT BREED OF ATHLETE.