

# Organizations and Structures in Track And Field

*-Or -*

What are all those  
Acronyms?

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## Perspective

When you try to understand how track and field is organized, you're reminded of a box full of octopi; whose tentacle is THIS? Or, it resembles the political structure of 10<sup>th</sup> century France, governed by "universal" authorities that have limited local clout; full of fiefdoms and freeholds, and cults of personality and disputed turf and contested territories.

At the same time, there are vast numbers of people "doing the work"—in medieval Europe, farming, making things, trading; in track and field, competing, coaching, officiating.

In this Track and Field world, we often speak in acronyms and short hand. It is bewildering. The list that follows is an attempt to bring some kind of order to officials' understanding of what is what, who is standing where, and who gets to tell whom, what. — bc.

## Request: crowd sourcing

This list is fairly subjective. Probably more items should be added. Let us not be too Wikipedia about it, but readers who have suggestions should contact the author at [brucecolman@earthlink.net](mailto:brucecolman@earthlink.net) to suggest terms and definitions and improved or corrected definitions to make this a more-better, more-useful document.

AAU = Amateur Athletic Union

**What it is:**

1. Predecessor organization to TAC and USATF
2. Existing organization involved in many nonprofessional sports in the United States, with track and field programs that directly compete with USATF, especially in Youth athletics.

**Website:** <http://aausports.org/>

ATO = Area Technical Official

**What it is:** an IAAF official who acts as an observer for and advisor to meet referees.

**See:** IAAF / officiating

CCCAA = California Community College Athletic Association

**What it is:** Organizing body for Junior (or Community) College athletics in California.

Conducts Northern California and Southern California championships; typically, the top six competitors in each event from each area go to the state championships

**Composition:** Has numerous conferences, leagues, etc.—some but not all, contiguous with Pacific Association’s borders.

**Rules:** Community/Junior colleges use the NCAA rule book.

**Website:** <http://www.cccaasports.org/>

CIF = California Interscholastic Federation

**What it is:** The NFHS-component body that runs inter-school high school sports for California

**Composition:** Has 10 sections, numerous conferences, leagues, etc. throughout the state; some of these lie completely within Pacific Association; others do not.

**Sections:** CIF sections are:

Section #	Section	Region	Location	Website	# of Schools
1	Northern	northern	inland, north California (NE corner of state)	<a href="http://www.cifns.org">www.cifns.org</a>	73
2	<a href="#">North Coast</a>	northern	coastal regions of north California ( <a href="#">Bay Area</a> , north)	<a href="http://www.cifncs.org">www.cifncs.org</a>	171
3	<a href="#">Sac-Joaquin</a>	northern	northern <a href="#">San Joaquin Valley</a> (east from <a href="#">Bay Area</a> to <a href="#">Lake Tahoe</a> )	<a href="http://www.cifsjs.org">www.cifsjs.org</a>	174
4	San Francisco	northern	<a href="#">San Francisco Unified School District</a>	<a href="http://www.cifsf.org">www.cifsf.org</a>	13
5	Oakland	northern	<a href="#">Oakland Unified School</a>	<a href="#">OAL</a>	6 <sup>[4]</sup>

			<a href="#">District</a>		
6	Central Coast	northern	middle, coast region of state (south from the <a href="#">Bay Area</a> to midway to Los Angeles)	www.cifccs.org	140
7	Central	southern	central and southern <a href="#">San Joaquin Valley</a>	www.cifcs.org	90
8	Los Angeles City	southern	<a href="#">Los Angeles Unified School District</a>	www.cif-la.org	70
9	<a href="#">Southern</a>	southern	southern California (coastal and inland areas), except L.A. and very southern part of the State	www.cifss.org	567
10	San Diego	southern	<a href="#">San Diego</a> and <a href="#">Imperial</a> (very southern part of California)	www.cifsd.org	

**SOURCE:** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California\\_Interscholastic\\_Federation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Interscholastic_Federation)

**Rules:** Uses NFHS rule book

**State meet** is typically held in Clovis, CA (in the Central California Association of USATF)

**See Also:** NIAA

**Website:** <http://www.cifstate.org/>

ExComm = Executive Committee of the Officials Committee

**What it is:** A nine-member body that sets policy and conducts business for the Pacific Association Officials Committee.

The executive committee meets about five times per year to consider matters related to training, membership, certification, awards and discipline.

**Composition:** Elected members of the executive committee are the chair, the secretary, and at-large members. They serve two year terms. There are no term limits.

The awards, certification, and training vice chairs are appointed by the chair; and the previous chair serves on the committee.

Certification of officials is under the authority and at the discretion of the vice-chair for certification.

Field Lynx/Finish Lynx

**What it is:** computer programs and systems (cameras, surveying gear) to measure and record times in races and results in field events.

Games Committee

**What it is:** the (usually volunteer; usually ad hoc) body that puts on a meet.

**Authority or role:** Deciding and attending to all details that go into presenting an athletic competition, from securing the facility to recruiting athletes and teams to publishing the results.

**Composition:** varies from meet to meet. Usually headed by a meet director and includes someone or some people responsible for recruiting, assigning, and attending to the needs of the officials who work the meet.

IAAF = International Association of Athletic Federations

**What it is:** World Governing body for Athletics (Track and field, Cross country and Marathons). Member of the IOC (International Olympic Committee).

Oversees all National Governing Bodies (NGB's) in the World.

**Authority or role:** Puts on international championships in most T&F sports, several age brackets; also regional championships such as NACAC (North American, Central American and Caribbean) Championships.

**Publications:** Publishes *Competition Rules* in even-numbered years—a model of clarity in rules-writing.

**Officiating:** IAAF has a three-level Technical Officials program. See:

<http://www.iaaf.org/development/education/officials>

**Website:** <http://www.iaaf.org/>

**Local angle:** IAAF meets are very rare in The Pacific Association.

ITO = International Technical Official

**What it is:** an IAAF official who acts as an observer for and advisor to meet referees.

**See:** IAAF / officiating

JO's = Junior Olympics

**What it is:** National USATF Youth championship tournament, conducted by the USATF youth committee and competed by region. Each region has multiple USATF associations; Pacific Association is in Region 14. JO's culminate in a national meet, the site for which is selected by the national youth committee at the USATF convention each year.

**Officiating:** officials are invited to work JO's by the local organizing committee and the national youth committee; generally speaking, national JO meets are open to all certified officials

LDR = Long Distance Running

**What it is:**

1. non-track running events, including road races and cross-country
2. committee of Pacific Association that conducts such races
3. officiating specialty related to non-track running events, including clerking, starting, umpiring, marshaling, and finish-line management.

Livescan

**What it is:** The background check system Pacific Association uses to ensure that volunteers working with Youth—coaches, officials, and others—are of good character and no danger to the children. It identifies individuals who have committed certain (by no means all) types of felonies.

Before working at Youth meet—or before working with a Youth club, PA requires members to undergo this procedure. This does not apply to High School or other meet systems.

Once an individual has cleared Livescan, that clearance remains valid as long as the USATF membership is maintained. No further action is required.

The Pacific Association will reimburse fees if the official, coach, or volunteer has joined PA/USATF or renewed PA/USATF membership.

For more information: <http://pausatf.org/data/yilivescanletter.pdf>

LOC = Local Organizing Committee

**What it is:** a larger version of a Games Committee convened typically to run meets for national organizations (USATF or NCAA).

See “Games Committee”

MOC = Meet of Champions

**What it is:** late-season Section-level High School meet(s) in Cross Country and track and field.

NCAA = National Collegiate Athletic Association

**What it is:** Governing body for all collegiate (college and university) sports in the US.

**Composition:** NCAA schools are organized into three divisions, based on such criteria as number of dollars devoted to athletics, number of scholarships, sizes of the institution, etc.

Each separately competes national championships in track and field and cross country. The locations for these championships rotate around the country;

generally, these championship meets are open to certified officials who apply to the local organizing committees.

**Conferences:**

Amusingly enough, Wikipedia has better descriptions of NCAA conferences than the NCAA website does: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NCAA\\_conferences](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NCAA_conferences)

**Local Angle:** Pacific Association officials work with schools in these NCAA conferences (among others):

conference	examples
PAC 12	University of California Berkeley, Stanford
Big Sky	California State University (CSU) Sacramento
Big West	UC Davis, Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo)
Mountain West	University of Nevada, Reno
California Collegiate Athletic Association	San Francisco State University, CSU Stanislaus, CSU Chico

None of these conferences' borders are contiguous with Pacific Association.

**Publications:** publishes *NCAA Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country Rules* in odd-numbered years.

**Website:** <http://www.ncaa.org/>

NFHS =National Federation of High School Associations

**What it is:** Nation-wide body administering High School athletics.

**Publications:** *Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Book*, published yearly. This is the only book that uses English or Imperial (foot/inch) measurement

**Website:** <http://www.nfhs.org/>

NGB = National Governing Body

**What it is:** the name says it, the organization with authority over and responsibility for sports in a given country. NGBs are part of the IAAF and IOC.

**Examples:** USATF is an NGB. The USOC is an NGB. Major League Baseball and the NFL probably are not.

NIAA: The Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association

**What it is:** the authority for high school sports in Nevada

**Authority or role:** Nevada state high school championships rotate between northern and southern Nevada.

**Composition:** Nevada high schools compete several divisions, based on school size.

**Website:** <http://www.niaa.com/landing/index>

NOC = USATF Officials Committee (or) National Officials Committee

**What it is:** A committee of USATF, representing and administering certified officials.

**Authority or role:**

Sets standards for certification.

Provides training at all levels for certified officials.

At the annual meeting participates in selection officials for USATF indoor and outdoor senior and junior championships and indoor combined-events championships (National- and Master-level officials are invited to apply). This work is conducted behind closed doors by a committee composed of persons appointed by the national officials chair and the USATF men's and women's track and field committees.

**Governance:** Is governed by a seven-member Executive Committee (elected at the USATF convention every two years), which meets several times annually. Has annual meeting as part of the USATF annual convention.

**Composition:** All certified officials, organized into regional committees that are part of regional USATF associations.

**Other:** Provides liability insurance as part of certification.

**Website:**

<http://www.usatf.org/groups/officials/>

NTO = National Technical Official

**What it is:** an IAAF official who acts as an observer for and advisor to meet referees.

**See:** IAAF / officiating

PA (or) PAUSATF = The Pacific Association

**What it is:**

A regional association of USATF that governs USATF sports in northern California and northern Nevada

**Governance:**

Each member committee is represented on the Board of Athletics, which meets five times per year, rotating between Redwood City, Walnut Creek, and downtown Sacramento. Board of Athletics meetings are open to the public.

Within the Board of Athletics, there is a Board of Directors consisting of the president, vice president, and secretary, who are elected by the Board of Athletics. The former president also serves.



PAUSATF maintains a professional staff and office—rare among USATF regional associations. The office is in Folsom, California.

**Composition:**

Anyone who joins USATF and lives within PA’s boundaries is automatically made a member of PAUSATF.

PA’s committee structure is modeled on USATF’s, with bodies for different levels (age-groups) of athletes; for officials, coaches, media, etc.

**Area:**

The counties that are under PA USATF are defined in *Competition Rules*. Essentially, they encompass California from San Luis Obispo to the Oregon border and the northern tier of counties in Nevada.

**Authority or role:**

PAUSATF *sanctions* some meets and races, and *conducts* certain meets and races.

Sanctioning is done when a meet or race organizer or organizing body applies to PA and agrees to conduct the event under USATF rules; and may involve providing insurance and certain other services in return for a fee. For more on sanctioning see: <http://www.pausatf.org/pdf/SanctionOverview.pdf>

The meets PA conducts are mainly Association championships in cross-country, race walk, and track and field.

In addition, PA applies by itself or partners with such other bodies as the Sacramento Sports Commission, to conduct USATF and NCAA national championship meets. In the past, these have included Olympic Trials, national cross-country championships, Junior Olympics championships, USATF team championships in both track and field and cross country, and NCAA Division I championships.

And member committees of PA—especially Youth, Long Distance Running, Race Walk, and Masters--conduct Association championship meets—and the LDR committee conducts Grand Prix series in cross country, road racing and Ultra Running.

**Publications:** PA members receive *California Track & Running News*, which also includes material from the Southern California Association.

**Website:** [www.pausatf.org](http://www.pausatf.org)

PA Officials Committee = PAOC

**What it is:** The governing body for officials within The Pacific Association; is a component of and is represented on the Pacific Association Board of Athletics and the National Officials Committee.

**Authority or role:** Certifies, trains, and disciplines (as necessary; this has seldom been necessary) PA officials.

The PAOC chair and certification vice chair provide the membership roster to meet directors and officials coordinators, upon request. This includes contact information and information on individuals' officiating specialties, but no other personal information.

**Governance:** see "Ex Comm"

Holds elections in odd-numbered years for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, at-large representatives and representatives to the Board of Athletics.

**Composition:** when a PAUSATF member checks "official" on the membership form, he or she becomes a member of the PAOC.

**Area:** Contiguous with Pacific Association USATF; but includes members who live in other associations, by special arrangement.

**Publications:** Publishes the newsletter *Turns and Distances* several times during the year.

Prepares and publishes a fairly complete calendar of track and field meets within The Pacific Association.

Publishes monographs on officiating skills on the PA website.

**Meetings:** Holds an annual meeting, in recent years a luncheon with raffle at UC Davis on a Sunday in late August or early September.

**Website:** <http://pausatf.org/indexofficials.html>

TAC = The Athletic Congress

**What it is (was):** governing body for track and field and related sports in the United States from 1979 until 1992, when the name was changed to USATF, with no organizational differences.

USATF = USA Track and Field

**What it is:** The National governing body for track and field in the United States—except for high school and collegiate track and field. Successor organization to the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and The Athletics Congress.

**Composition:**

Consists of committees governing all the sports related to track and field: cross country, long-distance running, ultra running, Race Walk, disabled athletics, youth athletics, masters athletics, and others; PLUS 57 regional associations,

which are smaller versions of the national organization; ALSO officials, medical, coaching, and other support committees.

Age divisions are (each has slightly different rules, defined in specific areas of *Competition Rules*):

Youth (with five, two-year age divisions, beginning at roughly age nine—plus an “8-under” division--defined in *Competition Rules*)

Open (men 18 to 39; women 16 to 39)

Masters (athletes 35 and older, with multiple age divisions, defined in *Competition Rules*)

**Governance:**

Governed by a 16-member Board of Directors.

Run by a professional staff headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Holds conventions each year on the weekend ten days after Thanksgiving, which are open to all members.

The convention decides locations for championship meets, certifies records, approves changes to rules, elects the board of directors and officers.

**Authority or role:**

Prepares teams for international championship competitions.

Is charged with promoting the sport(s) and providing cradle-to-grave recreation and fitness opportunities.

**Publications:** *Competition Rules*, with a new edition published each year after the Senior Indoor Championships.

Also a variety of newsletters and magazines, sent automatically to all USATF members.

**Website:** <http://www.usatf.org/Home.aspx>