

Rule 7: Assistance to Athletes

Medical Examinations and Assistance

1.

- a) Medical examination / treatment and/or physiotherapy may be provided either on the competition area itself by the official medical staff appointed by the LOC and identified by armbands, vests or similar distinctive apparel or in designated medical treatment areas outside the competition area by accredited team medical personnel specifically approved by the Medical or Technical Delegate for the purpose. In neither case shall the intervention delay the conduct of the competition or an athlete's trial in the designated order. Such attendance or assistance by any other person, whether immediately before competition, once athletes have left the Call Room, or during competition, is assistance.
- b) An athlete shall retire at once from an event if ordered to do so by the Medical Delegate, or a medical doctor who is a member of the official medical staff, identified by armbands, vests or similar distinctive apparel.

Note: The competition area, which normally also has a physical barrier, is defined for this purpose as the area where the competition is being staged and which has an access restricted to the competing athletes and to personnel authorised in accordance with the relevant Rules and Regulations.

2. Any athlete giving or receiving assistance (including under Rules 18.17, 18.18(b), and 49.8(h)) shall be warned by the Referee and advised that, if there is any repetition, they will be disqualified from that event. If an athlete is subsequently disqualified from the event, any performance accomplished up to that time in the same round of that event shall not be considered valid. However, performances accomplished in a previous round of that event shall be considered valid.

Note: in cases under Rules 7.3 (a) or 7.3(f) disqualification may be made without warning.

3. For the purpose of this Rule the following examples shall be considered assistance, and are therefore not allowed:
 - a) Save as otherwise permitted below, pacing in races by persons not participating in the same race, by athletes lapped or about to be lapped or by any kind of technical device (other than those permitted under Rule 7.4 (d));

- b) Possession or use of video recorders, radios, CD, radio transmitters, mobile phones, or similar devices in the competition area which have the capacity to communicate;
Note: Possession or use of items specified within Rule 7.3 b) also applies to athlete's assistants and guide-runners.
- c) Except for devices complying with Rule 6.12, the use of any technology or appliance that provides the user with an advantage which they would not have obtained using the equipment specified in these Rules.
- d) Provision of advice or other support by any official of the competition not related to or required by their specific role in the competition at the time (e.g. coaching advice, the take off point in a Jumping Event except to indicate a failure in horizontal jumps, time or distance gaps in a race etc.).

COMMENT: Rule 7.3(d) however makes it clear that the officials should not assist any athlete beyond what is required of their role – and specifically states as an example that officials should not provide details of the take-off position in jumping events, other than for the purpose of indicating the point of “impact” in a foul jump in Horizontal Jumps.

- e) Ambulant athletes who are competing from a standing position using a wheelchair to access the field of play.
- f) Receiving physical support from another athlete (other than helping to recover to a standing position) that assists in making forward progression in a race.

COMMENT: Any physical or technological action or activity that provides an athlete with an unfair advantage is not permitted on the field of play. Any device that has the capacity to be used for communicating is prohibited from the field of play. Speedometers attached to wheelchairs that have a GPS component, may be allowed as long as communication function is not included (see Rule 7.3(b)).

Call Room Judges will inspect the racing wheelchair frame as well as the helmet and athlete's ears to ensure the athlete is not in possession of any device that has the capacity to communicate. Note that further inspections may be conducted at any time. This rule applies to all athletes and their guide-runners (or assistants) on the field of play. Call Room Judges are advised to always check athletes and their guide-runners (or assistants) to ensure compliance with this rule.

It is also not considered appropriate for ITOs and other Technical Officials to use cell phones, cameras or other similar devices while on the field of play except for an officiating purpose.

4. The following should not be considered assistance:
- a) Communication between the athletes and their coaches not placed in the competition area. In order to facilitate this communication and not to disturb the staging of the competition, a place in the stands, close to the immediate site of each Field Event, should be reserved to the athletes' coaches;
Note: coaches and other persons otherwise complying with Rule 49.8 may communicate with their athlete(s).
 - b) Medical examination / treatment and/or physiotherapy necessary to enable an athlete to participate or continue participation once on the competition area under Rule 7.1.
 - c) Any kind of personal safeguard (e.g., bandage, tape, belt, support, wrist cooler, breathing aid etc.) or device (e.g. hearing amplifier/aid) for protection and/or medical purposes. The Referee, in conjunction with the Medical Delegate and, in some cases also an International Classifier, shall have the authority to verify any case should they judge that to be desirable. (See also Rule 30.5 and Rule 34.5)
 - d) Heart rate or speed distance monitors or stride sensors or similar devices carried or worn personally by athletes during an event, provided that such device cannot be used to communicate with any other persons.
 - e) Viewing by athletes competing in Field Events, of images of previous trial(s), recorded on their behalf by persons not placed in the competition area (see Rule 7.1 Note). The viewing device or images taken from it must not be taken into the competition area beyond the immediate area in which those providing the recording are placed. To ensure a better view of the images, the athlete may hold the device whilst communicating with the persons who have taken the images.
 - f) Hats, gloves, shoes, items of clothing provided to athletes at official stations or when otherwise approved by the relevant referee.
 - g) Receiving physical support from an official or other person designated by the LOC to recover to a standing position or to access medical assistance.
 - h) Electronic lights or similar appliance indicating progressive times during a race, including of a relevant record.
 - i) The use of a flag, a strobe light, other visual device or the touching of the athlete by an official to signal the start of a race (see Rule 17.2 Note).
5. WPA recognises the special needs of athletes with a hearing impairment and is keen to encourage and facilitate their participation in competition. In cases where deaf-blind

athletes are competing in an event the Technical Delegate shall have the authority to make appropriate modification to these rules as may be necessary to facilitate the effective participation of those deaf-blind athletes. In principal, no rule modification that disadvantages any other athlete will be allowed.

Note: No hearing aid/amplification of external cochlear implant parts containing radio transmission or reception components shall be permitted in the competition area under Rule 7.3.b.

Assistance – Track and Road Events

6. Athletes shall provide their own guide-runner(s).

COMMENT: The intention of this rule is to ensure compliance with the IPC Athlete Nationality Policy and to protect athletes from being adversely impacted by a guide-runner that they do not know.

7. Guide-runners for athletes in Sport Classes T11-12 shall be permitted and shall not therefore be considered assistance or pacing. Athletes in Sport Class T11 shall compete accompanied by a guide-runner for all events. Athletes in Sport Class T12 have an option of being accompanied by a guide-runner or competing by themselves. The LOC shall provide distinctive vests to identify guide-runners.

8. When a T11-12 athlete starts the event with a guide-runner, the athlete and guide-runner(s) must both finish the event with bona fide effort in accord with these rules for the performance to be recognised.

7.9.1 During a race, the method of guidance between an athlete and their accompanying guide-runner shall be through a tether. In addition, the athlete may receive verbal instruction from the guide-runner. The guide-runner must complete their task while running (or walking) and is not allowed to use any mechanical means of transport.

7.9.2 The tether attachment shall only be established between hand(s) and/or arm(s) of the athlete and their accompanying guide-runner. The athlete and their accompanying guide runner may not hold hands, wrists or any other part of the other's body so as to make the tether superfluous.

7.9.3 The athlete and their accompanying guide-runner shall retain the tether attachment

from the start of the race until the end of the race. No release shall be allowed until after the athlete and their accompanying guide-runner have both reached the vertical plane of the nearer edge of the finish line and finished the race, except during the process of interchange of guide-runners.

- 7.9.4 At no point during a race shall an athlete or their guide-runner(s) be permitted to hold on to a stopper and/or any part of the middle section in a way that shortens the length of the tether.
- 7.9.5 If an athlete and/or guide-runner fails to comply with any part of this Rule 7.9, the competing pair (the athlete and guide-runner) shall be disqualified.

COMMENT: For safety reasons, in all races, the guide-runner must not release the athlete before the finish line. It is sometimes difficult to determine if a release of the tether has taken place prior to the finish line. Therefore, at the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships, if the official is in doubt, they can refer to the Video Referee or the Chief Judge Photo Finish to make a determination.

- 7.10.1 The guide-runner is not allowed to push, pull or otherwise propel athletes in order to gain an advantage at any stage during a race.
- 7.10.2 Slingshotting is regarded as a technique whereby the guide-runner deliberately hurls their arm (attached to the athlete) forward in order to exert propulsion towards the athlete's running direction. Such a technique is not permitted at any stage during a race.
- 7.10.3 A guide-runner may assist an athlete who has tripped or fallen to regain their footing and/or orientation as long as such assistance does not provide any advantage to the athlete towards their running direction.
- 7.10.4 If an athlete and/or guide-runner fail to comply with any part of this Rule 7.10, the competing pair (the athlete and guide-runner) shall be disqualified.

COMMENT: It is important for ITOs and other Technical Officials assigned at Track or Road Events to watch for pushing, pulling, propelling or slingshotting. The athlete must be the one dictating the running style and cadence of the event, not the guide-runner. If the guide-runner is dictating the running style this can often be observed where an athlete has an exaggerated upper arm or shoulder movement which seems unnatural. In many cases it may be difficult to

observe pushing, pulling or propelling without the use of video analysis. Slingshotting is usually easy to observe at the finish line where the guide-runner will propel the athlete forward to ensure that the athlete finishes before the guide-runner.

- 7.11.1 For races of 5000m or longer athletes are allowed to use two guide-runners. However, only one interchange of guide-runners is permitted for each athlete per race. The interchange must take place without any hindrance to other athletes and must take place only on the back straight in track events, or at the designated location in Road events (See Rule 49.13).
- 7.11.2 Should there be an interchange of guide-runners, the athlete and the substituting guide-runner must both finish the event in order for the performance to be recognised.
- 7.12.1 The intention to interchange guide-runners must be notified in advance to the Referee and Technical Delegate. The Technical Officials will determine the conditions of the interchange and will communicate these in advance to the athletes.
- 7.12.2 If the interchange does not take place after the technical arrangement being made, the athlete shall be disqualified from the race.

COMMENT: Technical Officials who are assigned to Track or Road Events must watch guide-runner exchanges carefully to ensure they occur in accordance with these rules. The guide-runner exchange should be established on the back straight, or at the pre-determined designated location in road events, and a Technical Official(s) should be assigned with ensuring that the guide-runners are properly positioned on the outside of the track/course in preparation for the guide-runner exchange. The assigned Technical Official must ensure that guide-runners preparing for exchange do not interfere with other events and activities that may be occurring nearby. For example, in track events, if there is a “rail camera” on the back straight guide-runners should not be positioned between the “rail camera” and competing athletes except during actual guide exchange.

The assigned Technical Official must have a copy of the exchange specifics (that is the names of the athlete(s) who intend to interchange guide-runners and the lap(s)/location that these exchanges will occur). The assigned Technical Official shall ensure all guide-runner exchanges only occur as planned. After the exchange has occurred, the outgoing guide-runner shall be escorted out of the competition area by a Technical Official or accredited volunteer.

If an exchange does not occur in accordance with the above process the assigned Technical

Official shall report this to the Track Referee/Road Race Referee for final determination. That is, whether or not to disqualify the athlete.

13. Some athletes in Sports Classes T12, T20, T71-72 (Frame Running), T35-38, T40-47 and T61-64 may require their starting blocks to be set for them by the Starter's Assistant. The Technical Delegate will provide the appropriate athletes and/or their team coach with a document on which to show their requirements.

Note (i): Upon request, the Technical Delegate may permit an assistant to accompany the athlete to the start to set the blocks under special circumstances. The assistant shall withdraw from the field of play prior to the start of the race.

Note (ii): Upon request, the Technical Delegate may permit an assistant to accompany the athletes in sports classes T71-72 (Frame Running), to ensure the correct positioning of the athlete on the start line. The assistant shall withdraw from the field of play prior to the start of the race.

Note (iii): To ensure a safe transfer for those athletes in Sport Class T12 who do not run with a guide runner, an assistant may accompany the athletes through the Call Room up to the field of play. The assistant shall withdraw from the field of play prior to the start of the race.

COMMENT: Any request in this rule requires the athlete or their assistant or team leader to complete the relevant request form (such as a 'request for assistance form'). Completed forms must be presented to the TIC for approval by the Technical Delegate. If approved by the Technical Delegate the approved request form must be provided by the athlete, assistant or team leader to the Call Room Judges at the Call Room and subsequently taken with the athlete to the start line. Where Call Room Judges are in doubt as to whether or not a request has been approved, they must immediately seek clarification from the Technical Delegate.

If the rule enables an assistant to accompany an athlete a request to accompany the athlete is not necessary.

Assistance – Field Events

14. Assistants for athletes in Sport Classes F31-33 and F51-54 will be permitted (one assistant per athlete per event) who can assist the athlete under the control and supervision of the Officials to ensure the athlete transfers safely to the throwing frame and assist athletes to strap into their throwing frame.

Note (i): Strapping must be only to the frame with non-elastic material.

Note (ii): Should an assistant be required, the assistant shall be physically capable of transferring their athlete to the throwing frame and, in the event that the assistant is not capable, no assistance will be provided by the Technical Officials, accredited volunteers or any other person(s) without the prior approval of the Technical Delegate.

COMMENT: In Paralympic Games and WPA Championships (see Part B – 3.1.2 (a) and (b)), the Referee may require the assistant(s) to withdraw from the field of play and be seated outside of the field of play while the athlete is not competing. Prior to the time that the assistant's athlete is about to compete and as the Referee reasonably considers necessary, the assistant may be enabled to prepare the athlete for competition. In WPA Recognised Competitions, other than those referred to in Part B 3.1.2 (a) and (b), the assistant may be permitted to administer water/refreshment to their athlete during the break between their third and fourth trials. Once that assistant's athlete has finished competing, the assistant shall again withdraw from the competition area.

It is important to note assistants are only permitted for athletes in Sport Classes F31-33 and F51-54. If an athlete in different Sport Class requires assistance that athlete must complete a request for assistance form and submit this to the Technical Delegate for approval at least 24 hours prior to the event. Assistance is only permitted if the Technical Delegate approves the request.

Officials are not responsible for transferring athletes to the throwing frame. Athletes or their assistants (if permitted or approved) are responsible for this.

Technical Officials or accredited volunteers shall not provide assistance to athletes when transferring from their day-chair to the throwing frame and vice versa. Such assistance must only be performed by assistants approved by the Technical Delegate(s) in cases where such approval is required.

15. The assistant must withdraw from the competition area once they have completed these tasks and must follow any directives from officials of the event while they are in the competition area.
16. For athletes in Sport Classes F11 and F12 one assistant may bring athletes to the throwing circle or Javelin runway. The assistant may assist the athlete by orientating them with the throwing circle or on the Javelin runway before each attempt. The assistant must leave the

throwing circle or Javelin runway before each attempt begins. Once the athlete is oriented, the assistant may also provide acoustic orientation before, during and after each attempt. Athletes may only be escorted from the throwing circle or Javelin runway after the officials have determined whether or not the attempt was a valid one.

Note: If the official in charge of the event decides that an assistant who is providing acoustic orientation is in an unsafe location then the official has the right to require the assistant to move.

17. For athletes in Sports Class T11 acoustic assistance is permitted during Long Jump, Triple Jump and High Jump. However, no visual modification to the existing facility is permitted. In events where acoustic assistance is being used complete silence shall be requested from spectators.

Note: Whenever possible, to ensure silence, events in which acoustic assistance is being utilised should not be timetabled together with other running events.

COMMENT: Often these events are scheduled at the beginning of a session where the fewest number of spectators are in the stadium. It is important that the sports presentation team, including the announcer are carefully observing the event to ensure the sports presentation does not disrupt the concentration of athletes and their assistants during the event.

18. During Jump Events athletes in Sports Classes T11 can be accompanied onto the field of play by two assistants to:

- a) act as a caller to provide acoustic orientation during the approach run in High Jump, Long Jump and Triple Jump, and/or;
- b) act as an escort to assist the athlete by positioning and orientating them on the runway before each attempt.

Note (i): Acoustic orientation is permitted before, during and after each attempt. Once an attempt has begun, only acoustic orientation is allowed by the assistant(s) until after the officials have determined whether or not the attempt was a valid one.

Note (ii): The assistant(s) may be positioned on or beside the Long or Triple Jump runway or behind the landing area. The assistant(s) may be in front of or behind the take-off area but shall not stand in the take-off area (powdered area) or landing area.

Note: (iii) The assistant(s) must not stand in a position that hinders the view of Officials nor run along-side or behind the athlete during an attempt.

COMMENT: Athletes and their assistants may not physically touch each other until the Chief Judge has indicated that they may do so. This is normally after the attempt has been completed and the athlete has left the throwing circle, runway or landing area and the Chief Judge has raised the appropriate flag.

19. For athletes in Sports Class T/F12 visual modification of the existing facility is permitted during Field Events (i.e., Paint, chalk, powder, cones, flags, etc) at the discretion of the Technical Delegate. Acoustic signals may also be used.
20. For athletes in Sports Class T12, only one assistant is allowed to accompany the athlete onto the field of play to act as caller and/or escort in Jumping Events. The assistant shall observe Rule 7.18.
21. In Field Events, the assistant shall not conduct other than permitted under Rule 7.14 to 7.20. If the official in charge of the event decides that an assistant is in breach of these rules (e.g., coaching in competition area), the athlete and their assistant(s) shall be warned by the Referee and advised that, if there is any repetition, the athlete will be disqualified from that event subject to Rule 7.2.

Note: The LOC shall arrange separate waiting areas for athletes and their assistants.

22. Some athletes in Sports Classes T/F20, T/F35-38, T/F42-47 and T/F61-64 may require their runway markers to be at a pre-set distance from the take-off board. In this case, prior to the competition, the markers shall be set with assistance from a Field Judge. This would also apply in the javelin. The Technical Delegate will provide the appropriate athletes and/or their team coach with a document on which to show their requirements.

COMMENT: A request for information form is required to be completed by a responsible NPC official to outline their requirements prior to assistance being granted by the Technical Delegate. The Technical Delegate may approve assistance by the specified assistant of an athlete or, by a Field Judge. The determination will be made by the Technical Delegate to ensure there are no more people on the field of play than is absolutely necessary.

Animals

23. No animals shall be brought into the competition area, including guide, medical assistance, emotional support or any other animals subject to special certification.