

SECTION II – GENERAL COMPETITION RULES

Rule 3: The Athletics Facility

Any firm, uniform surface that conforms to the specifications in the World Athletics Track and Field Facilities Manual, may be used for WPA Recognised Competitions. Paralympic Games and World Championships must be held only on synthetic surfaced facilities that hold a current valid World Athletics Class 1 or Class 2 Athletics Facility Certificate.

In any case, a current national track certificate from an accredited surveyor shall be required for all facilities intended for use for Regional Championships, Regional Games, Sanctioned and Approved Competitions.

Note (i): The World Athletics Track and Field Facilities Manual, which may be downloaded from the World Athletics website, contains more detailed and defined specifications for the planning and construction of track and field facilities including further diagrams for track measurement and marking.

Note (ii): The current standard forms required to be used for the certification application and measurement report as well as the Certification System Procedures may be downloaded from the World Athletics website.

Rule 4: Age, Gender Categories and Mixed Competition

Age Categories

1. The following age groups are recognised by WPA:
 - a) Master Men and Women: Any athlete who has reached their 35th birthday
 - b) Under-20 (U20) Men and Women: Any athlete of 17, 18 or 19 years on 31 December in the year of the competition;
 - c) Under-17 (U17) Men and Women: Any athlete of 14, 15 or 16 years on 31 December in the year of the competition.

Note (i): An athlete must be 14 by 31 December in the year of competition to compete in an open event.

Note (ii): Eligibility, including minimum age for participation in the Paralympic Games and

WPA Championships (see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)) shall be subject to specific competition regulations.

2. An athlete shall be eligible to compete in an age group competition under these Rules if they are within the age range specified in the relevant age group classification. An athlete must be able to provide proof of their age through presentation of a valid passport or other form of evidence as permitted by the Regulations for the competition. An athlete who fails or refuses to provide such proof shall not be eligible to compete.

COMMENT: While this rule defines the age groups in a particular way, it is often the Technical Regulations for a specific competition which determines whether younger athletes can participate as envisaged by note (ii). If they are accepted into the competition they are required to compete with the same conditions and implements as their competitors in the age grouping.

Gender Categories

3. Competition under these rules is divided into men's, women's and universal categories. When a Mixed Competition is conducted outside the stadium or in one of the limited cases set out in Rule 4.7 and Rule 4.8, separate men's and women's categories results should still be declared or otherwise indicated. When a universal event or competition is conducted a single category result only shall be declared.
4. An athlete shall be eligible to compete in men's (or universal) competition if they are recognised as a male in accordance with Part B – 4.5 of these Rules.
5. An athlete shall be eligible to compete in women's (or universal) competition if they are recognised as a female in accordance with Part B – 4.5.
6. An athlete who fails or refuses to comply with the applicable Regulations shall not be eligible to compete.

COMMENT: Universal competition covers events in which men and women participate together without separate category of results as well as relay or team events in which both men and women are included in the same teams.

Mixed Competition

7. Universal competitions such as relays or other team events in which men and women compete together or events in which men and women compete for a single category are permitted in accordance with the applicable regulations of the relevant body.

8. Other than under Rule 4.7, for all other competitions held completely in the stadium, mixed events between male and female participants shall not normally be permitted. However, the following may be permitted in all competitions except held under Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b):
- a. Mixed stadium competition in races of 5000m or longer but it is permitted only when there are insufficient athletes of one or both genders competing to justify the conduct of separate races. The gender of each athlete shall be shown in the result. Such races shall not, in any case, be conducted so as to allow athletes of one gender to be paced / drafted or assisted by athletes of another gender.
 - b. Field Events for men and women may be conducted simultaneously at one or more event sites. Separate result cards shall be used and results declared for each gender. Each round of trials of such events may be conducted either by calling all athletes of one gender followed by the other or by alternating them. For the purposes of Rule 24.17, all athletes shall be regarded as if they were of the same gender. Where Vertical Jumps are conducted on a single event site, Rule 25 and Rule 26 must be strictly applied including that the bar must continue to be raised in accordance with a single set of previously announced increments for the entire competition.

COMMENT: The intent of Rule 4.8 is to facilitate the conduct of Field Events and in races of 5000m or longer, when small numbers of athletes of one or both genders are entered in the case of longer events, where timetabling constraints make it difficult to program separate races. The intent of the Rule is not to provide opportunity for women to compete in races against men to achieve potentially better performance conditions.

To be clear, mixed competition in Field Events and in races of 5000m or longer is:

- a) permitted in WPA Approved Competitions, subject only to the rules of the applicable governing body. [No additional permission from WPA is required];
- b) permitted in WPA Sanctioned Competitions under Part B - 3.1.2 (c) if specifically permitted by WPA;
- c) not permitted at the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships under Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b). In the case of mixed competitions in Vertical Jumps, Rule 25 must be strictly applied - including that the bar must continue to be raised in accordance with a single set of agreed increments for the entire competition.

There are also restrictions on the recognition of World Records in mixed competitions – see Rules 51.2 (with reference to track races of 5000m and longer) and Rule 51.22 (with reference to women’s road races).

Rule 51.22 Note (i) provides guidance on how a women’s only race can be achieved (enabling a women’s only record to be set) in a situation where both men and women are or might be competing. (See also Rule 2.20.2 and Rule 2.20.3).

Rule 5: Entries

1. Competitions under the Rules are restricted to eligible athletes.

Simultaneous Entries

2. If an athlete is entered in both a Track Event and a Field Event, or in more than one Field Event taking place simultaneously, the appropriate Referee may, for one round of trials at a time, or for each trial in the High Jump, allow an athlete to take their trial in an order different from the start list (or as determined in accordance with Rule 24.6(a)). However, if an athlete subsequently is not present for that particular trial, it shall be deemed that they are passing once the period allowed for the trial has elapsed. As this possibility exists only for that particular round / trial allowed by the Referee, if the athlete is then not present for a subsequent round / trial, when their competing order will be again according to the start list (or as determined in accordance with Rule 24.6(a)), it will be counted as a failure once the period allowed for the trial has elapsed.

Note: In Field Events, the Referee shall not allow an athlete to take a trial in a different order in the final round of trials, but the Referee may allow an athlete to do so during any earlier round of trials.

COMMENT: The Note clarifies that allowing an athlete to take a trial in a different order in the final round of trials (irrespective of the number of rounds of trials) because of a clash with another event is not permitted. If an athlete is not present in the final round and has not previously indicated that they will pass, then the time allowed for their trial will run and if they do not return before it expires, then they will be recorded as a failure. (See also Rule 24.18 where a change of order will normally not be made when a substitute trial is awarded - in any round of trials).

Re-entry after Changes in Sport Class

3. At all Paralympic Games and WPA Championships(see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)) should an athlete's Sport Class change during the Classification Evaluation Period and/or the Classification Competition Period re-entry may be considered and are subject to the approval of Technical Delegate(s).

If an athlete's Sport Class changes during the Classification Evaluation Period the athlete, someone acting on their behalf or an official representative of a team is required to notify of their intention for the athlete's re-entry immediately after publication of the classification outcomes.

Athletes who are subject to re-entry may only be permitted to re-enter in the same event(s) that they had been previously entered of the revised class. In the event that an athlete cannot be entered into an event due to lack of availability in their revised class, they may request to enter an alternative available event of their revised class.

During the competition period, the Sport Class of an athlete may change after Observation in Competition or classification protests and may affect an athlete's Sports Class, result(s), placing and record(s) at that competition in accordance with Rule 52.4 of these Rules. If the athlete is entered in other events of their previous Sport Class at the same competition, they may be re-entered in those events of their revised Sport Class subject to the approval of the Technical Delegate(s).

If at any stage of the athlete's evaluation WPA or a Classification Panel is unable to allocate a Sport Class to the athlete, the athlete may be designated with Classification Not Completed (CNC) in accordance with Article 10 of the WPA Classification Rules and Regulations. Any athlete who has been designated as CNC following Observation in Competition shall be shown in the official results as DNF and any performances achieved by the athlete in that Competition shall be void.

COMMENT: The following criteria should be considered when determining re-entry after changes in Sport Class:

- The Minimum Entry Standard for the newly allocated sport class;
- The event(s) is/are offered in the newly allocated sport class;
- The maximum entries per team have not been reached;
- The competition of the concerned event(s) has not started;
- The competition schedule is not affected.

Failure to Participate

4. At the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships (see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)), an athlete shall be excluded from participation in all further events (including other events in which they are simultaneously participating) in the competition, including relays, in cases where:

a) A final confirmation was given that the athlete would start in an event but then failed to participate;

Note: A fixed time for the final confirmation of participation shall be published in advance.

b) An athlete qualified in a Qualification Round of an event for further participation in that event but then failed to participate further;

c) An athlete and/or the accompanying guide-runner failed to compete honestly with bona fide effort. The relevant Referee will decide on this and the corresponding reference must be made in the official results.

However a medical certificate, provided by and based on an examination of the athlete by the Medical Delegate appointed under Rule 2.2 or if no Medical Delegate has been so appointed, by the Medical Officer of the LOC, may be accepted as sufficient evidence that the athlete and/or the accompanying guide-runner became unable to compete due to illness or injury, even if they are able to compete in further events on a subsequent day of the competition. Other justifiable reasons (e.g., factors independent of the athlete's own actions, such as problems with the official transport system) may also be accepted by the Technical Delegate(s).

d) An athlete fails to report to the Call Room(s) for an event in contravention of Rule 5.5.

COMMENT: If the relevant Referee, is satisfied that an athlete who abandoned a race was not competing with a bona fide effort, they must make a reference to this in the relevant results as "DNF Rule 5.4(c)". Either in the process of the Technical Delegate(s) making such a decision or the Jury of the Appeal considering any protest arising from it, reasons for the withdrawal or non-participation proposed by or on behalf of the athlete can be considered. The Rule sets out the process that should explicitly be followed in the case of a medical reason.

If the appropriate Referee is in any doubt that an athlete and/or guide-runner has made a bona fide effort in a specific event, available video evidence shall be considered. If the available video evidence is conclusive, then the athlete shall be disqualified in accordance with Rule 8.1 and

will not be permitted to take part in any further events in that Competition.

Failure to Report to the Call Room(s)

- 5.5.1 It is each athlete's responsibility to ensure that they are present in the Call Room(s) on time. Except as provided in this Rule, an athlete shall be excluded from participation in any event in which they are not present in the Call Room(s) at the relevant time as published in the Call Room schedule.
- 5.5.2 The relevant Referee shall determine if the athlete was present in the Call Room(s) on time, and if not, whether there was a justifiable reason for the athlete not being present on time. For this purpose, the following justifiable reasons may be considered by the Referee if the athlete can provide evidence that this led to them not being present on time:
1. Problems with the official transport system;
 2. Error(s) in the published Call Room Schedule;
 3. Illness or injury, for which a medical certificate must be provided as evidence and signed by the Medical Delegate.
- 5.5.3 The relevant Referee may, at their discretion, allow the athlete to compete in the event under protest if a decision cannot be made immediately in respect of 5.5.2.
- 5.5.4 If the Referee determines that the athlete was present in the Call Room(s) on time or had a justifiable reason for not being present on time, they shall be permitted to compete in the event.
- 5.5.5 If the Referee determines that the athlete was not present in the Call Room(s) on time and had no justifiable reason for not being present on time, the athlete shall be listed as "DNS", and a corresponding reference shall be made in the official results.
- 5.5.6 At Paralympic Games, WPA Championships and WPA Sanctioned Competitions, if the athlete is listed as "DNS" as a result of this Rule, they shall also be excluded from all further events in which they are entered at that Competition.

COMMENT: As the rule states, the athlete must be present in the Call Room(s) at the appropriate time, as determined by the relevant Referee. Being present in the Call Room does

not mean standing outside the Call Room. The technical regulations for the Competition may outline any Call Room procedures which must be followed.

For the avoidance of doubt, a “DNS” designation as a result of this Rule shall not affect any results obtained by the athlete at the same Competition in events prior to the event in which they received the “DNS” designation.

Rule 6: Clothing, Shoes, Athlete Bibs, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Eye mask, Tether, Non-compliance on Equipment and Helmets

6.1 Clothing

- 6.1.1 In all events, athletes and guides must wear clothing that is clean, and designed and worn so as not to be objectionable. The clothing must be made of a material which is non-transparent even if wet. Athletes must not wear clothing that could impede the view of the Judges.
- 6.1.2 Any athlete who removes an article of clothing inappropriately, such as taking off their top after the finish of an event to expose their torso, shall, for a first offence in that Competition, be warned by the Referee in accordance with Rule 8.1. For a second offence in that Competition, the Referee shall disqualify the athlete in accordance with Rule 8.1.
- 6.1.3 Where appropriate, athletes shall participate in the uniform clothing approved by their national governing body. The Victory Ceremony and any lap of honour are considered part of the competition for this purpose.

Note (i): In Seated Throwing Events clothing must be close fitting, and not loose, so that the view of the judges is not impeded.

COMMENT: Prior to entering the field of play Officials in the Call Room may require an athlete to change their clothing if it is deemed to be in-appropriate or objectionable. If an athlete refuses to follow the requirements of the Call Room Judges, the relevant Referee shall warn the athlete and issue a yellow or red card as deemed appropriate.

Athletes may be asked by Officials to adjust their clothing to make it easier for the Officials to observe their form, such as in a Seated Throwing Event.