

SECTION VI - ROAD RACES

Rule 49: Road Races

Preamble

In the case of mass participation events held outside the stadium, these rules should normally only be applied in full to those athletes, if any, who are designated as taking part in the elite or other defined section of the races such as age group categories for which there are placings for awards or prizes. Race organisers should outline in the information provided to other athletes which other rules will apply to their participation, particularly those pertaining to their safety.

Distances

1. The standard distances for men and women shall be 10km, Half-Marathon, Marathon (42.195km).

Course

2. The races shall be conducted on made-up roads. However, when traffic or similar circumstances make it unsuitable, the course, duly marked, may be on a bicycle path or footpath alongside the road, but not on soft ground such as grass verges or the like. The start and finish may be within an athletic field of play.

Note (i): It is recommended that, for road races staged over standard distances, the start and finish points, measured along a theoretical straight line between them should not be further apart than 50% of the race distance.

Note (ii): It is acceptable for the start, finish and other segments of the race, except for the wheelchair events, to be conducted on grass or other non-paved surfaces. These segments shall be kept to a minimum.

3. The course shall be measured along the shortest possible route that an athlete could follow within the section of the road permitted for use in the race.

In all the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships (see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)) the measurement line should be marked along the course in a distinctive colour that cannot be mistaken for other markings.

The length of the course shall not be less than the official distance for the event. At the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships (see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)), the uncertainty in the measurement shall not exceed 0.1% (i.e., 42m for the Marathon) and the length of the course should have been certified in advance by a World Athletics approved course measurer.

Note (i): For measurement, the “Calibrated Bicycle Method” shall be used.

Note (ii): To prevent a course from being found to be shorter than the official race distance on future re-measurement, it is recommended that a “short course prevention factor” be built in when laying out the course. For bicycle measurements this factor should be 0.1% which means that each km on the course will have a “measured length” of 1001m.

Note (iii): If it is intended that parts of the course on race day will be defined by the use of non-permanent equipment such as cones, barricades, etc. their positioning shall be decided not later than the time of the measurement and the documentation of such decisions shall be included in the measurement report.

Note (iv): It is recommended that for Road Races staged over standard distances, the overall decrease in elevation between the start and finish should not exceed 1:1000, i.e., 1m per km (0.1%).

Note (v): A course measurement certificate is valid for five years, after which the course shall be re-measured even when there are no obvious changes to it.

4. The distance in kilometres on the route shall be displayed to all athletes. The distance in miles may also be displayed in addition to the distance in kilometres. Where wheelchair athletes are competing in a race, the maximum height of the intermediate distance signs shall not exceed 1 metre.

Start

5. The races shall be started by the firing of a gun, cannon, air horn or like device. The commands and procedure for races longer than 400m shall be used. In races which include

a large number of athletes, five-minute, three-minute and one-minute warnings before the start of the race should be given. On the command “On your marks”, the athletes shall assemble on the start line in the manner determined by the LOC. The Starter shall ensure that no athlete has their foot (or any part of their body) or the front wheel (classes T33-34 and T51-54) touching the start line or the ground in front of it, and shall then start the race.

COMMENT: As for middle and long distance Track Events, it is emphasised for events held outside the stadium that Starters and Referees should avoid being over-zealous in the application of the false start Rules to such events. Recalling starts in road races and other outside events can be difficult, and in large fields impractical, in any case. However, where there is a clear and wilful breach, the Referee should not hesitate to consider appropriate action in respect of an individual either during or after the race. However, in major events, where the start mechanism malfunctions, and it is clear or possible that the timing system may not have started a recall where practical might be the best option.

Note (i): In Road races, ambulant athletes may start together, but will be ranked by the finishing time according to the eligible sport class(es) of each event.

Note (ii): In Road races, wheelchair athletes will start according to the decision of the Technical Delegate for the event but will be ranked by the finishing time according to the eligible sport class(es) of each event.

Note (iii): Seeding for Wheelchair Road Races should be by Sports Class, Seed Time and Gender (i.e., T54/34 Males should be seeded in the front row/s, then T54/34 Females, then T52/33/51 Males and then the T52/33/51 Females). The start of each Sports Class event/division should be separated by intervals of a minimum 30 seconds.

Note (iv): The seeding grid for each Sports Class event/division should position the #1 seeded athlete at the centre position in the front row of the grid with #2 and #3 placed on their immediate right and left respectively, and #5 and #4 on their outside right and left respectively and so on (See Figure 25).

Note (v): In the case of events starting outside the stadium, the start line may be up to 0.3m in width and made of any colour contrasting distinctively with the surface of the start area.

COMMENT: For the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships and WPA Sanctioned Competitions (3.12 (a) - (c)), at least, the basis of seeding should be by the best valid time achieved by each athlete during the pre-determined period. This period will be specified in

the Technical Regulations or in the document setting out the entry conditions and standards for the competition. Where there is no such specification, then the Technical Delegate(s) together with the LOC should decide the basis on which the seeding will be determined. For World Para Athletics Approved Competitions (3.1.2 (d)) the seeding and seeding grid shall be agreed between the Technical Delegate (if appointed) and the LOC.

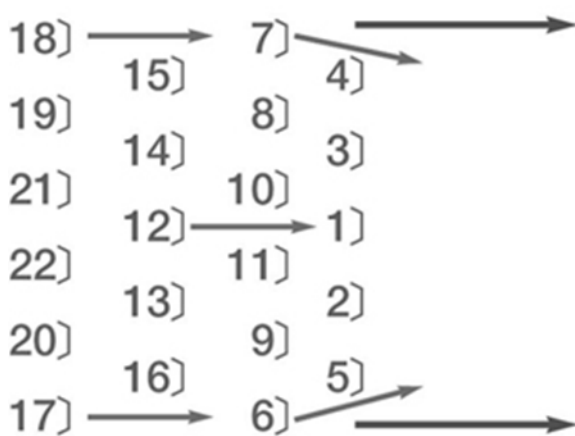


Figure 25 – Example of Seeding Grid for Wheelchair Road Races

COMMENT: Establishing the starting positions is not as important tactically for a half-marathon or marathon, or any mass road race in reality, however it is important to the athletes that proper recognition be given. The above is an example only, but the importance of the first two rows is paramount.

The Finish

6. In the case of events finishing outside the stadium:
 - a) the finish line may be up to 0.30m in width and may be of any colour contrasting distinctively with the surface of the finish area.
 - b) In races for athletes in Sports Classes T11 and T12 competing with a guide-runner the athlete must cross the finish line in front of the guide-runner or the athlete will be disqualified.

Safety

7. The LOC of Road Races shall ensure the safety of athletes and officials. At the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships (see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)), the LOC shall ensure that the roads used for the competition are closed to motorised traffic in all directions;

Drinking / Sponging and Refreshment Stations

8. Except for wheelchair events:
- a) Water and other suitable refreshments shall be available at the start and finish of all races;
 - b) For all events, water shall be available at suitable intervals of approximately 5km. For events longer than 10km, refreshments other than water may be made available at these points;

Note (i): Where conditions warrant, taking into account the nature of the event, the weather conditions and the state of fitness of the majority of the competitors, water and/or refreshments may be placed at more regular intervals along the route.

Note (ii): Mist stations may also be arranged, when considered appropriate under certain organisational and/or climatic conditions.

COMMENT: If mist stations are in place, they shall not span over the entire width of the course. This is to allow for some athletes to run or wheel without getting wet. It is very important to note that many wheelchair racers typically do not like mist stations because push rims and gloves might get wet and therefore hamper propulsion.

- c) Refreshments may include drinks, energy supplements, foodstuffs or any other item other than water. The LOC will determine which refreshments it will provide based on prevailing conditions;
- d) Refreshments will normally be provided by the LOC, but it may permit athletes (and their guide-runners) to provide their own refreshments, in which case the athlete shall nominate at which stations they shall be made available to the athlete. Refreshments provided by the athletes (and their guide-runners) shall be kept under the supervision of officials designated by the LOC from the time that the refreshments are lodged by the

athletes or their representatives. Those officials shall ensure that the refreshments are not altered or tampered with in any way;

- e) The LOC shall delineate, by barriers, tables or markings on the ground, the area from which refreshments can be received or collected. It should not be directly in the line of the measured route. Refreshments shall be placed so that they are easily accessible to, or may be put by authorised persons into the hands of, the athletes (and/or their guide-runner). Such persons shall remain inside the designated area and not enter the course nor obstruct any athlete. No officials shall, under any circumstances, move beside an athlete while they are taking refreshment or water;
- f) In the Paralympic Games and WPA Championships (see Part B - 3.1.2 (a) and (b)), a maximum of two officials per Country may be stationed behind the area designated for their country at any one time;

Note: For an event in which a Country may be represented by more than three athletes, the Technical Regulations may allow additional officials at the refreshment tables.

COMMENT: The revisions to Rule 49 adopted in 2011 included a harmonisation of the provisions within the rules pertaining to outside events, where this was logical and in accordance with practice. As a result, specific provision was made for the first time in this rule to cover team officials and refreshment tables.

- g) An athlete and/or the athlete's guide-runner may at any time carry water or refreshment by hand or attached to their body provided it was carried from the start or collected or received at an official station;
- h) An athlete and/or guide-runner who receives or collects refreshment or water from a place other than the officials stations, except where provided for medical reasons from or under the direction of race officials, or takes the refreshment of another athlete and/or guide-runner, should, for a first such offence, be warned by the Referee normally by showing a yellow card. For a second offence, the Referee shall disqualify the athlete, normally by showing a red card. The athlete shall then immediately leave the course.
- i) Guide-runners may collect refreshments for their guided athlete from the official stations provided they are passed to the athlete within the designated area from which refreshments can be received or collected. Guide-runners may not pass any refreshments to any athlete or guide-runner outside the designated area.

Note: An athlete and/or guide-runner may receive from or pass to another athlete and/or guide-runner refreshment, water or sponges provided it was carried from the start or collected or received at an official station. However, any continuous support from an athlete and/or guide-runner to one or more others in such a way may be regarded as unfair assistance and warnings and/or disqualifications as outlined above may be applied.

COMMENT: It is important to note here that the collection of refreshments must be made in the designated area, and they must not be passed to the athlete by the guide-runner outside of this designated area.

Wheelchair athletes (Sport Classes T33-34, T51-54) may carry their own refreshments.

Note: The LOC must ensure that officials are aware of the specific problems of safety presented in providing drinks to athletes with vision impairment (Classes T11-13) or upper limb impairment (Classes T45-46), and that adequate training is given to all assistants involved.

Race Conduct

9. In Road Races, an athlete may leave the marked course with the permission and under the supervision of an official, provided that by going off course they do not lessen the distance to be covered.
10. If the Referee is satisfied on the report of a Judge or Umpire or otherwise that an athlete has left the marked course thereby shortening the distance to be covered, they shall be disqualified.

COMMENT: The finish area shall be wide enough to enable several runners to sprint side by side and long enough to separate them at the finish. Unless a Transponder Timing System is being used together with a backup system (such as a video recording) to check finishing orders, finish lanes (“funnels”) should be set up some 8 to 10 metres after the finish line with a maximum width of 0.70-0.80m. Once in the funnels, the athletes must not be able to overtake one another. The funnels should be 35-40m long into which the athletes will be directed as they cross the finish line. At the end of each funnel, officials will note the athletes’ numbers/names and if applicable recover their transponder timing chips.

The funnels should have moveable ropes at the end at which the athletes enter, so that when

one lane is full, the next rope can be drawn across behind the last athlete, to enable the next finisher to enter the new finish lane, and so on.

Judges and Timekeepers will additionally be placed on either side of the finish line and it is recommended that, in order to follow up any appeal relative to the finishing order, an official with video recording equipment (if possible with a timing clock in sight) shall be assigned and placed a few metres after the finish line in order to record the order in which the athletes cross the line.

Where a Road Race finishes on a running track the provisions of Rule 18.5 (Lane Infringement) do not apply and, in the event that an athlete steps inside the track at the end of a Road Race the Referee shall apply this Rule 49.10 in determining whether an athlete has left the marked course thereby shortening the distance to be covered having regard to all the circumstances.

11. Umpires should be placed at regular intervals and at each key point. Other umpires should move along the course during the race.

COMMENT: It is acknowledged that following the practice of first giving a warning when applying relevant aspects of Rule 49 and where applicable Rule 7.2 and Rule 7.3 will create difficulties in implementation but where the opportunity arises, the Referee should do so. It is suggested that one option might be that course or refreshment station umpires be designated as assistant Referees and that they be in communication with the Referee and each other to ensure the effective co-ordination of warnings and disqualifications. But there remains the possibility as per the Note to Rule 7.2 that in some circumstances disqualification can, and should, occur without a warning being given.

When a Transponder Timing System is not in use, or where an additional back-up recording system is desired, it is recommended that a funnel system such as that described in the commentary on Rule 49.10 be used.

12. The LOC shall provide numbered bibs that distinguish between athletes of each Sport Class.

13. During road races athletes in Sport Classes T11-12 are allowed to use a maximum of two (2) guide-runners. Any interchanges must take place without any hindrance to other athletes, and may take place at either the 10km, 20km, 21.1km (half-way) or 30km marks for marathon races, 10km mark for half-marathon races and 5km mark for 10km races.

Note (i): It is strongly recommended that the LOC ensures that the race takes place in its

entirety in good daylight conditions.

Note (ii): 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.

Note (iii): Depending on the set up of the course, the interchange may take place at an alternative mark as determined by the Technical Delegate(s) together with the LOC. The interchange mark must be notified to athletes in an appropriate time frame before the race.

14. 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.

Note: If the interchange does not take place after the technical arrangement being made, the athlete shall be disqualified from the race.

Drafting

(Sport Classes T33-34, T51-54)

15. In WPA Recognised Competitions under Part B - 3.1.2, for Road Race Events where Sport Classes T33-34, T51-54 compete together, drafting behind an athlete from another Sports Class or gender is prohibited. Athletes are also prohibited from drafting behind motorised vehicles or bicycles. In violation of this Rule, the athlete concerned shall be disqualified.

Note (i): Drafting is defined as seeking a performance advantage by following another athlete within a distance of less than 5m for one minute.

Note (ii): In Road races, Sport Class T53 and T54 are considered as one class. The Rule 49.15 does not apply.

Obstruction

16. The provisions of Rules 18.1, 18.3 and 18.4 shall apply to Road Races.