

PART VIII - CROSS COUNTRY, MOUNTAIN AND TRAIL RACES

There are extreme variations in conditions in which Cross Country Running, Mountain Running and Trail Running are practised throughout the world and it is difficult to legislate international standardisation of these events. It must be accepted that the difference between very successful and unsuccessful events often lies in the natural characteristics of the venue and the abilities of the course designer. The following Rules are intended as a guide and incentive to assist Members to develop Cross Country Running, Mountain Running and Trail Running.

56. Cross Country Races

Distances

56.1 Distances at World Athletics Cross Country Championships should be approximately:

Senior Men:	10km	Senior Women:	10km
U20 Men:	8km	U20 Women:	6km

The distances recommended for U18 competitions should be approximately:

U18 Men:	6km	U18 Women:	4km
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It is recommended that similar distances be used for other International and National competitions.

Course

56.2 Cross Country course rules, as follows:

56.2.1 The course must be designed on an open or woodland area, covered as far as possible by grass, with natural obstacles, which can be used by the course designer to build a challenging and interesting race course.

56.2.2 The area must be wide enough to accommodate not only the course but also all the necessary facilities.

56.3 For Championships and international events and, wherever possible, for other competitions:

56.3.1 A loop course must be designed and it should measure between 1500m and 2000m. If necessary, a small loop can be added in order to adjust the distances to the required overall distances of the various events, in which case the small loop must be run in the early stages of the event. It is recommended that each long loop should have a total ascent of at least 10m.

56.3.2 Existing natural obstacles shall be used if possible. However, very high obstacles should be avoided, as should deep ditches, dangerous ascents / descents, thick undergrowth and, in general, any obstacle which would constitute a difficulty beyond the aim of the competition. It is preferable that artificial obstacles should not be used but if such use is unavoidable, they should be made to simulate natural obstacles met within open country. In races where there are large numbers of athletes, narrow gaps or other hindrances which would deny the athletes an unhampered run shall be avoided for the first 300m.

56.3.3 The crossing of roads or any kind of macadamised surfaces shall be avoided or at least

kept to a minimum. When it is impossible to avoid such conditions in one or two areas of the course, the areas must be covered by grass, earth or mats.

- 56.3.4** Apart from the start and finish areas, the course must not contain any other long straight. A “natural”, undulating course with smooth curves and short straights, is the most suitable.

56.4 Course markings, as follows:

- 56.4.1** The course shall be clearly marked with tape on both sides. It is recommended that all along one side of the course a 1m wide corridor, heavily fenced from the outside of the course, shall be installed for the use of organisation officials and media. Crucial areas must be heavily fenced; in particular the start area (including the Warm-up Area and the Call Room) and finish area (including any Mixed Zone). Only accredited people will be allowed access to these areas.

- 56.4.2** The general public should only be allowed to cross the course at well organised cross-over points, marshalled by stewards.

- 56.4.3** It is recommended that, apart from the start and finish areas, the course be a width of 5 metres, including the obstacle areas.

- 56.5** For Cross Country Relays, lines 300mm wide 20m apart shall be drawn across the course to denote the takeover zone. For all takeovers, athletes are not permitted to begin running outside their takeover zone, and shall start within the zone. All takeover procedures, which, unless otherwise specified by the organisers, shall comprise a physical contact between the incoming and outgoing athletes, shall be completed within this zone. If an athlete does not follow this Rule, their team shall be disqualified.

Note: 1m × 1m flags, mounted at least 2m high, should be placed at the beginning and end of the takeover zone. Green flags for the beginning of the zone and red flags for the end of the zone.

Start

- 56.6** The races shall be started by the firing of a gun, cannon or air horn or by initiating another distinctive and unambiguous start signal suitable for the relevant competition. The commands for races longer than 400m shall be used (Rule 16.2.2 of the Technical Rules).

In races which include a large number of athletes, five-minute, three-minute and one-minute warnings should be given.

Wherever possible departure boxes should be provided for teams races with the members of each team to be lined up behind each other at the start of the race. In other races, the athletes shall be lined up in the manner determined by the organisers. On the command “On your marks”, the starter shall ensure that no athlete has their foot (or any part of their body) touching the start line or the ground in front of it, and shall then start the race.

If not a gun, canon or air horn, the start signal shall be approved in advance by World Athletics.

Safety

- 56.7** Organisers of Cross Country Races shall ensure the safety of athletes and officials.

Drinking / Sponging and Refreshment Stations In Cross Country Races

- 56.8** Water and other suitable refreshments shall be available at the start and finish of all races. For all events, a drinking / sponging station shall be provided every lap, if weather conditions warrant such provision.

Note: 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 sponges may be placed at more regular intervals along the route.

Race Conduct

- 56.9** 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.

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 protest or 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.

57. Mountain and Trail Races

Part One: General Rules

Course

- 57.1** General rules for the course, as follows:

- 57.1.1** The discipline of Mountain and Trail Running takes place on various types of natural terrain (sand, dirt roads, forest paths, single track footpaths, snow trails etc), and in various kinds of environment (mountains, forests, plains, deserts etc).
- 57.1.2** Races take place mostly on off-road surfaces, however sections of paved surfaces (e.g. asphalt, concrete, macadam etc.) are acceptable as a way to reach or link the trails of the course but should be kept to a minimum. Preferably existing roads and trails should be used.
- 57.1.3** For Mountain Races only, some special exceptions do exist where races are held on a paved surface but are only acceptable when there are large elevation changes on the course.

57.1.4 The course must be marked in such a way that no navigation skills will be required from the athletes. Trail races have no limits to distance or altitude gain or loss and the course must represent the logical discovery of a region.

57.1.5 Mountain Races are traditionally divided into “uphill” and “up and down” races. The average altitude gain or loss can vary from approx. 50 – 250 metres per kilometre, and the distances up to 42.2km.

Start

57.2 Mountain and Trail Races typically have mass starts. Runners can also start separated by gender or age-related categories.

Safety, Environment

57.3 Organising Committees shall ensure the safety of athletes and officials. Specific conditions, such as high altitude, changing weather conditions and available infrastructure should be respected. The event organiser is responsible for taking care for the environment when planning the course, during and after the competition.

Equipment

57.4 Mountain and Trail Races do not imply the use of a particular technique, alpine or other, or the use of specific equipment, such as mountaineering equipment. The use of hiking poles could be permitted at the discretion of the Race organisation. The Race Organiser may recommend or impose mandatory equipment due to the conditions expected to be encountered during the race, which will allow the athlete to avoid a situation of distress or, in the case of an accident, to give the alert and wait in safety for the arrival of help.

Race Organisation

57.5 The Organiser shall, prior to the race, publish specific regulations of the race including at minimum:

57.5.1 Details of the organiser responsible (name, contact details)

57.5.2 Programme of the event

57.5.3 Detailed information about the technical characteristics of the race: total distance, total ascent / descent, description of the main difficulties of the track

57.5.4 A detailed map of the course

57.5.5 A detailed profile of the course

57.5.6 Course marking criteria

57.5.7 Location of the control posts and medical/aid stations (if applicable)

57.5.8 Allowed, recommended or mandatory equipment (if applicable)

57.5.9 Safety rules to be followed

57.5.10 Penalties and disqualification rules

57.5.11 Time limit and cut-off barriers (if applicable)**Part Two: International Technical Rules****Scope of Application**

57.6 While strongly recommended for all international championships, the application of the following technical rules is mandatory only in World Championships. For all Mountain and Trail Running Events other than World Championships, the specific event rules and/or the national rules shall have precedence. If a Mountain and Trail Running competition is held under “International Technical Rules”, it must be specified in the event regulations. In all other cases, if a referee is appointed by a Member, an Area Association or the authority that oversees the competition, this person must ensure compliance with the general rules of Athletics but shall not enforce the following International Technical Rules.

Start

57.7 The commands for races longer than 400m shall be used (Rule 16.2.2 of the Technical Rules). 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. A 10s countdown to the start can also be given.

Race conduct

57.8 If the Referee is satisfied on the report of a judge, or Umpire, or otherwise, that an athlete:

57.8.1 has left the marked course thereby shortening the distance to be covered; or

57.8.2 receives any form of assistance such as pacing, or refreshments outside of the official aid stations; or

57.8.3 does not comply to any of the specific race regulations;

they shall be disqualified or get the penalty stated by the specific race regulations.

Specific Provisions for Trail Races

57.9 Specific provisions for Trail Races, as follows:

57.9.1 Sections of paved surfaces shall not exceed 25% of the total course.

57.9.2 Races are classified by “km-effort”; the km-effort measure is the sum of the distance expressed in kilometres and a hundredth of the vertical gain expressed in meters, rounded to the nearest whole number (for example, the km-effort of a race of 65km and 3500m ascent is: $65 + 3500/100 = 100$); accordingly races will be classified as follows:

Category	Km-effort
XXS	0 – 24
XS	25 – 44
S	45 – 74
M	75 – 114
L	115 – 154
XL	155 – 209
XXL	210 +

57.9.3 World Championships races shall be based on the Short (S) and the Long (L) categories:

- a. in the Short Race the distance must be between 35km and 45km and the minimum vertical gain 1500m or more;
- b. in the Long Race the distance must be between 75km and 85km.

57.9.4 Competitions shall be based on the concept of self-sufficiency, meaning that the athletes will have to be autonomous between aid stations in terms of gear, communications, food and drink.

57.9.5 A survival blanket (140cm × 200cm minimum size), a whistle and a mobile phone are the minimum items the athletes have to carry at all times. However, the LOC may impose additional mandatory items due to the conditions expected to be encountered during the race.

57.9.6 Aid stations at official competitions shall be sufficiently spaced out so as to respect the “principle of self-sufficiency”. The maximum total number of aid stations, excluding start and finish line, including water points, shall be no more than the km-effort points of the race divided by 15, rounded to the lower integer (example of a race with a km-effort of 58: $58/15=3.86$, which means no more than 3 aid stations, excluding start and finish, are allowed).

Note (i): In a maximum of half of the above aid stations, rounded to the lower integer, food, drinks and personal assistance may be given (e.g. maximum total number of aid stations 3, $3/2=1.5$, maximum number of aid stations where food and personal assistance may be given is 1); at the remaining aid stations only drinks, but no food nor personal assistance, may be given.

Note (ii): aid stations layout, where personal assistance is allowed, shall be organised in a way that allows each country to have an individual table or allocated space, identified with the flag of the Country (or Territory) and where their official staff will give assistance to the athletes. Tables shall be organised by alphabetical order, and each team is allowed to have a maximum of 2 officials per table.

Note (iii): Assistance to the athletes may only be given at complete (food and drinks) aid stations as defined above.

57.9.7 A finishing position resulting in a tie is permissible when clearly evident by the athletes' intention.

Specific provisions for Mountain Races

57.10 Mountain Races are classified as follows:

57.10.1 “Classic Uphill”

57.10.2 “Classic Up and Down”

57.10.3 “Vertical”

57.10.4 “Long Distance”

57.10.5 “Relays”

57.11 In all categories other than Vertical, the average incline should be between 5% (or 50m per km) and 25% (or 250m per km). The most preferable average incline is approximately 10%-15% provided that the course remains runnable. These limits do not apply to the Vertical category, where the incline shall be not less than 25%.

57.12 World Championships races shall be based on the following categories and distances:

57.12.1 “Classic Uphill”: 5km to 6km for U20 Men and U20 Women; 10km to 12km for Senior Men and Senior Women

57.12.2 “Classic Up and Down”: 5km to 6km for U20 Men and U20 Women; 10km to 12km for Senior Men and Senior Women

57.12.3 “Vertical”: it should have at least 1000m of positive vertical elevation and be measured in a certified manner to an accuracy of +/- 10m.

57.12.4 “Long Distance”: the race distance should not exceed 42.2km and the nature of the course maybe mainly uphill or up and down. The total amount of ascent in the race should exceed 2000m. The men’s winning time should be between two and four hours and less than 20% of the distance should be paved surfaces.

57.12.5 “Relays”: Any course or team combinations, included mixed gender / age group, are possible as long as they are defined and communicated in advance. Distance and elevation gain of each individual leg should respect the parameters of the “Classic” categories.

Note: “Classic Uphill” and “Classic Up and Down” events traditionally alternate at each edition of the World Athletics Championships.

57.13 Water and other suitable refreshments shall be available at the start and finish of all races. Additional drinking / sponging stations should be provided at suitable places along the course.