

PART VI - RACE WALKING EVENTS

54. Race Walking

Distances

- 54.1** The standard distances on a Short Track shall be: 3000m, 5000m; on a 400m Standard Oval Track: 5000m, 10,000m, 20,000m, 35,000m, 50,000m; and on road courses: 10km, 20km, 35km, 50km.

(In force from 1 January 2026: The standard distances on a Short Track shall be: 3000m, 5000m; on a 400m Standard Oval Track: 5000m, 10,000m, Half-Marathon, Marathon, 50,000m; and on road courses: 10km, Half-Marathon, Marathon, 50km.)

Definition of Race Walking

- 54.2** Race Walking is a progression of steps so taken that the walker makes contact with the ground, so that no visible (to the human eye) loss of contact occurs. The advancing leg must be straightened (i.e. not bent at the knee) from the moment of first contact with the ground until the vertical upright position.

Judging

- 54.3** Judging, as follows:

- 54.3.1** The appointed Judges of Race Walking shall elect a Chief Judge, if one has not been appointed previously.
- 54.3.2** All the Judges shall act in an individual capacity and their judgements shall be based on observations made by the human eye.
- 54.3.3** Where applicable, Judges shall be appointed in accordance with Rule 9 of the Competition Rules.
- 54.3.4** For Road Races, there should normally be a minimum of six to a maximum of nine Judges including the Chief Judge.
- 54.3.5** For Track Races, there should normally be six Judges including the Chief Judge.
- 54.3.6** In competitions held under paragraphs 1. (a) and (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition not more than one Judge (excluding the Chief Judge) affiliated with any one Member can officiate.

Note: The Member affiliation of each Judge is that properly stated on the current lists of World Athletics Gold, Silver or Bronze Level Race Walking Judges.

Chief Judge

- 54.4** Chief Judge, as follows:

- 54.4.1** In all World Rankings Competitions, the Chief Judge has the power to disqualify an athlete in the last 100m, when their mode of progression obviously fails to comply with Rule 54.2 of the Technical Rules regardless of the number of previous Red Cards the Chief Judge has received on that athlete. An athlete who is disqualified by the Chief Judge under these circumstances shall be allowed to finish the race. They shall be notified of this

disqualification by the Chief Judge or a Chief Judge's Assistant by showing the athlete a red paddle at the earliest opportunity after the athlete has finished the race.

54.4.2 The Chief Judge shall act as the supervising official for the competition, and act as a Judge only in the special situation noted in Rule 54.4.1. In competitions held under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, two or more Chief Judge's Assistants shall be appointed. The Chief Judge's Assistant(s) are to assist with the notification of disqualifications only and shall not act as Race Walking Judges.

54.4.3 For all competitions held under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition and where possible for other competitions, an official in charge of the Posting Board(s) and a Chief Judge's Recorder shall be appointed.

Yellow Paddle

54.5 When a Judge is not completely satisfied that an athlete is fully complying with Rule 54.2 of the Technical Rules, they should, where possible, show the athlete a yellow paddle with the symbol of the offence on each side.

An athlete cannot be shown a second yellow paddle by the same Judge for the same offence. Having shown a yellow paddle to an athlete, the Judge shall inform the Chief Judge of their action after the competition.

Red Cards

54.6 When a Judge observes an athlete failing to comply with Rule 54.2 of the Technical Rules by exhibiting visible loss of contact or a bent knee during any part of the competition, the Judge shall send a Red Card to the Chief Judge.

Disqualification

54.7 Disqualification, as follows:

54.7.1 Except as provided in Rule 54.7.3 of the Technical Rules, when three Red Cards from three different Judges have been sent to the Chief Judge on the same athlete, the athlete is disqualified and they shall be notified of this disqualification by the Chief Judge or a Chief Judge's Assistant by being shown a red paddle. The failure to give notification shall not result in the reinstatement of a disqualified athlete.

54.7.2 In competitions under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the World Rankings Competition definition, in no circumstances shall the Red Cards of two Judges affiliated with the same Member have the power to disqualify.

Note: The Member affiliation of each Judge is that properly stated on the current lists of World Athletics Gold, Silver or Bronze Level Race Walking Judges.

54.7.3 A Penalty Zone shall be used for any race where the applicable regulations for the competition so provide and may be used for other races as determined by the relevant governing body or Organisers. In such cases, an athlete will be required to enter the Penalty Zone and remain there for the applicable period once they have received three Red Cards and are so advised by the Chief Judge or someone delegated by them.

The applicable period in the Penalty Zone shall be as follows:

Races up to and including	Time
5000m/5km	0.5 min
10,000m/10km	1 min
20,000m/20km	2 min
30,000m/30km	3 min
35,000m/35km	3.5 min
40,000m/40km	4 min
50,000m/50km	5 min

(In force from 1 January 2026: The applicable period in the Penalty Zone shall be as follows:)

Races up to and including	Time
5000m/5km	0.5 min
10,000m/10km	1 min
Half Marathon	2 min
30,000m/30km	3 min
Marathon	4 min
50,000m/50km	5 min

An athlete who fails to enter the Penalty Zone when required to do so, or remain there for the applicable period, shall be disqualified by the Referee.

- 54.7.4** If, under Rule 54.7.3 of the Technical Rules, an athlete receives a third Red Card and it is no longer practicable to direct them to enter the Penalty Zone before the end of the race, the Referee shall add the time they would have been required to spend in the Penalty Zone to their finishing time and adjust the finishing order as may be necessary.
- 54.7.5** If, at any time when Rule 54.7.3 of the Technical Rules applies, an athlete receives an additional Red Card from a Judge other than one of the three who had previously sent a Red Card, they shall be disqualified. They shall be notified of this disqualification by the **Chief Judge or a Chief Judge's Assistant by being shown a red paddle. The failure to give notification shall not result in the reinstatement of a disqualified athlete.**
- 54.7.6** In Track Races, an athlete who is disqualified shall immediately leave the track and, in Road Races, shall, immediately after being disqualified, remove the distinguishing bibs and leave the course. Any disqualified athlete who fails to leave the course or track or comply with directions given under Rule 54.7.3 of the Technical Rules to enter and remain for the required period in the Penalty Zone may be liable to further disciplinary action in accordance with Rules 7.1 and 7.3 of the Technical Rules.
- 54.7.7** One or more Posting Boards shall be placed on the course and near the finish to keep athletes informed about the number of Red Cards that have been sent to the Chief Judge for each athlete. The symbol of each offence should also be indicated on the Posting Board.
- 54.7.8** For all competitions falling under paragraphs 1. (a) and (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, hand held computer devices with transmission capability must be used by the Judges to communicate all Red Cards to the Recorder and the Posting Board(s). In all other competitions, in which such a system is not used, the Chief Judge, immediately after the end of the event, shall report to the Referee the identification of all athletes disqualified under Rules 54.4.1, 54.7.1 or 54.7.5 of the Technical Rules by indicating the bib identification, the time of the notification and the offences; the same

shall be done for all the athletes who received Red Cards.

Start

- 54.8** 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 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 organisers. 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

- 54.9** The Organisers of Race Walking Events shall ensure the safety of athletes and officials. In competitions held under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, the Organisers shall ensure that the roads used for the competition are closed to motorised traffic in all directions.

Drinking / Sponging and Refreshment Stations in Road Race Walking Events

- 54.10** Drinking / Sponging and Refreshment Stations in Road Race Walking Events, as follows:

54.10.1 Water and other suitable refreshments shall be available at the start and finish of all races.

54.10.2 For all events of 5km or longer up to and including 10km, water only drinking / sponging stations shall be provided at suitable intervals if weather conditions warrant such provision.

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

54.10.3 For all events longer than 10km, refreshment stations shall be provided every lap. In addition, water only drinking / sponging stations shall be placed approximately midway between the refreshment stations or more frequently if weather conditions warrant such provision.

54.10.4 Refreshments, which may be provided by either the Organisers or the athlete, shall be placed at the stations so that they are easily accessible to, or may be put by authorised persons into the hands of, the athletes. Refreshments provided by the athletes shall be kept under the supervision of officials designated by the Organisers from the moment that the refreshments are delivered by the athletes or their representatives. Those officials shall ensure that the refreshments are not altered or tampered with in any way.

54.10.5 The Organisers shall delineate, by barriers, tables or markings on the ground, the area from which refreshments can be collected or received.

The authorised persons may hand the refreshment to the athlete either from behind, or from a position no more than one metre to the side, but not in front, of the table. They may not enter the course nor obstruct any athlete.

No official or authorised person shall, under any circumstances, move beside an athlete while they are taking refreshment or water.

- 54.10.6** In competitions held under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, a maximum of two officials per Member may be stationed at any one time behind the table.

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

- 54.10.7** An athlete 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.

- 54.10.8** An athlete who receives or collects refreshment or water from a place other than the official stations, except where provided for medical reasons from or under the direction of race officials, or takes the refreshment of another athlete, 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.

Note: An athlete may receive from or pass to another athlete 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 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.

Generally, where it is logical and in accordance with practice, there is uniformity of the provisions within Rules 54, 55 and 56 of the Technical Rules pertaining to outside events. It should be noted, however, that Rule 54.10.5 of the Technical Rules is intentionally different from Rule 55.8.5 of the Technical Rules in that in Race Walking Events, the team officials are not permitted in front of the tables.

Road Courses

- 54.11** Road courses, as follows:

- 54.11.1** The circuit shall be no shorter than 1km and no longer than 2km. For events that start and finish in the stadium, the circuit should be located as close as possible to the stadium.

- 54.11.2** Road courses shall be measured in accordance with Rule 55.3 of the Technical Rules.

Race Conduct

- 54.12** 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 shorten the distance to be covered.
- 54.13** 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.
- 54.14** In the case of Race Walking Events not covered by this Rule, the applicable regulations should specify any particular rules that should be applied and the method by which the event should be conducted.