

PART VII - ROAD RACES

55. Road Races

Distances

- 55.1** The standard distances shall be: Road Mile (1609.344m), 5km, 10km, 15km, 10 Miles, 20km, Half-Marathon, 25km, 30km, Marathon (42.195km), 50km, 100km and Road Relay.

Note: It is recommended that the Road Relay race be run over the Marathon distance, ideally over a 5km loop course, with stages of 5km, 10km, 5km, 10km, 5km, 7.195km. For a U20 Road Relay, the recommended distance is a Half-Marathon with stages of 5km, 5km, 5km, 6.098km.

Course

- 55.2** The races shall be run 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. For approval of Records, see Rule 31.21.2 of the Competition Rules.

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

- 55.3** 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 competitions under paragraphs 1. (a) and (b) and, where possible, 1. (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, 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 all World Rankings Competitions, the uncertainty in the measurement shall not exceed 0.1% (i.e., 42m for the Marathon) and the length of the course shall have been measured and certified in advance by an International Road 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%).

For approval of Records, see Rule 31.21.3 of the Competition Rules.

Note (v): A course measurement certificate is valid for 5 years, after which the course shall be re-measured even when there are no obvious changes to it.

- 55.4** The distance in kilometres on the route shall be displayed to all athletes.
- 55.5** For Road Relays, lines 50mm wide shall be drawn across the course to mark the start of each stage distance (scratch line). Similar lines shall be drawn 10m before and 10m after the scratch line to denote the takeover zone. For all takeovers, athletes are not permitted to begin running outside their takeover zones, 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.

Start

- 55.6** 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 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.

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.

Safety

- 55.7** Organisers of Road Races 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 Races

- 55.8** Drinking / Sponging and Refreshment Stations in Road Races, as follows:
- 55.8.1** Water and other suitable refreshments shall be available at the start and finish of all races.
- 55.8.2** 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.

- 55.8.3** Refreshments may include drinks, energy supplements, foodstuffs or any other item other than water. The Organisers will determine which refreshments it will provide based on prevailing conditions.
- 55.8.4** Refreshments will normally be provided by the Organisers but it may permit athletes to provide their own, in which case the athlete shall nominate at which stations they shall be made available to them. Refreshments provided by the athletes shall be kept under the supervision of officials designated by the Organisers 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.
- 55.8.5** The Organisers shall delineate, by barriers, tables or markings on the ground, the area from which refreshments can be collected or received. 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. Such persons shall remain inside the designated area and 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.
- 55.8.6** 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 inside the area designated for them.
- 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.*
- 55.8.7** 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.
- 55.8.8** 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.

Race Conduct

- 55.9** 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.
- 55.10** 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.

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

It is acknowledged that following the practice of first giving a warning when applying relevant aspects of Rule 55 of the Technical Rules and where applicable Rules 6.2 and 6.3 of the Technical Rules 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 6.2 of the Technical Rules 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 for Cross Country Races in the green text on Rule 56 of the Technical Rules be used.