

Walk Judges



What is race walking?

Race Walking involves a sequence of steps where the athlete maintains continuous contact with the ground, ensuring there is no visible loss of contact to the naked eye. The advancing leg must remain straight (without bending at the knee) from the point of initial ground contact until it reaches an upright, vertical position.

What are the race walking rules?

There are two fundamental rules in Race Walking:

- **Contact:** The athlete must always have at least one foot in contact with the ground.
- **Knees:** The advancing leg must remain straight (not bent at the knee) from the moment it first touches the ground until it reaches the vertical upright position.

Additional Guidelines:

- A **Yellow Paddle** is shown when an athlete is nearing a rule violation.
- A **Red Card** is issued when an athlete has definitively broken the rules.

How are yellow paddles or red cards given?

A Walk Judge may issue a Yellow Paddle (caution) to an athlete twice - once for Contact and once for Knees. However, a judge cannot issue two cautions for the same infraction (e.g., two for Knees or two for Contact).

Key Guidelines:

- Yellow Paddles (cautions) do not contribute to disqualification.
- Each Walk Judge can only issue one Red Card per athlete.

The method of communication:

- **Verbal Yellow Paddles (cautions):** Applicable to all age groups. The judge is to show the athlete a Yellow Paddle and verbally communicate the offence in a loud, clear voice (e.g., “Number 3: Caution for Contact”).
- **Verbal Red Cards (reports):** Up to and including U11 age group. The judge must communicate with the athlete (e.g., “Number 9: Report for Knees”), and document the Red Card.
- **Non-Verbal Red Cards (reports):** Applicable for U12 and older age groups.



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Where do I stand on the track?

Judges should distribute themselves evenly around the track to ensure full coverage of all athletes.

- Position yourself in lanes 5-7 for an optimal, unobstructed view of athletes within your zone. If this is not practical, ensure you are at least positioned on the inside of the track with no obstructions.
- For accurate assessment, it is recommended to observe athletes from a side-on view rather than from behind.

What does a good judge NOT do?

- Avoid believing that the mark of a good judge is solely based on the number of red cards issued. A skilled judge helps more competitors finish by using cautions wisely, preventing rule infringements.
- Do not pre-judge a competitor based on their performance in a previous event.
- Remain independent and avoid being influenced by outside opinions. You are responsible for your section of the track, so trust your own judgment.
- Refrain from engaging in conversations with other judges or spectators during the race.
- Stay neutral and do not take an interest in the positions or rankings of the competitors.
- Avoid judging from a lying or crouched position on the track.
- Do not conceal yourself from competitors in a race. It is unethical and distracting to surprise athletes by emerging from behind objects such as discus nets, shade tents, or spectators.



Who can disqualify?

The Chief Walk Judge is the only official authorised to inform an athlete of their disqualification. For a disqualification to occur, the athlete must receive three Red Cards.

What happens at the end of the race?

Each Walk Judge must submit their Judge's Record Sheet to the Chief Walk Judge immediately after the event concludes. If multiple races are taking place, a runner may assist with this task. Once the event has finished, athletes are held at the end of the track while the Chief Walk Judge reviews the results and informs any disqualified athletes. If athletes do not stay back to hear the results, that is fine; they can find out later on ResultsHQ. Due to the nature of the races, Records and Rankings Officer will recheck the sheets before loading them onto the results system. This process is again checked and confirmed with the Chief Walk Judge to ensure accuracy.

The Chief Judge is also responsible for notifying the athletes of any disqualifications. It is important to note that the decision of the Chief Judge is final, and no one has the authority to overrule it.

