



FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA
DI ATLETICA LEGGERA

Nordic Walking

NORDIC WALKING COMPETITION RULES

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FOREWORD

The competitions of Nordic Walking are among the disciplines that the Italian Athletics Federation (FIDAL) acknowledges. They can be speed, mass-start, time based for individuals and relay races, in circuits with homogeneous soils that can have slight altitude variations.

The competitions of Nordic Walking are governed by the following guidelines that regulate the equipment, competition techniques, circuits and operating methods of race, timing and classification.

SECTION 1 – TECHNICAL RULES

RULE 1 RACE TECHNIQUE

1. General principles

- a) During the walking, running and/or loosing contact between the two supports are forbidden: one foot must always be in contact with the ground.
- b) Foot contact with the ground must begin with the heel placement as to make a rolling movement involving the whole plantar area ending with the completion of the thrust in the forefoot.
- c) Only alternate step is allowed.
- d) It is not allowed to excessively bend the legs with consequent lowering of the centre of gravity.
- e) It is not allowed to excessively rotate the pelvis as in the racewalk technique.

2. Usage of poles

- a) The poles must always be planted in between the athletes' feet.
- b) There must be an evident, active and powerful push through the poles; during the leaning phase, the arm must extend and exert a gradual push that ends visibly over the hip.
- c) The hand holding the pole must exert the thrust during the whole pull phase. The push must also be kept over the hip's passing and during the relapsing phase, creating an empty space (light) between the hand and the pelvis.
- d) During the initial pole planting phase and at the end of the push, the athlete's legs and arms can be slightly bent (in a natural way), as provided by the Nordic Walking technique.
- e) During the competition, poles must have a fixed length.
- f) The pole planting on the ground must take place at the same time of the planting of the front foot heel on the ground.
- g) The usage of poles must not obstruct another athletes' walking.

RULE 2 EQUIPMENT - CLOTHING

In Nordic Walking competitions, it is mandatory to use the following equipment:

1. Poles

- a) Poles must be provided with a specific strap that, if worn correctly, allows to handle the pole so that it can be controlled during both the pull and relapsing phases.
- b) Neither curved poles, like trekking ones or artisanal ones, nor other non-specific Nordic Walking poles are allowed. The poles must be provided by Companies acknowledged in the sector, that can guarantee all the security and resistance features.
- c) The poles must have the same length. The pole, correctly handled and perpendicularly planted on the ground in front of the athlete, must allow the elbow to form an angle of 90 ° (ninety degrees), with tolerance in more or less than 5% (five percent) of the length of the pole.
- d) When using pads, the pole's length must be within the parameters stated in the point c).
- e) It is allowed to use telescopic poles as long, but before the start they have to be signed by judges with a visible mark so that the pole's measure can't be changed during the competition.
- f) Before the start, at judges' discretion, there might be a regularity control of the pole's heights. Always before the start, judges might impose to the athletes an adjustment of the pole's height when considered incorrect.

2. Footwear

- a) Sports shoes with structural features and sole's grip adequate to the competition's ground are allowed.
- b) It is forbidden to wear spiked shoes with or without spikes.

3. Bib number

All athletes must wear the bib number given by the organization in a visible position on the breast and back

4. Clothing

It is not allowed to wear clothing that do not consent to the Competition Judges to make an adequate evaluation of the competitor's technical and athletic moves.

SECTION 2 – RACE OFFICIALS

RULE 3 MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS

The Competition Director:

1. Is appointed by FIDAL Nordic Walking national responsible.
2. Is responsible for all the services regarding the competition.
3. Before the start, appoints the Chief Judge to organize as well as possible the position of the Competition Judges along the competition track.
4. In collaboration with the Technical Delegate must ensure that the competition track is adequate and properly marked, that the start, arrival and rest areas have been set up in accordance with these Technical Regulations and are properly marked.
5. Verifies with the award supervisors that is all set up for the award ceremony.

RULE 4 TECHNICAL DELEGATE

The Technical Delegate:

1. Is appointed by the FIDAL Judges' group.
2. Must ensure that the Competition Rules are respected by all athletes, technicians and coaches.
3. In collaboration with the Competition Director must ensure that the competition track is adequate and properly marked, that the start, arrival and rest areas have been set up in accordance with these Technical Regulations and are properly marked.

RULE 5 JURY OF APPEAL

The Jury of Appeal:

Deals with appeals made in the second instance (Rule 119- IAAF Competition Rules).

RULE 6 REFEREES

The competition Referee:

1. Verifies that the Timekeepers have drawn up the classification results.
2. Have authority to warn or exclude from competition as laid down in the IAAF Competition Rules.
3. At the end of the competition appoints the Chief Judge to draw up the Competition Documentation.

RULE 7
NORDIC WALKING JUDGES

Characteristics:

1. The Judges of Nordic Walking (NW) are Racewalk Judges, who have obtained the specific qualification thanks to a training course held by Nordic Walking Federal Technicians of the Italian School of Nordic Walking.
2. During the competition, they will have to check that all the competitors respect the Nordic walking technique and abide by the current rules.
3. In the competitions, the Judges of NW must be placed by the Chief Judge along the track with a minimum distance between them so that they can properly supervise the competitors along the path.
4. A Competition Judge, chosen by the Referee, must be placed next to the rest areas to check the > of all athletes who enter and go out.
5. The Chief Judge or an assistant of theirs, can go around the track, on foot or by a mean of transport.
6. The Competition Judges must attend the briefing before the competition and the technique demonstration given by the person chosen by the Organizing Committee.
7. If one of the Judges of NW detects an evident non-conformity in respect with the current Rule in the competition equipment, clothing and footwear, they can stop the athlete to check.
8. At the end of the competition, the Judges of NW will meet to draft up the Race Document where they will point out potential disqualifications and calls, highlighting the reasons.
9. The Judges of NW must maintain contact with the Chief Judge using an adequate tool provided by the Organization of the Competition.
10. The Competition Judges must be equipped with a table where they can record the penalties, calls, admonitions, disqualifications and any other note concerning the athlete's behaviour during the competition.
11. The Competition Judges must be equipped with the signaling disks for the infractions. The Chief Judge must be equipped with a signaling disk or a red card.

SECTION 3 – THE COMPETITION

RULE 8
RACE COURSES

1. General characteristics

- a) The competitions must be organized in ring circuits with homogeneous soils, which might have slight altimetric variations- not exceeding 6%. The courses must be wide enough to allow the competitors to pass each other.
- b) The ground of the courses can be in asphalt, tartan or other synthetic material, dirt road, grass or other natural surfaces as long as they are smooth and compact. Courses with mixed surfaces are allowed.
- c) The rings of the course must have a length between 1000 and 1200 meters.
- d) The FIDAL Nordic Walking national responsible will take care of the course's validation.

2. Courses' setting up

- a) The courses must be accurately signaled, in particular in the start and arrival areas, crossroads and other potential critical points, in order to avoid wrong routes by the athletes.
- b) The athletes' safety must be guaranteed, by making safe the course with regards to the public and the potential road traffic.
- c) The course must be provided with a food court for the supplies and a service area for technical assistance, both well-signalled

3. Courses' length

- a) Individual races:
 - i) 5.000 meters
 - ii) 10.000 meters
 - iii) Half marathon (21.097 meters)
 - iv) Marathon (42.195 meters)
- b) Relay
 - i) 4x 3000 meters
 - ii) 4x 5000 meters

RULE 9

CONDUCT OF THE COMPETITION

1. Pre-competition briefing

Before the competition's start, there will possibly be a briefing where the Competition Director and the Chief Judge of Nordic Walking will show the athletes and team delegates the competition's features (track, service and supply areas, infractions and sanctions, medical assistance and any other useful info).

- a) Athletes who does not participate in the pre-competition briefing, can still participate in the competition.

2. Start

- a) Athletes must be present at the start line-up at least ten minutes before the start.
- b) The start can be both mass-start and individual time-trial. It can be at the same time for men and women categories.
- c) An acoustic signal must indicate the competition's start.
- d) In the mass-starts, the nominated Judge must announce when 5 minutes are left for the start. In the individual time-trial, the Judge must beat the time left at 30 and 10 seconds to the start and with the count down during the last 5 seconds.
- e) Only in the mass-start, and at the discretion of the Technical Delegate and the Competition Director, athletes can proceed with the poles raised for a length of 100 meters (properly

indicated), to avoid accidents. It is forbidden to run or adopt a step different from the alternate one.

3. Timing – classifications – rules diffusion

- a) The competition timing must be entrusted to official timekeepers, acknowledge by FIDAL or FICr.
- b) It is desirable but at the discretion of the Organizing Society to decide if to use the classic timing or the transponder timing.
- c) The classifications must be drawn up at the end of the competition and exhibited in the arrival area.
- d) The current Regulation must be made available in the competition center or in the event's meeting area so that technicians and competitors can consult it.

4. Complaints

Any possible complaints must be made orally to the Referee within 30 minutes from the publication of the competition results. If it is rejected, competitors can make a written complaint in the second instance to the Appeal Jury paying a deposit of 50,00€ (€ 100,00 for national competitions) that will be returned only in case of acceptance of the same.

5. Competition Document

- a) At the end of the event, the Competition Director is responsible for drawing up the competition document in hard copy or in electronic form.
- b) The document must contain the date and place where the event took place, the type of the event, the tracks' characteristics (length and difference in height) and the name of the Competition Director.
- c) The Competition Document, written by the Technical Delegate, must contain a brief report of the event and the names of the Competition Judges.
- d) The Chief Judge of NW will deliver to the Referee the Regola9NW model document written with the NW Judges at the end of the competition.

RULE 10 BEHAVIUR DURING THE RACE

1. Each athlete must walk in a way that does not constitute an obstacle or danger for other athletes. The athlete who stands before has the right to choose the trajectory.
2. It is forbidden to walk too close to the competitor who stands before, except for the overtaking phase. The competitor who is being overtaken must make way for the faster one.
3. It is forbidden to have any mobile assistance and to be followed along the track by any accompanying person or public, both in-vehicle and on foot. The competition track is restricted to the competitors.

4. Athletes cannot leave the track or take any detours, otherwise they will be disqualified.
5. Competitors who damage or break one or both the poles during the competition must go on until the service technical area for the replacement, preserving the alternate step and the correct rolling.
6. When the broken poles are replaced, the new poles must have the same length of the previous ones, otherwise the competitor can be disqualified. The new sticks must be kept by the coach and made available to the Judges.
7. If a competitor accidentally loses the pads during the competition, he/she can stop to salvage them.
8. Any kind of supplying outside the authorized areas is forbidden.
9. Nobody can stay near or talk with a judge during the competition.

RULE 11 ATHLETES' RIGHTS AND DUTIES

1. Rights

- a) Athletes who pay the enrolment fee have the right to enjoy any service made available by the organization for the event and have guaranteed the assistance service in case of accidents.

2. Duties

- a) To participate to Nordic Walking competition, it is compulsory to have the membership card of the Italian Athletics Federation (FIDAL).
- b) All competitors must be in possession of a valid competitive medical certificate.
- c) With the enrolment to the competition, the athlete accepts the Federal Regulation and commits to respect it, competing with loyalty towards the Organization and other competitors.
- d) All competitors must have a respectful behaviour towards the Organization, Competition Judges, Timekeepers and Competition Supervisor.
- e) Athletes commit to relieve the organization of the responsibility for things that happen before, during and after the competition, unless they are caused by the same event's organization.
- f) Renounces to the right of redress towards the organization for things that happened during the event.

RULE 12 REST AREAS

1. Rest areas are places along the track (possibly near to the start and finish area) where competitors can get technical assistance and stop to rest and eat.

2. In the rest areas competitors can lift up or pull out one stick or both, without prejudice to the prohibition of running.
3. Two different types of rest areas are foreseen:
 - a) Service technical area
In the service technical area, the assistance officers, accredited by the Organization, can give tactical and chronometrical instructions and provide the athletes with technical assistance (ex. Broken sticks replacement).
In service technical areas the competitors can apply or remove the pads.
 - b) Supply area
The athletes can get provisions (drinks and food) only in the supply areas.

SECTION 4 – PENALTIES

The non-compliance with the current Regulation foresees the following sanctions:

1. Verbal warning with yellow signaling disk
2. Admonition written on the table
3. Disqualification

RULE 13 VERBAL WARNINGS

The Verbal warning with yellow signaling disk will be used by any Judge of NW as a first warning and does not imply any penalty.

RULE 14 ADMONTIONS

The admonition will be used in case of non-compliance with the walking technique and/or misconducts indicated in the current guidelines.

An athlete cannot get more than one admonition by the same Judge.

The admonitions will be promptly communicated to the Chief Judge and written in the table.

With the admonition, the following penalties will be applied:

- a) First and second admonition: no penalty.
- b) Third admonition: the competitor will be stopped by one Competition Judge in a dedicated prearranged area (pit line) before the arrival area and will have to stop 30 seconds (5000 meters), 60 seconds (10000 meters) or 120 seconds (21km and 42km) at the end of which can reenter in the circuit and continue the competition.
- c) If the third admonition card is not given by the track's assistants to the judges before the end of the competition, the seconds of penalty foreseen for the stop in the pit line will be added at the final time depending on the distance of the competition done.

RULE 15 DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. Technical disqualifications

The technical disqualification will be imposed by the Chief Judge of Nordic Walking by exhibiting to the athlete a red disk and will be applied in the following cases:

- a) When receiving the fourth admonition, visible on the table, by four different Judges.
- b) In case of evident non-compliance with the rules in the arrival straight road, even if the competitor has not got any previous admonitions.
- c) Variation of the length of the poles, in case of telescopic poles.
- d) Replacement of the poles with ones of a different length.
- e) If the fourth admonition is not given by the track's assistants to the judges before the end of the competition, the disqualification will be given after the arrival.

2. Other admonitions and disqualifications

The following admonitions or disqualifications will be applied by the Referee to the races by following what the IAAF Competition Rules foresees.

- a) Serious foul plays towards the competitors or judges.
- b) Deviations from the track.
- c) Supplies in non-authorized areas.
- d) Any other sort of assistance received out of the rest areas.

The disqualified competitor must immediately leave the track and remove the racing bib number.

3. Any other

- a) The Judges of NW, along the track, must immediately communicate to the Chief Judge the racing bib's number of the sanctioned athlete.
- b) The Referee, when ordered by the Organization's Doctor, must exclude from the competition any competitor with a vulnerable physical condition. This decision is unappealable.

4. Complaints

Any possible complaints must be made orally to the Referee within 30 minutes from the publication of the competition's results. If the complaint is rejected, competitors can make a written complaint in the second instance to the Appeal Court paying a deposit of 50,00€ (€ 100,00 for national competitions) that will be returned only in case of acceptance of the same.

The rules established by FIDAL will be applied for all that is not mentioned in the following regulation.

SECTION 5 – ITALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE ASSIGNMENT

RULE 15
- OMISSIS -

RULE 16
- OMISSIS -