

NORDIC WALKING COMPETITION RULES 2013

1. Introduction

Nordic Walking is an activity that can be used for fitness development, relaxation, exploration, social activities, rehabilitation, weight loss, general enjoyment and in competitive sport.

In order to provide a consistent structure and foundation for competitive sport, INWA provides the following rules for the use of race organisers, judges and competitors. These rules are based on the rules developed and used by the Polish Federation of Nordic Walking.

2. Definition of Nordic Walking

“Nordic Walking is a form of physical activity, where the active use of a pair of specially-designed Nordic Walking poles are added to regular natural walking. However, the characteristics of natural, biomechanically correct walking and appropriate posture are maintained in all aspects. It also means that the arm movements of the correct NW technique respect the range of movement of natural walking.

Natural Walking Definition - The gait of a human in which the feet are lifted alternately with one part of a foot always on the ground. (Concise Oxford Dictionary.)

3. Nordic Walking Technique

To comply with INWA Race Nordic Walking rules, every competitor must:

- 3.1 Move by taking alternative steps
- 3.2 Ensure that the leading foot is on contact with the ground before the following foot is lifted from the ground.
- 3.3 Ensure that at no point are both feet be off the ground simultaneously
- 3.4 Ensure that the arms and legs move alternatively.
- 3.5 Use the poles such that the feet of the poles are not planted in front of the alternate foot at any stage of the action except when ascending or descending steep rises or steps
- 3.6 Use the poles so that they pass through all stages of the Nordic Walking technique from the plant through to the push behind the hips and torso.
- 3.7 Ensure that the grip on the pole is partially released from the hand only at the end of the swing.
- 3.8 “Nordic Bounding,” “Nordic Running” and “Nordic Blading” are not permitted in a Nordic Walking race.

4. Race Entry

Entry is open to all Nordic Walkers who, by completing the required entry form, assure the organisers that they are capable of completing the distance of the race in a reasonable time and that they accept all liability for any injury, illness, loss or damage that they may suffer or incur as a result of entering the race.

5. Race Categories

The following age categories shall apply:

Youth: under 16

Junior: 18 – 20

Open: 20 – 35

Senior: 35 – 45

Masters: 45 – 55

Age: 55 – 65

65 – 75

75 – 85

85+

6. Nordic Walking Poles

Only specific Nordic Walking poles may be used in a competitive event.

6.1 The poles may be fixed length or telescopic.

6.2 They must have a fixed hand strap.

7. Other Equipment

Participants may also carry or use:

7.1 Gloves

7.2 Suitable clothing for the event, including wet or cold weather clothing

7.3 A timing device, compass or other electronic equipment including GPS, heart rate monitor or exercise monitoring

7.4 Hydration bottles or bladders

Please Note: The use of earphones reduces the ability to hear directions from officials and other competitors so in a competitive event they are prohibited.

8. Entry to an Event

Before entering an event held under INWA Rules, a participant must complete a form, either on paper or electronically that includes:

8.1 Name and address

8.2 Age

- 8.3 Acceptance of any terms and conditions including an acceptance that they take part in the event at their own risk.
- 8.4 Any other information required for the conduct of the event, data management, communication or marketing.

9. Requirements of Race Organisers

In order to qualify to be an INWA-sanctioned event, the Race organisers must provide the following:

- 9.1 A safe course for all participants and officials that is over a certified distance. The accurate distance for the course shall be determined by:
 - 9.1.1 A manual measurement and/or
 - 9.1.2 A mechanical measurement and/or
 - 9.1.3 A measurement using a transponder system.
 - 9.1.4 The distance measured shall be the shortest route that a participant could follow along the course.
 - 9.1.5 The Chief Judge shall certify that the distance is correct and that the course is safe.
 - 9.1.6 The times for completing a course that is shorter than the advertised or stated distance will not be recognised.
- 9.2 Medical assistance from suitably qualified medical staff at the start, finish and on the course.
- 9.3 Refreshment stations on the course, including at the start and finish.
 - 9.3.1 Refreshments shall include water and other forms of hydration or nutrition.
 - 9.3.2 The stations shall be placed at least at every 3 kilometres in an event up to 15 kilometres or at least at every 5 kilometres in an event of more than 15 kilometres.
 - 9.3.3 More stations should be added if weather conditions dictate.
 - 9.3.4 Refreshment stations should be sign posted at least 500 metres before the lead into the station.
 - 9.3.5 The lead into the refreshment station shall be at least 50 metres in length.

- 9.3.6 The exit from the refreshment station shall be at least 50 metres in length.
- 9.3.7 The area around the refreshment station and the exit shall be regularly cleared of bottles, cups or other drinking utensils which may pose a danger to participants.
- 9.3.8 Judging of participants shall not occur in the lead into and exit from the refreshment station.
- 9.4 A clearly marked start line that provides sufficient space for all participants to safely use their poles.
- 9.5 A clearly marked finish line that provides sufficient space for all participants to finish safely.
- 9.6 Sufficient space on the course to enable participants to pass each other safely.
- 9.7 Where there is a change of surface which requires the addition or removal of asphalt paws, a 50 metre lead in with appropriate signage must be provided. Judging of participants shall not occur in this lead in zone.
- 9.8 Two race numbers for every participant. The numbers must be affixed in clear sight, on the participant's front and back.
- 9.9 A means of accurately timing each individual participant.
- 9.10 Distance markers showing each kilometre.
- 9.11 Accredited INWA referees including a chief referee and a means of transporting them around the course.

10. Starting and Finishing the Race

- 10.1 The race shall start from a standing start.
- 10.2 Participants are given a 5 minute and 1 minute warning of the start of the race.
- 10.3 The race may be started by the sounding of a horn or a gun or the command – “Get set.....Go.”
- 10.4 The timing of a participant will commence from the time that they step over the start line.
- 10.5 A participant is deemed to have finished when their torso is completely

across the finish line.

11. Race Results

The race results shall be posted in two stages – Preliminary and Official

11.1 Preliminary Results showing placings and timings of participants shall be posted in a place that is viewable by all participants as soon as possible. In any case, preliminary results should be available no more than 30 minutes after the final participant has crossed the line.

11.1.1 Appeals against any disqualification, placing or timing shall be heard and determined by the Results Committee which shall consist of, at least, the Race Organiser and the Chief Judge before the Official Results are released.

11.1.2 The decisions of the Results Committee are final and the Preliminary Results are signed off by the Chief Judge.

11.2 Official Results showing final placings and timings shall be posted in a place that is viewable by all participants. A copy of the official results is to be forwarded as soon as possible to the INWA Office.

11.3 Where possible, the Official Results shall be published on the INWA website

12. Withdrawal from an Event

12.1 It is expected that all participants enter an event having adequately prepared to successfully complete the event. However a participant may withdraw from an event if:

12.1.1 They suffer any medical complication or

12.1.2 They suffer any injury

12.1.3 They believe that they cannot complete the event.

12.2 All participants who withdraw shall advise, or arrange to have advised, a race official that they are withdrawing.

12.3 Participants who withdraw shall be recorded in the Official Results as “DNF” (Did Not Finish.)

13. Disqualification

13.1 Any participant who is disqualified by an event referee must immediately withdraw from the event. A participant shall also be disqualified who:

- 13.1.1 Fails to keep to the course
- 13.1.2 Fails to follow the specific directions of a race official
- 13.1.3 Verbally or physically abuses any official or other participant
- 13.1.4 Behaves in a disorderly or inappropriate manner

13.2 Disqualification under clause 11.1 shall be made by the Chief Judge after a report is made to him/her.

13.3 A participant is disqualified who fails to comply with the Nordic Walking Technique outlined in Clause 3 of these Rules as assessed by an official race referee. Nordic Walking is a “technical sport” and in order to assess compliance with the Rules, judges are placed around the course. A judgement that a participant is not following the correct technique is made by viewing with the naked eye. The process for disqualification is as follows:

- 13.3.1 On the first observation that an incorrect technique is being used, the judge shall warn the participant and show him/her a yellow card or baton.
- 13.3.2 The participant’s number is recorded on a card and other judges are advised.
- 13.3.3 Where the course permits, the number of the participant and the first warning shall be posted on a board that can be seen by the participants.
- 13.3.4 When any judge observes the participant again using an incorrect technique, the judge shall give the participant a final warning and show him/her a yellow card or baton.
- 13.3.5 The participant’s number is again recorded on a card and other judges are advised.
- 13.3.6 The number of the participant and the second warning

shall be posted on a board that can be seen by the participants.

- 13.3.7 When any judge observes the participant again using an incorrect technique, the judge shall advise the participant that they are disqualified and show him/her a red card or baton.
- 13.3.8 The participant's number is removed and they shall immediately withdraw from the event.
- 13.3.9 A disqualified participant may appeal to the Chief Judge at the event within 1 hour of being disqualified. The decision of the Chief Judge to uphold or dismiss the appeal is final.