

Correct INWA Nordic Walking technique sits at the heart of our sport. As racing develops, we want to help every competitor understand what good competition technique looks like, and feel supported in using it with confidence.

We see a wide variety of techniques during championships. This shows us there is a need for clearer guidance, more consistent teaching and a shared understanding of the technique expected in competition.

This is not about suggesting competitors are deliberately competing unfairly. Our focus is education, support and consistency. We want Nordic walkers worldwide, regardless of country, region, age, gender or organisational affiliation, to have access to the same guidance and the same opportunity to develop their technique.

By teaching and reinforcing correct INWA Nordic Walking technique, we can create fairer races, support athletes, and strengthen the future of Nordic Walking competition.

The INWA Competition Rules 2026 include the following Competition Values. More detailed Fair Play Rules are included in the appendix.

OUR FAIR PLAY VALUES

At INWA competitions, how you compete matters as much as where you finish.

We believe in fair play, respect, and personal integrity — following the rules even when no one is watching, and treating fellow athletes, officials and volunteers with respect.

Every competitor should be able to stand on the podium — or walk away from the course — knowing they earned their result honestly, through skill, effort and sportsmanship.

These values protect not only the fairness of each race, but the reputation and future of Nordic Walking as a sport we can all be proud of.

Compete fairly. Respect others. Earn your result.

The INWA Competition Committee encourages stronger and more consistent use of both Nordic Walking poles during competitions, in line with the INWA definition of Nordic Walking.

From 2026, rules will be clearer and focus on technique. This change is not intended to issue more Yellow or Red Cards. Our priority is to teach, guide and support competitors so they can race with a strong, consistent Nordic Walking technique.

Officials work to help athletes understand the standard and improve their technique. Warnings and cards remain part of the competition rules, but education and support come first.

Correct technique is central to INWA. It reflects Nordic Walking skill, supports fair competition, and helps every athlete race with confidence. **Together, we can build a competition environment that is positive, supportive, consistent and fair for everyone.**

Here are some common examples of insufficient Non-Active Push.

Case 1: The hand does not finish behind the hip.

Competition Rule 3.9 states:

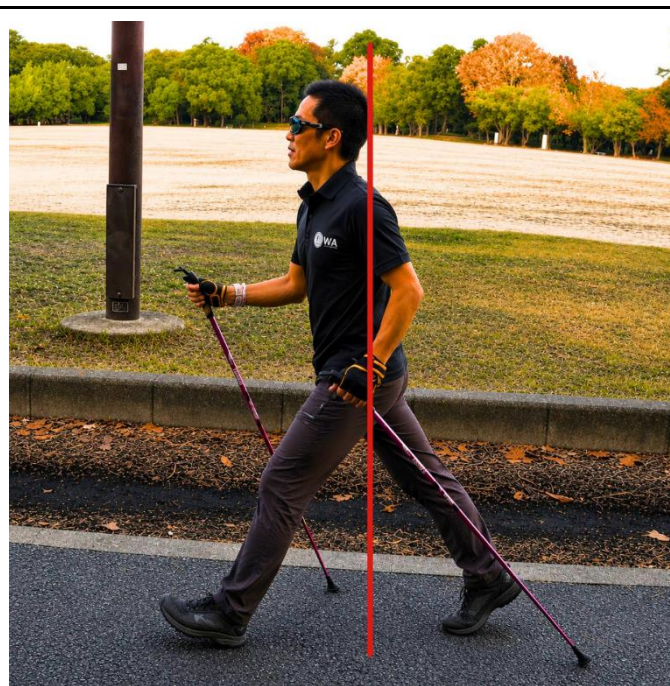
“When pushing through the pole, the hand ends the push behind the hip.”

To meet this requirement, the pushing hand should continue past the body line and finish clearly behind the hip. If the hand stops alongside the body or in front of the hip, the push phase is incomplete and does not meet the required Nordic Walking technique.

Please review INWA NW Competition Rule 3.9.



Correct



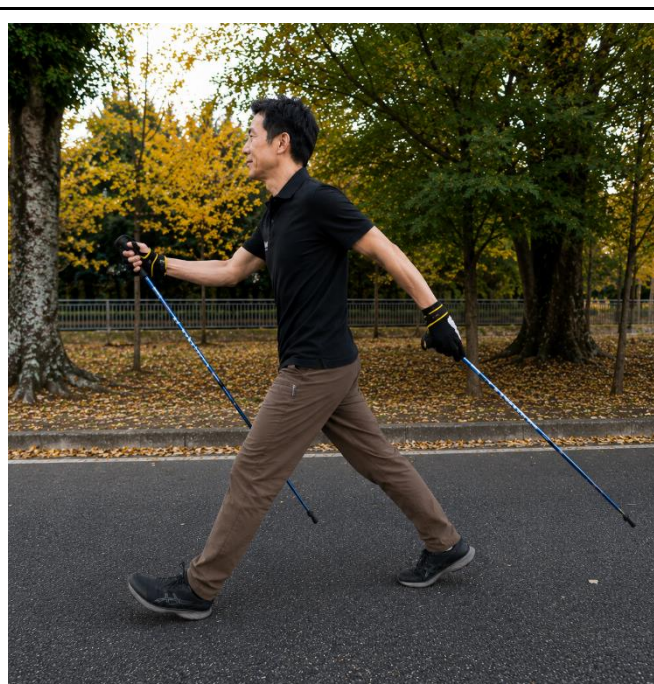
Incorrect: Not enough push back

Case 2: Some participants may experience moments during Nordic walking when both poles are airborne, or when the poles remain in contact with the ground for only a very brief period. This creates intervals during which neither pole is effectively engaged. Consequently, this movement pattern cannot be classified as Nordic walking.

Please review INWA NW Competition Rules 3.4.



Correct



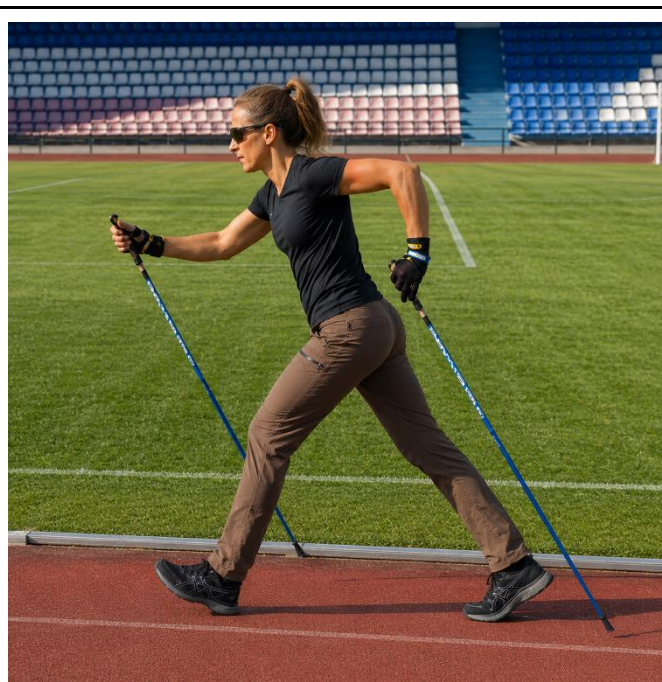
Incorrect: Both poles are airborne

Case 3: When swinging the arms backwards, there must be extension at the elbow joint without elevation of the shoulder girdle. The triceps then receive the resistance and transform the power toward the pole. If the shoulder girdle elevates while the elbow bends, the force vector does not point toward the poles; instead, it is oriented vertically. The poles are not used. In other words, some athletes intentionally deflect the poles' resistance and focus solely on walking, sometimes using the poles improperly.

Please review INWA NW Competition Rules 3.9.



Correct: Elbow extension without elevation of the shoulder girdle.



Incorrect: Without elbow extension and elevation of the shoulder girdle.

Appendix 1. Fair Play Rules

Fair play is a fundamental principle of this competition and applies to all athletes, coaches, team staff, officials, and supporters. All participants are expected to uphold the values of honesty, respect, and integrity throughout the event.

Respect for the Rules

All athletes must fully comply with the competition rules and the technical requirements of Nordic walking. Participants may not seek advantage through prohibited, dishonest, or unethical means. Attempting to exploit loopholes or intentionally bending the rules is considered a breach of fair play.

Respect for Others

Competitors must show courtesy and respect towards fellow athletes, officials, volunteers, and spectators. Unsporting behaviour—such as intimidation, verbal abuse, inappropriate gestures, or intentional obstruction—is strictly prohibited.

Respect for Officials' Decisions

Athletes must accept judges' and officials' decisions without dispute. Raise concerns only through the designated protest and appeals procedures. Athletes may not attempt to influence judges or undermine their authority.

Integrity and Honesty

Athletes must compete with dignity and conduct themselves truthfully at all times. Deliberate deception, including falsifying information, misrepresenting performance, or encouraging others to violate the rules, is forbidden.

Responsible Conduct

All participants must act as positive role models. Fair play applies during competition, in training, and in all interactions associated with the event.

Violation of fair play principles may result in warnings, penalties or disqualification. Upholding fair play ensures a safe, respectful, and honourable sporting environment for everyone involved.