



Nordic Walking Race

International regulation

**Based on international regulations
used at:**

World Championship

2008-2009-2010-2011-2013-2014-2018-2022-2024

European Championship

2015 – 2016 – 2017 – 2018 – 2019 - 2023

Europa Cup

2015 – 2016 – 2017 – 2018 - 2019

Version 2.4

This document amends and fully replaces all previous versions

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A. INTRODUCTION

I. Declaratory and peculiarities

1. Nordic Walking is a walking discipline, belonging to march sector, in which the athlete's first and most evident tool of advancement is represented by the pole which, by giving adequate thrust to the ground, makes walking fast, characterized by long steps and respectful of human biomechanics.
2. Nordic Walking basics are:
 - a. The use during the march of two appropriate poles, held one in each hand, as more fully described at point C of this regulation;
 - b. The evident and active use of poles during the phases of thrust and advancement, as more fully described at point D of this regulation;
 - c. The continuous athlete ground contact, as more fully described at point D of this regulation;
 - d. The continuous check of marching technique by a specially trained jury.
3. Nordic Walking races are speed based, either with mass or individual start, on flat and homogeneous terrain, or including light slopes.
4. Agonistic Nordic Walking does not include style or regularity competitions, or other events with rankings not drawn on chronometric basis.
5. Agonistic Nordic Walking does not include events with rankings not drawn following the progressive arrival time, even if related to a chronometric basis. (I.e. "average" finish time.)
6. Agonistic Nordic Walking does not include races with evidence of heavy rising or descending slopes or rough terrain.
7. Agonistic Nordic Walking does not include „no jury“ events, or events in which Judges do not meet all requirements more fully described at point F. (I.e. events judged by Nordic Walking instructor or other sports judges).

II *Basic marching rules*

1. The correct marching technique to be used during Nordic Walking races is fully described at point D of this regulation and recalls itself to human biomechanics principles of walking, as well as to the physiologic limits between walking and running.
2. Agonistic Nordic Walking explicitly excludes any marching technique not complying with natural and physiologic human walking, even when performed at high speed and with heavy physical effort.
3. Therefore, agonistic Nordic Walking proposes itself as an effective way of technique evolution, as well as a matter of promotion and cultural diffusion of Nordic Walking, even when performed with ludic or healthy purposes.

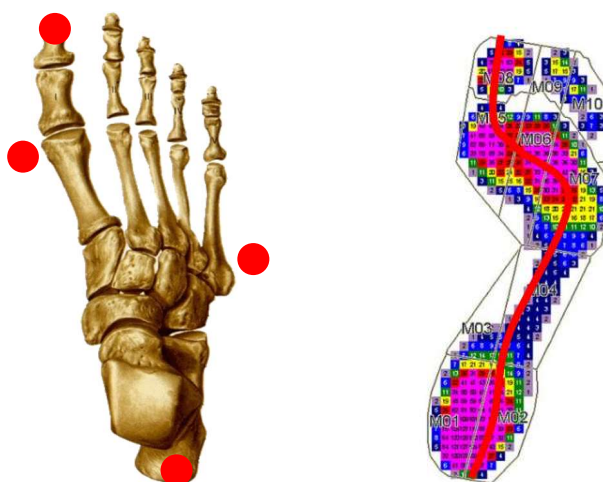
III *Rules communication*

1. Copy of this regulation, in the official language of the event, must be available at the race bureau, in order to allow a full consultation to competitors.
2. It is excluded any right of copy and diffusion of this regulation by competitors.
3. Organizers are allowed to diffuse the regulation in several ways, (l.e. on the web), at the condition that all rules will be reported in a fully integral way and remaining steadfast their responsibility in case fraudulent use.
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B. RACE TRACK

I Overall characteristics

1. Tracks must be suitable for a marching discipline and must warrant an adequate width and floor, in order to allow speed and overtaking.
2. Following floors are suitable: concrete floor (cement, asphalt), tartan or other synthetic materials, smooth and compact dirty floor, sand, grass, or other natural floor no more than 3 cm. high.
3. Concrete floors must warrant a sufficient graininess, in order to allow an adequate asphalt pads grip.
4. Concrete floors must be clean, without any kind of dirtiness who would affect the correct asphalt pads grip. (I.e. sand, leaves and so on).
5. Natural floors must be properly compact, in order that no excessive subsidence should be possible when the heel hits the ground. Subsidence has not to be greater than 5mm, based on a 75 kg. man, wearing proper shoes and marching at a speed of 8 min/km, or faster.
6. Footprint must be sharp and evident on dirt or sand floors, except as specified above at point 5 of this section; floor typology has not to invalidate a right marching technique. No yielding along the longitudinal foot axis must occur, in particular under the points of foot spin, as described by human biomechanics: start of the step from the heel and progressive contact of fifth metatarsal bone, followed by first metatarsal bone and, finally, by big toe.



7. Concrete floors are not suitable if they do not allow a correct asphalt pads grip, during standard and dry weather conditions.
8. Following floors are not suitable: rough terrains, cobbled paths, forest and meadow paths and any other kind of floor not reported at point 2 of this section.
9. It is allowed to prepare a track with several floor typologies, as reported at point 2 of this section.

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10. Only flat or slightly waving tracks are suitable; (lower than 4-6% steepness, considering lowest limit to the natural tracks and upper limit to concrete or synthetic tracks).
11. No slopes steeper than 4-6% are suitable, as well as rough terrains, mountain paths, water puddles or fords, cobbled floors and/or any other rough terrains.

II Track preparation

1. Track length must be verified by:
 - a. Manual measurement and/or
 - b. Mechanics measurement and/or
 - c. Transponder.
2. Track slope must be measured by digital inclinometer.
3. Measured distance must be the shorter to walk by the athlete.
4. Track slope must be measured at maximum inclination point.
5. Race director must certify that correct measurement, correct steepness and adequate track safety are warranted.
6. Qualified medical assistance at start, finish and any other point of the track must be granted.
7. Track must be marked in every critical point like start, finish, junctions, in order to avoid any of mistake.
8. Kilometric signals must be placed in order to allow any athlete to be sure about his position.
9. Athletes' safety with adequate separation by external persons and road traffic must be granted.
10. A correct asphalt pads grip on concrete tracks, as fully described at point B of this regulation, must be assessed in normal weather and environmental conditions; (dry and clean floor, without moisture, frost or ice).
11. A correct compactness and regularity of natural floors, as described at point B of this regulation, must be assessed in normal weather and environmental conditions; (dry and cleaned floor, without moisture, frost or ice).
12. Sudden variations of floor characteristics, due to change of weather condition or environmental matters, does not invalidate track regularity, provided that safety should be granted and regular march should be possible, following standard human biomechanics rules.
13. Race Director can cancel the race or modify the track when safety is not granted, or if marching following standard human biomechanics rules is not possible.
14. Race Director will indicate, during pre-start briefing, any track section where, due to changed weather and/or environmental condition, any exception to this regulation should be allowed, in order to let the event start.
15. It is advisable to place a safety zone, to avoid accidents during race start, marked with a coloured line on the ground and with a 30 mts length from start line.
16. In case of merit group start, as fully described at point E of this regulation, all groups dedicated areas will be divided by a horizontal tape or other protection, avoiding competitor to mix up.
17. Track must be equipped by service areas, called "coaching areas" "changing areas" and "supplying area"; use of them is fully specified at point E of this regulation.
18. Supplying area must be placed at least every 3 kms for race length up to 10,000 mts and every 5 kms for longer races.
19. Distance between supplying areas can be reduced in case of particular weather condition. (I.e. high temperature).
20. Coaching areas must be placed at least every 3 kms.
21. Changing areas must be placed at every variation of floor typology. (I.e. from asphalt to dirty road or vice-versa).
22. Changing areas must cover a length of 25 mts before and after floor typology change.

23. Any typology of service area, with a minimum length of 50 mts, must be clearly marked by coloured lines on the floor and vertical signals with the notice “start” and “end”.

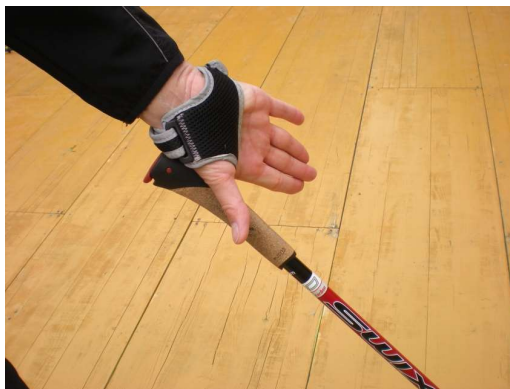
III Track typologies

1. Track length must comply with official measuring of athletics and marching specialities:
 - a. Speed
 - 1,000 mts - road or track (male – female)
 - 4x1,000 mts relay - road or track (male – female - mixed)
 - b. Middle distance
 - 5,000 mts - road or track (male – female)
 - 10,000 mts - road or track (male – female)
 - Quarter marathon (10,548 mts) - road (male – female)
 - c. Long distance
 - 20,000 mts – road (male – female – relay)
 - Half marathon (21,097 mts) - road (male – female - relay)
 - Marathon (42,195 mts) on the road (male – female - relay)
 - 50 km – road - (male – female - relay)
2. Different lengths can be applied during “classic” events, if they comply with point B of this regulation.
3. Relay races may be performed on distances as quoted on point 1. All team members must walk the same distance.

C. EQUIPMENT

I. Poles

1. Poles must be equipped with a special Nordic Walking strap, able to maintain full pole control even during the eventual opening of the hand, as well as a handle, which, in conjunction with the strap, allows complete control and suspension of the pole, when the athlete extends his arm, posteriorly and completely with open hand and in a prone-supinated position.



2. Neither trekking nor any other kind of poles, not specifically designed for Nordic Walking, are allowed.
3. Handmade poles are not suitable; just poles from recognized factories are admitted and they must grant resistance and safety.
4. Poles created by the athlete himself by assembling different part from recognized factories, (I.e. handle from factory X, shaft from factory Y, tips from factory W, asphalt pads from factory Z), are also suitable; Race Director has the right to test the poles to verify regularity and safety.
5. Both poles must have the same length.
6. In case of curved poles, the shape of both poles must be the same.
7. Length of poles must create an angle of 95° at elbow, with tolerance of +/- 5°.
8. Pole length must be verified with the pole correctly handled, the athlete properly standing and the pole posted perpendicularly; during the length check, the athlete must wear the same shoes that he will use during the race.
9. If an athlete is utilizing asphalt pads, the pole length must be checked with and without pads, to verify the compliance with paragraph 7.
10. An athlete cannot use asphalt pads, neither on concrete floor, if he submitted his poles to size controls without pads.
11. Asphalt pads use is not mandatory and organizers cannot impose it. Any athlete has the right to decide when to use pads at the only condition that he passed the measurement as per paragraph 9 and he showed to have poles of proper length with or without pads.
12. If a wrong poles length is established, the athlete has right to change his poles and, just once, to repeat the measurement.

13. Race organizer must supply poles to an athlete owning not suitable equipment, as per typology, length or any other reason, in order to allow him to participate to the race, if he has no spare poles. In this case, organizer would supply either single piece or telescopic poles.
14. If an athlete owning not suitable poles as per typology, length or any other reason, rejects to use spare poles supplied by the organizer, he cannot participate to the race and no refund will be recognized.
15. It is forbidden to modify the poles length during the race, even in case of poles replacement or by adjustment of telescopic poles.
16. In the case of use of telescopic poles, the judge must mark clearly and in an inerasable way the original length.
17. Poles in all-composite construction (fiberglass, Kevlar or carbon fibre) are preferred, as well as single-piece poles (not telescopic poles).
18. Metal poles (ex. aluminium) may suffer of folding during the race; if the folding modifies the pole length in an evident way, the athlete must comply the "broken pole" procedure, as described at the section E.

II. Shoes and footwear

1. Only sports shoes are suitable; they must have a flexible sole and warrant an adequate grip on race floor. Trekking shoes or mountain shoes are not suitable as well as any shoe with rigid sole.
2. Cleats shoes are not permitted.
3. Any kind of heavy duty shoe or sole is not permitted.

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III. Other

1. All competitors must wear bib number on the chest; it is not allowed to hang bib number beside shorts or on the back, in order to allow an easy identification of the athlete by Race Judges.
2. All competitors must wear clothes fitted for running or agonistic march; they must not be too wide or shaped in a way that would not allow an easy examination of the correct technique by Race Judges.
3. Wearing of mountain suits or trekking clothes, is forbidden.

4. Competitors may wear or use the following additional devices:
 - a. Gloves;
 - b. Hats or peaks;
 - c. Sun or vision glasses;
 - d. Leggings;
 - e. Sweatbands, (to be used only into the service areas);
 - f. Orthopaedic devices, if that they do not give to the athlete any advantage;
 - g. Clothes fitting temperature and weather conditions, but complying with point 2 of this section;
 - h. Heart rate monitors (to be used only into the service areas);
 - i. Chronometer and/or position detector like GPS (to be used only into the service areas);
 - j. Pouches or other equipment where to put asphalt pads or spare pads.
5. It is not allowed to use earphones to receive radio messages, listening music or similar; hearing aids, accompanied by medical certification, are allowed.
6. Not suitable devices and other non-compliances to the above listed equipment will result in a disqualification.

D. RACE TECHNIQUE

I. General principles

1. Marching technique during the race directly comes from correct human biomechanics principles noted at section A of this regulation.
2. The concept of natural gesture is the basis of the correctness of any athlete single action.
3. No posture or action affecting a natural gesture, even when performed under high speed and with heavy physical effort. In particular, this regards hip, upper and lower limbs extension, posture of the torso.

There are no regulation limits describing the difference between natural and forced gesture, even when performed under high speed, (I.e. block of the hip, of the knee, of the horizontal or vertical shoulder swing).

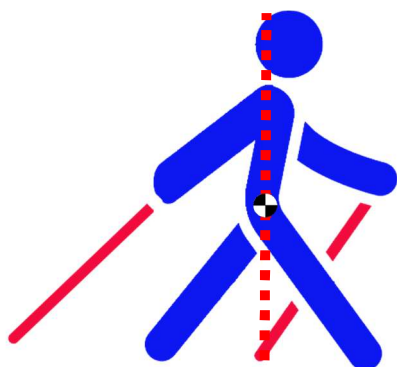
It is a Race Judge peculiarity to discern, in any athlete, when the gesture seems to be normal or forced, by considering athlete's capabilities, practices and motor peculiarities.

4. It is forbidden any loss of contact with the ground, visible to the human eye: one foot must always be in contact with the ground and, consequently, the front foot must touch the ground before that the back foot raises; every discontinuity will be considered as running, as better described to the section G of this regulation.
5. The first contact on the ground must occur on the heel, followed by the progressive contact of fifth metatarsal bone, first metatarsal bone and, finally, by big toe; it is forbidden any first foot contact to the ground with different foot areas than heel (fingers, ball, sole). Such a contact will be considered as a "heavy step nuisance" as fully described to the section G of this regulation.
6. Only alternate technique (also known as diagonal technique) is allowed, even during slopes; double step, also known as parallel step or polish step, as well as any other technique, different from the alternate technique, is forbidden.
7. Head and knee shall not exceed the virtual vertical line of big toe.
8. Excessive leg bending is not allowed, as well as excessive pelvis lowering (like in cross-country skiing).
9. Front leg has to be naturally extended, with no evidence of excessive knee bending, from the first ground contact to the moment when the leg is in vertical position; every excessive or unnatural bending of the knee will be sanctioned as a "heavy step nuisance" as better described at section G of the regulation.
10. An excessive and unnatural hip swing, as during agonistic march, is not permitted, meaning as "unnatural" an evident and forced swing, going beyond the normal motion of the athlete.
11. An excessive and unnatural horizontal shoulders swing, as during agonistic march, is not permitted, meaning as "unnatural" an evident and forced swing, going beyond the normal motion of the athlete.

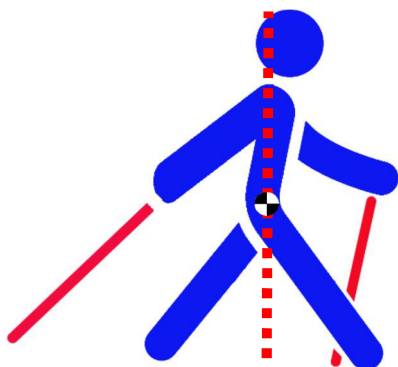
12. No walking technique different from natural and physiologic human walking is permitted and especially:
- a. Trotting: walking with a high frequency and short steps and/or an excessive vertical body swing and/or an excessive bending of both legs, even with no evidence of loss of contact with the ground;
 - b. Amble: walking with simultaneous swing of arm and leg from the same side; (i.e. right arm and leg together or left arm and leg together):
 - c. Proceeding with too much difference between step length and the arms swing.
- Above mentioned techniques will be sanctioned as a “heavy step nuisance”.
13. Alternate step cannot be interrupted for any reason (sweat drying, looking at chronometer or GPS, etc.) except within service areas as betted described at point E of this regulation.

II. Pole management

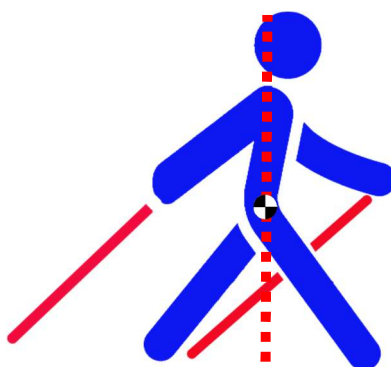
1. Pole ground contact must occur between the heel of front foot and the big toe of back foot.



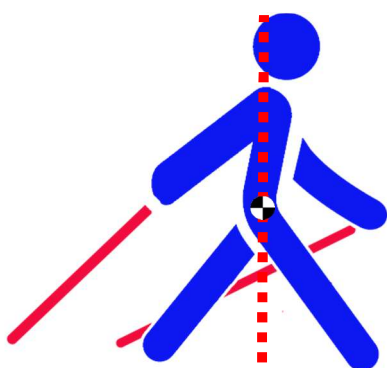
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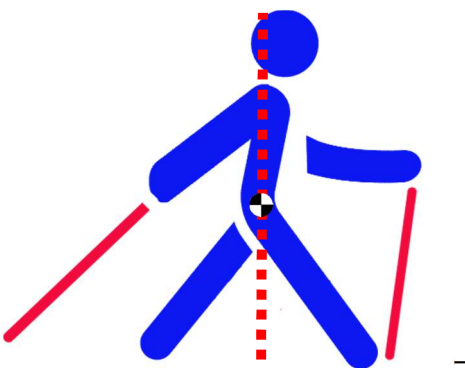
REGULAR



REGULAR



NOT REGULAR



NOT REGULAR

2. At the start of the arm movement, when the pole tip is placed on the ground, the hand should be forward of the hips. (Barré's line)

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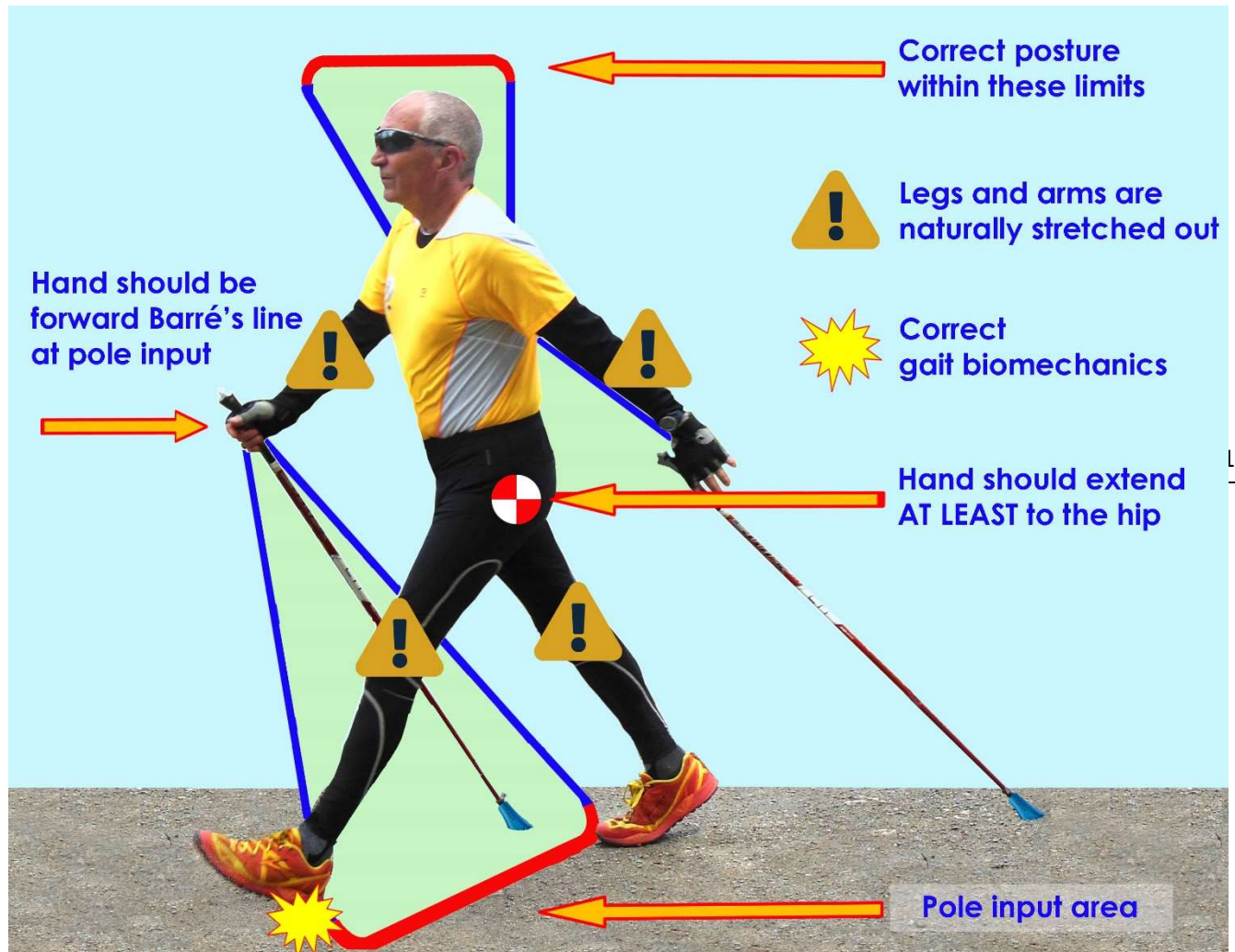
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3. As the push with the pole continues backwards the hand should extend at least to the hip and ideally beyond.
4. Pole ground contact must occur at the same time of the opposite side heel; (I.e. right pole at the same time of left heel).
5. Pole management must not create any obstacle or danger to the closest competitors.
6. In particular, the pole must not be conducted with excessively spread out arms, nor "thrown" posteriorly in the recovery phase.



SUMMARY OF WALKING TECHNIQUE AND POLES MANAGEMENT

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E. RACE DEVELOPMENT

I. Pre-race briefing

1. Before the start, Race Director summons all team leaders, as well as competitors not represented by a team and Race Judges, to carry out a pre-race briefing.
2. Pre-race briefing is held in the event official language; organizer may use interpreters to communicate in different languages.
3. During the pre-race briefing, main rules are illustrated, with particular regard to:
 - a. Admitted walking techniques (with practical demonstration by a judge);
 - b. Use of service areas and their location on the route;
 - c. Main infringements and related sanctions;
 - d. Any criticality of the terrain (i.e. due to weather conditions) and related behaviour;
 - e. Points of availability of medical assistance;
 - f. Telephone numbers to contact persons in charge of competition;
 - g. Any exceptions to this regulation due to particular conditions (i.e. wiping sweat outside the service areas on particularly hot days);
 - h. Any other information deemed useful for the correct race development.
4. Competitors represented by their team leader can also participate to the pre-race briefing.
5. Team leaders may put any question from competitors represented, to the Jury.
6. The presence of team leaders implies acceptance of the regulation and the agreement of validity by all the competitors represented, even if not physically present.
7. Failure to attend the pre-race briefing does not affect the starting possibility; however, no complaints will be accepted from competitors who did not attend, in person or by proxy, the briefing.

II. Start

1. Athletes must be on the starting grid at least ten minutes before the start, in order to allow personal recognition and equipment control.
2. Start can take place either as mass start or by individual time trial, or for small groups.
3. Simultaneous start of male and female race is admitted, although not recommended.
4. Merit groups start is allowed, in order to allow a better race development and avoid accidents at the start.
5. Start by age categories, is also allowed.
6. Merit groups will be composed according to the accreditation time, based on achieved time during last official event held on same track or, in lack of this, on the expected time, declared in registration phase.
7. No penalties are foreseen for excessive deviations between declared time and achieved time during the race; a correct division into merit groups is therefore based on athletes' fair play and correctness.
8. Start in wrong groups of merit will be sanctioned, as detailed in point G of this regulation.
9. Starting signal must be provided with suitable acoustic means, (I.e. gun, horn or similar), so that visual contact with the starter, (I.e. flag), would not be necessary.
10. Starting signal must be preceded by missing time indication, at sixty, thirty, ten seconds before the start and by the countdown of the last five seconds.
11. In order to avoid accidents, poles can be kept raised and approached to the chest for the first thirty meters from start line, (safety area), if adequately indicated by a coloured line on the ground.
12. It is however forbidden, in the first thirty meters, to walk in any other technique than the alternate one; poles ground contact is mandatory since most advanced foot exceeds the thirty-meter line.
13. During relay races, the change between athletes must take place, through physical contact, within the thirty meters line.
14. Both the incoming and outgoing walkers may keep the poles raised within the thirty-meter line, without prejudice to the prohibition on running.

III. Behaviour during the race

1. Each competitor must walk avoiding to hinder or threaten other athletes.
2. In particular, poles must always be conducted in full compliance with the previous point.
3. Most advanced competitor has the right, when cornering, to choose his own trajectory, avoiding to hinder the following competitor.
4. It is forbidden to walk too close with preceding competitor, except the few time preceeding an overtaking.
5. Overtaking should be done to the left; the overtaken competitor must give way to the faster competitor.
6. It is recommended to announce the imminent overtaking to the previous athlete, by means of the vocal alert "Left free - left free".
7. At the opposite, it is mandatory to announce the overtaking to the previous athlete, by means of the vocal alert "Right free - right free", if type of terrain, weather conditions or other valid reasons make overtaking to the right safer. This practice must be of an exceptional nature.

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8. A competitor, who unintentionally damages another athlete, is obliged to stop, give help and draw the attention of the closest Race Judge; he will resume the race only when the injured athlete is adequately assisted.
9. It is forbidden to create any cause of visual, acoustic or material disturbance to other competitors.
10. It is forbidden to be followed on the track by any accompanying person, both on any vehicle or by foot: only competitors are allowed on the track.
11. Competitors cannot exit the track, or make detours, under penalty of exclusion from the race.
12. A competitor who decides to withdraw must:
 - a. Immediately exit the track, taking care not to hinder other competitors;
 - b. Inform the nearest Race Judge about his decision;
 - c. Remove the bib number;
 - d. Return to the start by himself or by the recovery service, if available, taking care not to interfere with other competitors still in the race and not to pass on chronometric detectors in case of use of bibs equipped with microchips.

IV. Behaviour within service areas

1. Competitors will find three different types of service areas along the track:
 - a. Coaching areas;
 - b. Changing areas;
 - c. Supplying areas.
2. Within service areas, the use of poles and alternated technique may be interrupted, without prejudice to the prohibition to run.
3. Within these areas, competitors can raise, unhook or remove one or both poles.
4. Within these areas, competitors can also make use of sweatbands, tissues and similar devices as well as consult any instruments (chronometer, heart rate monitor, GPS, etc.).
5. These faculties begin and end when the most advanced foot crosses the service area marking line.

V. Use of coaching areas

1. Only coaches and technicians, recognized by race organization, may stand within coaching areas.
2. Within coaching areas, technicians and coaches can provide technical assistance to athletes, (i.e. replacement of broken poles), or tactical and chronometric indications.
3. No food and/or drinks can be supplied within coaching areas.
4. Any broken pole, or parts of it, can be replaced only within coaching areas.
5. An athlete who broke one or both poles, must continue to the nearest coaching area, while maintaining the alternated technique and the correct rolling of the step.
6. During the approach to the coaching area, the athlete cannot input the broken pole (or bent, in the case of metal sticks) to the ground.
7. In case of replacement of one or both poles, same length must be kept.
8. Only the full replacement of broken or bent pole is allowed, with the exception of the strap, which can be kept if equipped by a fast lock system.
9. The technician or coach must keep any replaced pole, including any broken one and make them available on request to the Race Director for any opportune check.
10. Replacements with poles of different length will result into an immediate disqualification.
11. The athlete who has spare poles at a coaching area must compulsorily replace the damaged or bent pole.
12. The athlete who does not have spare poles at a coaching area, can continue the race, while still holding the broken or bent stick and continuing to perform the alternated technique and the correct rolling of the step, if he does not create dangerous situations, at discretion of Race Director. This decision is not subject to complaint.
13. Loss of one or both asphalt pads is not considered as a pole damage and must be managed as in point VI below.

VI. Use of changing areas

1. Asphalt pads can be mounted / removed within changing areas.
2. Asphalt pads must be mounted / removed on poles, directly by the athlete, when entering the changing area; it is not allowed to receive new poles within a changing area.
3. Asphalt pads change, however, must be performed without any disturb or damage to other athletes walking in the same changing area.
4. Any asphalt pad lost during the track can also be replaced outside a changing area, but the athlete must completely stop during the replacement operations, position himself at the side of the track, without hindering other competitors.
5. The athlete must also inform the nearest Race Judge about his will to stop for the change and obtain his consent.

VII. Use of supplying areas

1. Within supplying areas, the athlete can take food and/or drinks, both owned or supplied by the organization.
2. It is allowed, with the authorization of the Race Director, to use personal supplies (drinks, food, etc.); they must be marked with competitor's bib number and positioned within supplying areas. An employee, indicated by Race Director, will deliver it to the competitor.
3. Race Director retains himself the right to analyse the content of personal supplies.
4. It is forbidden to receive any kind of refurbishment along the track by coaches, technicians or public.

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VIII. Exit from service areas

1. A correct alternated technique must be resumed at the latest when the first foot rests beyond the coloured line at the end of the service area, indicated by the vertical sign with the notice "end".

IX. *Timing and final rankings*

1. Timing of the event must be entrusted to official timekeepers, recognized by a national or international authority.
2. Timing by microchip, both incorporated in the bib or to be worn elsewhere, (i.e. shoe lace), should be preferred.
3. In case of timing by microchip, starting time is taken when the athlete passes through the detector set on the start line; ("real time" timing).
4. At least one timing detector must be set along the track, to detect the athlete's passage and the intermediate time.
5. It is however recommended that a timing detector is positioned in every critical track area, (i.e. course change), in order to be able to record any athlete track shortening.
6. Final chronometric result, with the addition of chronometric penalties, as better described in point G of this regulation, represents the only tool to draw up final rankings.
7. Following age groups are considered:

F / M Junior	from 14 to 16 years
F / M Under 20	from 17 to 19 years
F / M 20	from 20 to 29 years
F / M 30	from 30 to 39 years
F / M 40	from 40 to 49 years
F / M 50	from 50 to 59 years
F / M 60	from 60 to 69 years
F / M 70	from 70 to 79 years
OVER	from 80 years

Just year of birth is valid: athletes born from 1st January to 31st December of the same year will be ranked in the same age category, regardless that, on the event date, they already had birthday.

F. RACE JUDGES

I. Judges trainer - requirements

1. Judge Trainer is the only responsible for selection, training, certification, professional verification and continuous updating of the Race Judges.
2. To hold the position of Trainer of Judges, the following requirements must be met:
 - a. proven and prolonged competitive experience at European or world level, consisting of:
 - I. previous membership in a competitive technical commissions, nearby Federations or other official competitive entities of European level;
 - II. documented management and drafting of competitive regulations approved by Federations or other official competitive entities of European level;
 - III. previous significant experience of Race Direction in official events;
 - IV. participation as an athlete in at least five world championship events;
 - V. participation as an athlete in at least five European championship events;
 - VI. participation as an athlete in at least five Europe Cup events;
 - VII. participation as an athlete in at least one hundred international competitive events;
 - VIII. participation as an athlete and organization of world record attempts.
 - b. proven and demonstrated previous experience of Race Judges training, according to international rules, consisting of:
 - I. documented teaching activity during Race Judges courses, even in other official competitive circuits in which at least fifty Race Judges were trained;
 - II. documented periodic training and refreshment activities of Race Judges at national or international official events;
 - c. possession of following professional and personal qualifications and skills:
 - I. certificate of technical qualification of Discipline Trainer or equivalent, issued by an agency recognized by Olympic Committee;
 - II. certificate of technical qualification of Technical Trainer or equivalent, issued by an agency recognized by Olympic Committee;
 - III. certificate of technical qualification of Specialized Technician or equivalent, issued by an agency recognized by Olympic Committee;
 - IV. adequate skills in human biomechanics, normal human anatomy, human physiology;
 - V. demonstrated leadership, group management and problem solving skills;
 - VI. evident teamwork skills;
 - VII. demonstrated classroom communication and management skills;
 - VIII. demonstrated ability to operate according to required methods by certified continuous professional development programs (I.e. ECM-CPD);
 - IX. long and documentable Nordic Walking teaching activity, at sport and competitive level, as well as Nordic Walking Instructors and athletes training;
 - X. documentable credibility as a source of authority at national and international level, consequent to all the requirements set out above in points a) b) and c);
 - XI. fluent knowledge of English and at least one second European language.

II. Race Judges - requirements

1. Official circuits just recognizes as Race Judges, professional characters trained by a Trainer with professional characteristics conforming to what indicated in the previous paragraph.
2. Candidates must pass an entrance test held by the Trainer, in which they must demonstrate the following characteristics:
 - a. mastery of an excellent Nordic Walking technique, with particular regard to the alternate technique, both at a didactic and speed level;
 - b. knowledge of Nordic Walking sports sector, with particular regard to competitive aspects and their diffusion and management at European and world level;
 - c. adequate knowledge in human biomechanics, normal human anatomy, human physiology;
 - d. knowledge of English, at least at school level;
 - e. adequate problem solving skills;
 - f. adequate leadership and teamwork skills.
3. Candidates experience as described at point 2 will unquestionably be evaluated by the Trainer.
4. Candidates not holding all qualifications as described at point 2, may acquire them during didactic events chaired by the Trainer or his representative.
5. No other title possessed by the candidate (Instructor, Master Instructor, International Coach, National Discipline Trainer, or Race Judge or Referee of any other sport), issued by any Agency or Federation, will be considered as a preferential title to enrol in a course for Nordic Walking Race Judges.
6. The title of Nordic Walking Race Judge issued by any Agency or Federation constitutes a preferential title but does not exempt the candidate neither from attending a course, nor from the relative admission test.
7. Race Judges not trained in compliance with points 1 to 5 are not recognized.
8. The title of Race Judge is acquired through a theoretical and practical course, chaired by the Trainer and after passing a theoretical and practical examination.
9. Holding an IGC Race Judge card, commits the Judge himself to be available to carry out his activity during IGC events and to participate to periodic refreshment and focus groups; a not documentable frequency to the above implies the title forfeiture.
10. Holding an IGC Race Judge card, commits the judge himself to carry out periodic training, at least once a week and to be current about changes and amendments of to the regulations; a not documentable frequency to the above implies the title forfeiture.

III. Race Judges - activities

1. Race Judges must be clearly visible and recognizable along the track.
2. Race Judges also must be personally recognizable, by means of a name badge or an identification code.
3. Fixed and mobile judges can be placed along the track.
4. Fixed Judges must be positioned at regular distances along the track, following Race Director indications and, in any case, at a distance allowing visual contact between Judges in the event of track tortuosity.
5. Fixed judges' position must be clearly identified on the track, by means of a coloured pole, plate or other suitable instrument.
6. A fixed Judge must stay nearby service areas, to detect early suspension of the alternated technique at the entrance or late resumption of alternated technique at the exit.
7. Fixed Judges can use binoculars to better evaluate athletes' action.
8. Mobile judges must be equipped with a bike or any other transportation, so that any critical situation may benefit of their support.
9. Race Judges:
 - a. Participate to the pre-race briefing and demonstrate to competitors the correct walking technique,
 - b. Verify that all competitors are equipped with suitable equipment, by checking poles type and length, clothing and footwear;
 - c. On Race Director demand, they test poles built by assembling different part from recognized factories; (I.e. handle from factory X, shaft from factory Y, tips from factory W, asphalt pads from factory Z);
 - d. Verify that locking spindle in telescopic poles is well tightened, in order to avoid any shortening during the race;
 - e. Note the lengths adopted by competitors equipped with telescopic poles;
 - f. Supervise the respect of this regulation and sanction as indicated in point G of this regulation;
 - g. Discern between a natural and a forced gesture in athletes' technique, in compliance to point D of this regulation;
 - h. Promptly communicate bib numbers of warned or disqualified athletes to the Table Official, so that they will be reported on the appropriate board located, nearby the finish line;
 - i. Cooperate with Race Director in complaints management, providing adequate reasons for applied penalties;
 - j. During relay races, they monitor the regularity of changes between athletes of the same team.
10. Race Judges get in touch each other and with Table Official by suitable means.
11. If a Race Judge cannot apply a penalty due to position difficulties, or in order to avoid hindering other competitors, he will inform next Judge, or a mobile Judge if available, so that they could provide on the matter.
12. Mobile Judges may also follow along the track one or more athletes, whose action is considered liable to sanctions, on request of a fixed Judge.
13. In the event of races involving several laps on a closed circuit, all fixed Judges will maintain their position until the end of the event.

14. In the case of inline races, fixed Judges can leave their position after the passage of last competitor and move themselves to a more advanced position.

IV. Race Judges - equipment

1. Each Race Judge holds a red and a yellow card, to indicate the type of sanction imposed on the athlete.
2. Each Race Judge is equipped with an adequate mean of communication to get in touch with the Table Official and with the other judges on the track.

G. PENALTIES

i. Generalities

1. In the event of non-compliance with this regulation, infringements and improprieties against other athletes or Race Judges, the following penalties will be applied:
 - a. Warning (yellow card – disqualification proposal);
 - b. Disqualification (red card - immediate exclusion from the race).

ii. Warning – (Disqualification proposal)

1. A warning (yellow card) will be applied on unquestionable opinion of Race Judge in case of:
 - a. Technical and / or more significant mistakes, with particular regard to points D and E of this regulation;
 - b. Improprieties towards competitors or judges;
2. A warning entails no chronometric penalties, but represents a disqualification proposal suggested by a Judge to the Race Director, or directly by the Race Director himself. In case of disqualification proposal the Race Director will verify whether the athlete, following the yellow card, modifies and corrects his technical deficiency. The Race Director decision may be modulated according to the following methods:
 - a. The athlete corrects the technical error reported – no further intervention.
 - b. The athlete persists in the reported technical error – further yellow card or red card.
 - c. The athlete worsens the reported technical error - disqualification with a red card.

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The Race Director has also the right to impose the disqualification after the race end if, for this decision, he has rather to consult with the Judge who assigned the disqualification proposal or if he deems appropriate to give the athlete further opportunity to correct yourself.

3. A maximum of three yellow cards (proposed disqualification) is allowed. A fourth yellow card will result in immediate exclusion from the race.

iii. Disqualification

1. Disqualification (red card) will be imposed at the sole discretion of the race judge in the event of:
 - a. Race Director proposal, following a disqualification proposal (yellow card);
 - b. Fourth disqualification proposal (yellow card) assigned to the athlete;
 - c. Running:
 - I. Any loss of contact with the ground, visible to the human eye, excluding those that are obviously accidental (e.g. tripping);
 - d. Heavy step nuisances:
 - I. Any first foot contact to the ground with different areas than heel (fingers, ball, sole). Excessive and unnatural flexions of the front knee at the time of contact of the heel with the ground;
 - II. Trotting: walking with a high frequency and short steps and/or an excessive vertical body swing and/or an excessive bending of both legs, with no evidence of loss of contact with the ground.
 - III. Amble: walking with simultaneous swing of arm and leg from the same side; (I.e. right arm and leg together or left arm and leg together).
 - e. Heavy improprieties towards competitors, spectators or judges;
 - f. Dangerous attitudes;
 - g. Deviations from the track;
 - h. Variation in pole length, in case of telescopic poles;
 - i. Replacement with poles of different length in case single piece poles;
 - j. Unauthorized supplies;
 - k. Any other form of assistance received outside the coaching areas, with the exclusion of forms of assistance attributable to "team play" (I.e. assistance of a "pace maker" on the track);
 - l. During relay races, change without any physical contact between the incoming and outgoing athlete or not performed within the thirty meter line;
2. A red card will also be issued to the competitor who, according to the unquestionable opinion of Race Judge or the Race Doctor, if available, does not appear to be psycho physically able to continue on the course due to:
 - a. Injury
 - b. Illness
 - c. Obvious state of malaise not allowing the athlete to safely reach the finish line.

This decision is not appealable and is therefore will not be subject of a possible complaint.
3. A disqualified competitor must immediately stop, exit the race track and remove the bib number; he will be back to the start by himself or by the recovery service, if available.

iv. Various

1. Race Judge must apply any penalty by showing the related card (yellow or red).
2. No other way to report the infringements (pallets, signs, images, etc.) is suitable, except the verbal communication in the official language of the event, in order to allow the maximum Race Judge's discretion and to avoid few and restrictive communication options.
3. The athlete, by registering himself to the event, certifies his knowledge of the event official language, at least at an elementary level, allowing him to understand any simple Race Judges communication; Race Judges, if able, may speak into competitor's language, in order to facilitate understanding.
4. Athletes with hearing impairments may agree with Race Director any additional gestural signal, to make communication possible.
5. It is not allowed to replace chronometric penalties with other kind of penalty (i.e. extension of the course on "penalty rings") in order to:
 - a. make the impact of the penalty homogeneous among all athletes, avoiding that the penalty will be greater for a slower athlete, given the longer time to walk a penalty ring compared to a faster athlete;
 - b. allow applied penalties to be removed from the total time, if the athlete submits a complaint and the same is accepted;
6. Race judges will promptly communicate to Table Official the numbers of warned and/or disqualified athletes.
7. Any complaints for warning and/or disqualifications must be filed within 10 (ten) minutes after the arrival of the last competitor, or after the expiry of the maximum time.

H. COMPETITOR RIGHT AND DUTIES

I. *Rights*

1. By paying the registration fee, competitor acquires the right to:
 - a. Participate to the race;
 - b. Take advantage of infrastructures and other competitors reserved services;
 - c. Take advantage of timing service;
 - d. Take advantage of refurbishments provided on the track;
 - e. Take advantage of recovery service, where provided;
 - f. Exercise his right of complaint in the event of penalties.

II. *Duties*

2. By paying the registration fee, the competitor:
 - a. Declares to be in good health and psycho physically able to participate to the race; (organizer or Race Director may ask for a valid medical certificate either general or agonistic, following national laws).
 - b. Declares to be able to walk the entire route and to finish it within a reasonable time;
 - c. Declares to enjoy of an adequate health insurance;
 - d. Relieves the organization from any responsibility in case of accidents, illness, theft of material and from any right of recourse for any occurred event during the race;
 - e. Declares to be aware of these regulations;
 - f. Declares that he is able to understand, at least at an elementary level, the official language of the event;
 - g. Undertakes to respect this regulation;
 - h. Undertakes to compete with fair play, with respect of the other competitors, Race Judges and any decisions they will take, according to the Olympic spirit.
 - i. Consents the processing of personal data and images by the organization.