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Nordic Walking Guidelines for Race Directors

Nordic walking continues to gain popularity in the U.S. Increasing numbers of Nordic walkers are participating in distances from 5KS to Marathons. Even more wish to participate, but too few venues are open to Nordic walkers. This manual is intended as a guideline for race directors and organizers interested in opening their events to this growing activity.

Providing a Nordic walking division in a road race does not require many special considerations, especially if your race is already accommodating walkers, however there are some areas of concern. The following guidelines should insure a quality experience for all.

Handouts or other mentioned literature can be provided by Fittrek. Please contact us at 800-345-1004 or dan@fittrek.com.

Pre-Race

Sign-Up

It is important to provide separate or distinctive registration procedures for Nordic walking. Race directors will need to “tag” NW participants for easy retrieval on race day. If the event will be judged, directors may wish non-competitors to enter as walkers or runners because disqualified Nordic walkers times may not be posted.

Pace for Route Planning

The pace of NW typically ranges from 10-15 minute miles. If course closing time is a factor expected pace times should be communicated to Nordic walkers well in advance of race day.

Techniques

A road rules or regulation sheet should be provided well in advance of race day. Nordic walking is a new activity and people’s “versions” can vary wildly.

Safety

A safety guideline sheet should be provided well in advance of race day and it is recommended to have a pre-race meeting with NW prior to the event. Some areas to address with all Nordic Walkers, Competitive and recreational are:

1. Nordic walkers need to begin in the back of the pack to minimize the risk to non-Nordic walkers.
2. Nordic walkers should be mindful of pace changes, “lane” changes and stopping/ re-starting. We do not want to trip another participant.
3. Please keep pole tips orientated towards the ground at all times.

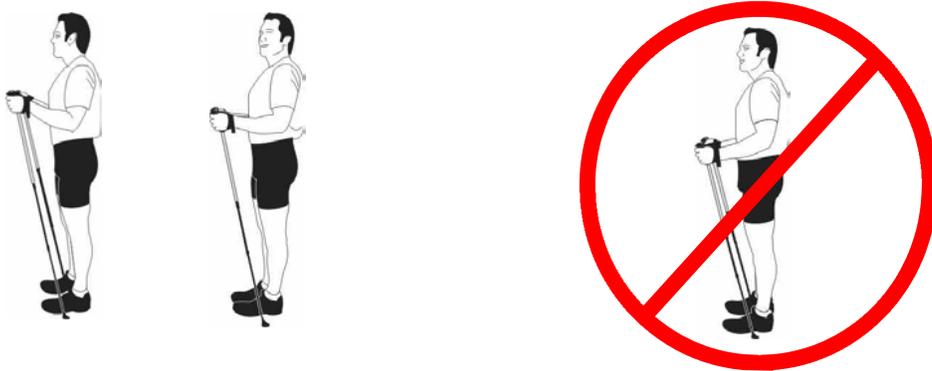
Starts

It is critical to establish a designated area for Nordic walkers. Behind runners and before walkers is recommended.

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Equipment

Poles must be composed of either aluminum, carbon fiber, fiberglass or a combination thereof. Poles can be fixed length or adjustable. Length must be at least 10cm taller (top of grip) than participants elbow when standing erect and hands held by side. When poles are held by participant and elbows are placed at side, the forearms should slope upward as illustrated below.



Poles must have straps designed to distribute load to “heel” of hand and wrist.



Poles must terminate on ground end with a rubber tip. Tip must last for entire event or NW must carry replacements. No sharp tips or exposed metal. Race directors can decide to allow metal tips in wet road conditions.



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Techniques

1. Opposing pole tip must “plant” (6 or more inches behind lead foot) with every opposing foot strike, except when eating or drinking.
2. Leading leg must have bent knee when heel strike occurs.
3. No running, jogging or race walking.
4. Elbows must cross center line of body during anterior phase of the arm swing.



CORRECT



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Techniques (cont.)

5. Double poling, multi-steeping and other irregular pole action will result in disqualification.



For more information on including a Nordic Walking Division in your next event please contact Dan Barrett at: dan@fittrek.com or 800-345-1004.

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