



USATF PROSPECTIVE OFFICIALS TRAINING

Part of the USATF South Carolina Association Training & Development Program

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USATF PROSPECTIVE OFFICIALS TRAINING CLINIC

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Published by Wilmont & Wilsher Book Publishing
Delaware | Georgia
www.wilmontwilsher.com

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Paperback ISBN: 979-8-9875288-6-0

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Nobody likes tainted victories

- Steve Prefontaine



USATF South Carolina Association Officials Training Clinic



ABOUT USATF OFFICIALS

Athletes from different backgrounds and with different experiences come together to participate in a sports event. That event may be a track and field meet, a race walk event, a road race, a cross-country event, or a MUT (Mountain, Ultra, Trail) event. These events may vary in size from very small to extremely large. Yet, as different as these events are, and as diverse as the athletes are, they all have one thing in common: the desire to have a fair competition.

Officials are responsible for judging events and for uniformly enforcing a defined and documented set of rules to ensure a fair competition and a level playing field for all athletes.

The Athletes are not there for the Officials. The Officials are there for the Athletes.

Being a certified USATF Official means being recognized for:

- Possessing USATF Membership
- Passing a background check
- Maintaining SafeSport training
- Having met education standards
- Having knowledge of rules
- Demonstrating fair and impartial judgment
- Supporting athletes
- Being a member of an organization that provides training opportunities

As one becomes a certified USATF Official, they have many officiating opportunities:

- Clerks
- Inspectors
- Referees
- Judges – Track
- Judges – Field
- Starters
- Timekeepers



There are four different levels of certification for USATF Officials:

- Apprentice
- Association
- National
- Master

All new Officials start as an Apprentice Official. As officials gain knowledge and experience, they progress through the various levels. And as Officials progress, they mentor and guide more junior Officials.

If you are not already a certified USATF Official, what are you waiting for? Become one today!



Ethics

The primary role of a USATF Official is to ensure a fair competition.

In order to do this, all Officials must themselves be fair and unbiased.

- Officials must remain impartial at all times.
- Officials must not show any favoritism or bias towards any team.
- Officials must not show any favoritism or bias towards any athlete.
- Officials must not discriminate against any team.
- Officials must not discriminate against any athlete.
- Officials must not coach any athlete in any event for which the Official is officiating.
- Officials must always remember they are there for the athletes
- Officials must always remember the athletes are not there for the Officials.
- Officials who are coaches should not serve as an Official or Referee for any event(s) in which an athlete whom that Officials coaches competes.
- Official officiate, Coaches coach. One cannot both officiate and coach at the same event.
- Officials must not use any electronic device in the competition area. It is difficult to remain fair and impartial when distracted. (Plus, it is a safety issue.)



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Field Events



There are eight field events: four which involve throwing, and four which involve jumping. For Indoor meets, there are only two throwing events.

Field events can be classified as either horizontal events or vertical events. Horizontal events measure how far something travels horizontally, while vertical events measure how high something travels.

In horizontal events, some “thing” flies through the air and the landing point is measured. In vertical events, some “thing” flies through the air, up and over a bar at a known (measured) height. In the case of jumps, it is the human body. In the case of throws, it is an implement.

In the case of horizontal events, there exists a foul line. In the case of vertical events, there exists a vertical plane which the athlete cannot breach improperly while initiating take-off.

There are one or more foul lines in all field events.

- In the case of jumps, both horizontal and vertical, there is both a foul line and a vertical plane.
- In throws from a circle (Shot, Discus, Hammer), there is circular foul line. For throws from a runway (Javelin), there is an arced foul line.
- For throws from a circle, there is also a white line logically dividing the circle into a front half and a back half. Though an athlete may enter the circle at any point, an athlete must exit from the back half of the circle.

There is also the notion of a valid sector in all field events.

- For all throws events, the sector is defined by the inner edges of a pair of horizontal lines extending from the foul line, which logically extends to the pin (or pull-thru point).
- For all jump events, the sector is defined by the landing area.
- The throws made from a circle usually involve rotation, while rotation is prohibited in throws using a runway (Javelin).

An attempt made by a competitor in any Field Event during competition is referred to as a *trial*. A competitor has a fixed amount of time to initiate a trial. Consult the appropriate competition rules for the amount of time allowed. Failure to initiate a trial in the allotted time is a foul.



In all field events, communication is done with flags.

- Red Flag
 - Used to indicate a foul
 - Used to indicate circle or runway is closed
 - Used to pause or stop activity
- White Flag
 - Used to indicate a legal attempt (no foul committed)
 - Used to signal “okay”, that competitor is clear to begin attempt
 - Used to resume activity
- Yellow Flag
 - Used to indicate (warn) 15 seconds or less remaining on trial time clock

All field events include a Flight Coordinator, Recorders, an Official watching for fouls, a Timer, and an Official reading a measurement, and all field events involve an Official marking.

- The Official reading the measurement may be an Official reading the tape, or it may be an EDM operator utilizing a laser.
- For horizontal events, the measurement is the distance of the final point of contact from the athlete side of the foul line.
- For vertical events, the measurement is the height of the bar.
- For horizontal events, “marking” involves an Official marking the appropriate point of impact to facilitate measurement of the trail.
- For vertical events, “marking” involves an Official marking the height of the bar once the standards supporting the bar have been adjusted. This facilitates marking and recording the height at which competitors will be jumping during a given round.
- All field events have an Official watching for violations of foul lines.

So, what do Officials do in Field Events? Simple. They ensure a fair competition and a level playing field for all athletes, and ensure all athletes have equal opportunity to compete.

- Maintain control of the event
- Ensure a safe event
- Ensure an event free of harassment and intimidation
- Check-in competitors
- Ensure all rules are followed
- Watch for fouls
- Measure and record marks
- Maintain neat and clean paperwork (record of marks) to be submitted and used for formal scoring
- Ensure all implements conform to requirements and specifications

Field Event Officials



Field Referee

- A more experienced with knowledge of all field events.
- Protests, appeals, and disagreements are escalated to the Referee for resolution. The decision of the Referee is final, unless a Jury of Appeals is established. In that case, the Referee's decision may be appealed to the Jury of Appeals.
- Collects, reviews and approves results. Delivers results to timer/scorekeeper
- Has sole authority to change order of events in program.
- Has authority to cancel, postpone, or reschedule events dues to safety concerns.
- Has authority to cancel, postpone, or reschedule an event (even if it has already started) if, in the Referee's opinion, it cannot be conducted in a satisfactory manner that is fair to competitors and Officials.
- Has authority to warn or disqualify any competitor for improper behavior.
- Verifies venue is properly set up.
- Ensures positioning of wind gauges.
- Certifies records (must be a National or Master level Official).

Field Judges

Crew Lead (often called Lead)

- An official with experience in that particular event.
- Responsible for ensuring venue is prepared for the event.
- Responsible for assigning duties to other Officials on the crew.
- Mentors other Officials on the crew.
- First point of contact for any protests; escalates protests to Referee.
- Point of contact for questions.
- Ensures paperwork is completed properly.
- Reviews and signs-off on score sheet.

Crew Member

- May or may be familiar in that particular event.
- Measure and record competitors' marks.
- Watch for fouls.

Flight Coordinator: Checks in competitors. Controls pace of competition. Manages access to the competition area. Call competitors, "UP", "ON DECK", or "ON HOLD".

Timer: Manages the trial time clock. Raises yellow flag when 15 second remain.

Line / Circle Fouls: Watches foul line (and circle) for any fouls.

Recorder: Writes on the scoresheet each competitor's mark (score) for each trial. There are generally two Recorders.

Reader: Read the tape and announces the distance (mark) for each trial. If EDM (Electronic Distance Measuring) is used, then the EDM operator will read and announce the mark.

Marker: Marks the point of impact within the sector. If the point of impact is outside the sector, the Official shall so indicate.



Retriever: In Throws events, the Retriever retrieves implements from the sector.

Raker: In Horizontal Jumps events, the Raker rakes and smooths the sand pit between trials.

Bar Setter: In Vertical Jumps, sets the bar on the standards.

Wind Gauge Operator: Reads and records wind direction and wind speed reading for all running events of 200m or less, and in Horizontal Jumps events.

Implement Inspectors

- Verify all implements meet established specifications
- Ensures legal implement are delivered to the appropriate venue on time



Field Event Comparison and Commonality

Event	Discus	Hammer / Weight	Shot	Javelin	Long Jump	Triple Jump	Pole Vault	High Jump	
Classification	Horizontal Events						Vertical Events		
Type	Throwing Events				Jumping Events				
Trial From	Circle			Runway			Apron		
	Cage		Arced Toe Board		Arc		Horizontal Line & Vertical Plane		
Foul Line	Circular band & Circle Half-mark*			Arc		Horizontal Line & Vertical Plane			
Trials	Fixed number of attempts						Fixed number of misses		
Sector (Landing Area)	Defined by diagonal lines				Sand Pit		Mat(s)		
Measure	Distance to point of impact						Height of Bar		
Measurement Point	Point of first contact closest to athlete side of file line				Point of contact closest to athlete side of foul line		Height of top of bar		
Scoring	Success	Meters and centimeters (MM.cc)						0	
	Miss/Foul	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Pass	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Exit / Completion	Back half of circle, only after the implement has landed			Behind the arc and arc extension line only after implement has landed		Away from the point of contact, not through front of pit.		Without displacing the bar	

Steve Mullaney – USATF South Carolina

* A 5cm wide white line extending 75cm minimum on the outside left and outside right side of the circle that logically divides the circle into a front-half and a back half.



Safety

It is important to remember the implements used in field throws events were originally weapons of war. There were not designed for fun and games. **They were designed to maim or kill.**

NEVER allow anyone (official, volunteer, athlete) to use a cellphone or headphones in the competition areas.

NEVER turn your back to the circle or runway.

NEVER allow anyone in the sector (or runway) to turn their back on the sector (or runway) at any time.

NEVER allow an athlete to warm-up without an Official monitoring warm-ups.

NEVER allow ANYONE near the cage when an athlete is inside the cage with an implement.

NEVER stand at the front of the cage or within 10 ft of sides or back when an athlete is inside the cage with an implement. *(Many people recommend 6 ft for Discus and 8-10 ft for Hammer, but play it safe and just do 10ft for everything.)*

NEVER look into the sun while an implement is in the air.

NEVER assign an Officials with limited mobility to be in the sector marking.

NEVER allow an Official with limited mobility to be in the sector marking, including yourself

NEVER allow an event requiring a cage to be conducted without a cage.

Never allow throws warm-ups to begin without safety flags 3 meters or more off sector lines

NEVER allow competition at an unsafe venue to be conducted without first checking with the appropriate Referee.

NEVER allow a pole vaulter to vault with a pole that is not matched to their weight.



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Field Events – Throws

Throws are events where a competitor throws an implement (the thing being thrown: club, discus, hammer, javelin, shot, weight) in a designated area (a circle or a runway) behind a foul line. The implement is required to land in designated area (the sector). The distance the implement traveled is measured and recorded.

General Competition Rules

- Competitors have a fixed amount of time to initiate a trial. Failure to do so is a foul.
- Competitors must throw from within a designated area. Failure to do so is a foul. (For all Throws events except the Javelin, that designated area is a circle, and for Javelin it is a runway.)
- A competitor must come to a complete stop (however briefly) upon entering the designated throwing area and before commencing the trial. Failure to do so is a foul.
- Competitors must not step on or over any foul line during a trial, else it is a foul.
- The band inside the circle is considered a foul line. It is a foul if a competitor steps on top of the band during a trial.
- All throws from a circle, except for Discus, utilize the same diameter circle. The Discus utilizes a larger circle. Sometimes there are two distinct circles of different diameters, with the large diameter circle used exclusively for Discus. Other times, there is only a single large diameter circle and inserts are used to decrease the size of the circle for non-discus throws events.
- A competitor's implement must make first contact with the ground fully within the sector. Failure to do so is a foul. If the implement's first point of contact touches the sector line (which is also a foul line) or is outside the sector line, that trial is ruled a foul.
- A competitor must leave the designated throwing area in a certain manner. Failure to do so is a foul. (For throws from a circle, it is from the back half of the circle. For Javelin, it is from behind the front foul line.)
- The distance for the trial is measured from the competitor's side of the foul line to the point of first contact within the defined sector. The distance is read and recorded. If a tape is used, the tape is pulled through (across) a pin (mark) in the circle or the runway.
- For failed trials (those resulting in a foul), and "X" is recorded.
- A "-" is recorded for a trial that is passed, or the competitor did not otherwise attempt.

Throws from a Cage

A cage is essentially heavy netting between steel frames (around the sides and back of the designated throwing area – the circle) meant to control an errant throw. Implements thrown from within a cage include: discus, hammer, weight.

- Competitors have a fixed amount of time to initiate a trial. Failure to do so is a foul.
- Competitors must throw from within a designated area, which is a circle within the cage.



- The inside edge of the circle either has a steel band, or is painted white. Competitor's may touch the inside edge of the circle or band, but it is a foul if any part of the competitor touches the top edge of the circle or the top of the band.
- An implement that strikes any part of the cage and lands such that the first point of contact is within the sector is a fair trial, provided there are no other fouls.
- The throws cage has moveable panels. For the Hammer Throw event, for safety, the panels are moved to restrict the size of the opening at the front of the cage.

Hammer Specific

- The outer panels at the front of the cage are moved based on the direction the competitor will throw.
- Any part of the hammer may strike the ground, either inside or outside the circle, during rotations in a competitor's trial. The implement striking ground during rotation and prior to the competitor releasing it is not considered a foul, provided no other fouls have been committed.
- Ensure the proper diameter circle is used. If inserts exist, ensure they are not used.

Discus Specific

- Ensure the proper diameter circle is used. If inserts exist, ensure the inserts are removed from the circle.
- Panels on the cage are not moved for Discus.

Throws From Outside a Cage

Throws from outside a cage are those throws that do not utilize a cage. These include Shot Put and Javelin. NOTE: There are instances, such as at indoor facilities) where Shot Put may be contested using the circle in a cage. In such instances, it is imperative the correct size ring be used, and that there also be a proper toe board/stop in place.

Shot Put

- The diameter of the circle used for Shot Put is the same as that used for Hammer Throw and Weight Throw. The diameter should always be verified.
- A toe board (also called a toe stop) is installed at the front of the circle, flush with the front edge of the circle (or flush with the band on the inside edge of the circle).
- A competitor may touch the side of the toe board facing the circle. However, it is a foul if the competitor makes contact with any other part of the toe board (including the sides, top, or edge facing the sector.)
- There is a certain manner in which the Shot must be put. Failure to properly put the shot is a foul.
- The shot must be put. It is a foul if the shot is thrown. It is a foul if the shot is dropped.
- The distance of the trial (the distance the implement traveled) is always measured from the inside edge (competitor's side) of the toe board to the point of first contact.



Javelin

- Javelin is the only Throws event that does not utilize a circle; it uses a runway.
- The minimum length for the runway is 35m, but there is no maximum. The width of the runway is defined to be 4m. Officials verify this before competition starts.
- The foul line is an arc across the end of the runway. However, it also extends to either side of the runway, horizontal and perpendicular to the runway.
- There is a proper method for throwing the javelin. Failure to properly throw the javelin is a foul. The javelin must be thrown using an overhand motion, and over the shoulder. The javelin is not allowed to be thrown using a side-arm motion or under-arm (*submarine*) motion
- In some competitions the metal head of the javelin is required to strike the ground first. In those competitions, failure of the metal head to strike the ground first is a foul.
- In some competitions the metal head of the javelin is not required to strike the ground first. In those competitions, any part of the javelin may strike the ground first.
- The distance of the trial (the distance the implement traveled) is always measured from the inside edge (competitor's side) of the arced foul line to the point of the javelin's first contact with the ground, provided no other foul has been committed. If a tape is used for measurements, the tape is pulled across a pin set in the runway (or a paint mark in the runway), across the foul line, and out to the implement's point of first contact as marked by an Official in the sector.



Throws Special Safety Considerations

As always, safety is a primary concern.

- **Never allow an event to be conducted in an unsafe venue. Contact the appropriate Referee if there are any questions about safety.**
- **Never allow an event that requires a cage to be conducted outside of a cage.**
- **Always inspect the cage prior to the event, before athletes are allowed to check-in.**
- **For events where a cage is utilized, always keep people at least 10ft away from the cage.**
- **Always control access to implements.**
- **Always control access to the designated throwing area.**
- **Always ensure implements are thrown only from the designated throwing area.**
- **Always allow only one competitor at a time into the designated throwing area.**
- **Always ensure there is no one other than the competitor in the designated throwing area.**
- **Never allow anyone to stand in front of the designated throwing area.**
- **Always ensure everyone in the sector is facing the designated throwing area when the designated throwing area is accessible to competitors.**
- **Never allow anyone (yourself included) to walk into the sector without facing the designated throwing area, even while walking.**
- **Never turn your back to the designated throwing area, even if you are not in the sector.**
- **Never allow coaches, spectators, or other competitors in the sector or along the sector lines when the designated throwing area is accessible to competitors.**
- **When in the sector, always maintain visual contact with the implement, from the competitor's hand to the point at which the implement has come to a complete stop.**
- **Always remember, travel of the implement does not usually stop at the moment of ground contact. Most implements will skip or bounce and continue traveling until all momentum is lost.**
- **When in the sector, NEVER look into the sun while an implement is in the air.**
- **Officials with limited mobility should never be in the sector marking.**
- **If photographers are authorized Meet Management, always ensure the photographers are a safe distance away, and preferably using a zoom/telephoto lens.**
- **If photographers are authorized by Meet Management, ensure the photographers do not interfere with competition.**
- **Absolutely no electronic devices are allowed in the competition area.**



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Field Events – Horizontal Jumps

Horizontal Jumps are events where a competitor runs down a runway and jumps into a pit of sand. The distance of the jump is measured, and that distance is written on the score sheet.

General Competition Rules

- Competitors have a fixed amount of time to initiate a trial. Failure to do so is a foul.
- Competitors must jump from behind a foul line. Failure to jump from behind the foul line is a foul.
- The foul line also represents a vertical plane. It is a foul if the competitor's shoe or foot breaks the plane (prior to the competitor leaving the ground).
- A competitor must land completely inside the sand pit (also called the *landing area*). It is a foul if any part of the competitor's body (including anything attached to the competitor) lands outside the sand pit.
- The competitor must exit the landing area beyond the nearest break in the sand (the point furthest from the foul line). It is a foul if the athlete exits the front of the landing area (the point closest to the foul line).
- Once the competitor has left the landing area, they are not allowed to walk back through the landing area. It is a foul if the competitor walks back through the landing area.
- The competitor's point of final contact is marked. The final point of contact is realistically the mark in the sand made by the competitor (or anything attached to the competitor) closest to the foul line during that competitor's trial.
- A Wind Gauge Operator reads and records the direction and speed of the wind for each trial.
- There is a minimum length for the runway (40m), but there is no maximum. Officials verify this before competition starts. The width of the runway is defined to be 4m.
- For legal jumps during competition, the distance jumped is measured and recorded.
- For failed trials (those resulting in a foul), an "X" is recorded.
- A "-" is recorded for a trial that is passed, or the competitor did not otherwise attempt.
- The lines on either side of the runway do not represent foul lines. The competitor may cross these lines so long as the competitor jumps from behind the board (foul line).

Horizontal Jumps Special Safety Considerations

As always, safety is a primary concern.

- Always thoroughly rake the pit before any event begins to ensure there is nothing other than sand in the sand pit.



- Always ensure there are no rakes, brooms, or anything else other than sand in the landing area before any competitor jumps or runs through the sand pit. This applies to warm-ups and competition.
- Always ensure the tines of any rakes are pointed towards the ground (not pointed up) before any competitor jumps or runs through the sand pit. This applies to warm-ups and competition.
- Always place an orange cone on the runway, in the center of the foul line (board), when the runway is closed.
- Always ensure there is only one competitor at a time on the runway.
- Always be alert for people walking around. Ensure no one crosses the runway, especially while a competitor is on the runway.
- Absolutely no electronic devices are allowed in the competition area.

Long Jump

Competitors jump from a behind a common foul line.

- All of the previously mentioned Horizontal Jumps Competition Rules apply.
- A competitor may take off with either foot, or even both feet simultaneously.
- A competitor may choose not to run, to simply stand behind the foul line and jump.

Triple Jump

The Triple Jump is similar to the Long Jump, but there are notable differences. The triple jump consists of a hop, a step, and a jump. There are two or more boards from which competitors jump (take-off) from. The jump must be from one foot only. Each competitor selects the board they want to jump (take-off) from.

- All of the previously mentioned Horizontal Jumps Competition Rules apply.
- Each competitor declares which board they are jumping (taking-off) from prior to competition. It is a foul for the competitor to jump (take-off from a board they did not declare.
- The board (take-off board) is the point at which the competitor begins the sequence hop, step, jump (in that order). The competitor must take-off (hop) on one foot, land on the opposite foot, then step and land on the opposite foot, and then initiate the jump into the pit using the same foot that was used to initiate the hop. Failure to perform these steps in order is a foul. One of more Officials are assigned the task of watching for this sequence.
- The leg which the competitor is not landing on is referred to as the “sleeping leg”. It is not a foul for the sleeping leg to touch the ground, provided the proper legs has touched the ground first.
- The competitor must make the hop, step, jump using one foot at a time. The hop, step, or jump cannot be done from both feet simultaneously.



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Field Events – Vertical Jumps

Vertical Jumps are events where a competitor runs toward a bar held up by pegs on a pair of standards (vertical posts, also referred to as *uprights*) and jumps over that bar, without knocking the bar off the pegs or otherwise committing a foul.

General Competition Rules

- The bar is set a certain height. The height (from the top of the bar to the ground) is measured and verified by Officials.
- Competitors can choose to jump at that height, or they may opt not to jump at that height.
- The bar is raised only after all competitors that are jumping at the current height have successfully cleared the bar. The bar is raised in fixed increments; those increments are found in either the meet information or the appropriate rule book.
- Competitors have a fixed amount of time to initiate a trial. Failure to do so is a foul.
- Competitors must jump from in front of a foul line on the ground, which is parallel to and beneath the bar. The foul line also represents a vertical plane. It is a foul if the competitor breaks the plane (prior to the competitor leaving the ground).
- Unlike other field events, the height jumped is not recorded for each competitor. Instead, a "O" is recorded for a successful trial, which is a trial for which the competitor cleared the bar without displacing the bar or otherwise committing a foul.
- As with the other field events, an "X" is recorded for a foul, and a "-" is recorded for a trial that is passed or that the competitor did not otherwise attempt.
- There is a minimum length for the runway (35m), but there is no maximum. Officials verify this before competition starts.

High Jump

- There is a minimum length (15m) for the runway apron (sometimes referred to as either the *runway*, or as the *apron*) and a minimum width (16m) but no maximum. Officials verify this before competition starts.
- Competitors must jump from in front a foul line which is on the ground under the bar and parallel to the bar. The foul line also represents a vertical plane. It is a foul if the competitor's shoe or foot breaks the plane (prior to the competitor leaving the ground).
- A competitor must take-off using only one foot. A jump using both feet simultaneously is a foul.
- A competitor may run up to the bar, abandon the jump attempt, and may retry, provided there is still time remaining on the trial time clock. However, if the competitor's shoe or foot breaks the plane, or if the competitor touches either the bar or one of the standards during an abandoned attempt it is a foul.



Pole Vault

- There is a minimum length for the runway (40m), but there is no maximum. Officials verify this before competition starts. The width of the runway is defined to be 4m.
- Competitors must jump from in front a foul line, which is parallel to the bar. Practically speaking, the foul line is an imaginary line that extends across the front of the standards and the back edge of the plant box (the rectangular box recessed into the ground in which competitors place the pole when initiating take-off). The foul line also represents a vertical plane. It is a foul if the competitor improperly breaks the plane and the competitor abandons the jump or does not otherwise clear the bar.
- A competitor may run up to the plant box, and may even plant the pole in the plant box, and may even leave the ground, then abandon the jump attempt, and may retry, provided there is still time remaining on the trial time clock. However, if any part of the competitor's body or pole breaks the plane or touches either the bar or one of the standards during an abandoned attempt it is a foul.

Vertical Jumps Special Safety Considerations

As always, safety is a primary concern.

- Always ensure there is only one competitor at a time on the runway.
- Always be alert for people walking around. **Ensure no one crosses the Pole Vault runway or High Jump apron,** especially while a competitor is on the runway or the apron.
- Absolutely no electronic devices are allowed in the competition area.
- The runway and plant box must be dry. A wet runway, and especially a wet plant box, is a serious safety issue.
- Any rain at all during a pole vault competition is serious safety concern. Remember, competitors are grasping a pole and propelling themselves in the air at dangerous heights.



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Track and Off-Track Events



Track events can be classified as short distance, middle distance, or long distance:

- Short distance: 100m (or less) – 400m
- Middle Distance: 800m – 3000m
- Long Distance: 3200m and greater

Track event common distances may include:

- Short distance sprints (60m, 100m dash, 200m, 400m)
- Middle distance races (800m, 1500m, 1600m, 1mile, 2000m, 3000m)
- Long distance races (3200m, 5000m, 10,000m)
- Relay races (4x100m, 4x200m, 4x400m, 4x800m, Distance Medley)
- Hurdle races (60m, 100m, 110m, 400m)
- Steeplechase races (2000m, 3000m)
- Racewalking (1500m, 1mile, 3000m, 10k, 20k, 35k, 50k, 1hr, 12hr, 24hr)

Off-track events include:

- Long Distance Running (more common distances include: 5k, 8k, 12k, 15k, 21k, 42k)
- Racewalking (common distances include: 5k, 10k, 20k, 35k, 50k)
- Mountain and Trail
- Ultra (typically any distance longer than marathon distance, generally 30miles or longer)
- XC (Cross-Country; anything 5000m or longer is also considered a long-distance event)

Some track events (any race 400m or less) require the competitor to remain in their assigned lane for the entire race. Failure to do so may constitute a foul. Stepping on the inside line of a lane for two or more consecutive steps is a foul.

Some track events require competitors to start in an assigned lane, but allow athletes to move out of their assigned lanes at a defined break-line. It is a foul if an athlete breaks out of their lane prior to the break-line.

In all races, impeding another runner is a foul. This includes blocking, pushing, shoving, tripping.

For hurdles and barriers (steeplechase), competitors (their entire body) are required to go over the hurdle or barrier. Going around the hurdle or barrier (even if it is just the competitor's foot) is a foul.

On-Track Events



	Event	Type	Blocks	Description
Sprinting	60m	Short	Yes *	A short distance sprint usually contested at Youth Meets, at Masters Meets, at Indoor Meets , and as part of Combined Events. Athletes must remain in assigned lane for entire race.
	100m	Short	Yes *	Run on the straight section of a standard 400m track. Athletes start aligned along common starting line (one athlete per lane) using blocks. Athletes must remain in assigned lane for entire race.
	200m	Short	Yes *	Begins in the curve 200m away from the finish line. Staggered start, one athlete per lane, using starting blocks. Athletes must remain in assigned lane for entire race.
	400m	Short	Yes *	Staggered start, one athlete per lane, using starting blocks. Athletes must remain in assigned lane for entire race.
Distance Running	800m	Middle	No	Two laps around standard 400m track. Challenging event which leaves athletes exhausted. Athletes must remain in assigned lane until the break line is reached.
	1200m	Middle	No	This distance is usually only run in competition as part of a distance medley.*
	1500m	Middle	No	(metric mile) 3 and ¾ laps around standard 400m track. This event has evolved over the last several years to the point where the 1500m is now essentially a prolonged sprint.
	1600m	Middle	No	4 laps around the track. Commonly referred as “the mile”, even though it is 30.6ft (9.344m) short of a mile. This event is generally contested primarily at high school meets, and at some collegiate meets.
	1 mile	Middle	No	A true one-mile run. The only non-metric race for which world records are maintained by WA (formerly IAAF).
	3000m	Middle	No	7 ½ laps around the track. Is at the border of middle distance and long distance events.
	3200m	Long	No	8 laps around track. Commonly referred to as “two mile”, even though it is 61.2 ft (18.688m) short of two miles. The 3200m race is typically contested at high school meets. <i>NOTE: The 4x800 relay totals 3200m.</i>
	5000m (5k)	Long	No	12 ½ laps around standard 400m track. Also contested indoors: 25 laps around a 200m track.
	10000m (10k)	Long	No	25 laps around standard 400m track. Is rarely contested indoors: 50 laps around 200m track.



Hurdles	60m	Sprint	Yes	Sprint hurdles. 5 hurdles. Run indoors. Also run in outdoors in Masters and Youth meets, and also run outdoors as part of combined events.
	100m	Sprint	Yes	Sprint hurdles. 10 hurdles in 100m straightaway.
	110m	Sprint	Yes	Sprint hurdles. 10 hurdles in 110m straightaway.
	200m	Long	Yes	Long hurdles. 5 hurdles spread around 200m
	400m	Long	Yes	Long hurdles. 10 hurdles spread around 400m track.
Steeplechase	2000m	Middle	No	18 barriers + 5 water jumps. <i>4 barriers + 1 water jump per lap</i> <i>No barrier in 1st 200m of 1st lap</i>
	3000m	Middle	No	28 barriers + 7 water jumps. <i>4 barriers + 1 water jump per lap</i> <i>No barrier until finish line has been crossed the first time.</i>
Relay	4x100m	Relay	First leg	Staggered start. Team of 4 athletes, each running 100m. One athlete must successfully pass the baton to the next athlete in a designated exchange zone.
	4x200m	Relay	First leg	Staggered start. Team of 4 athletes, each running 200m. One athlete must successfully pass the baton to the next athlete in a designated exchange zone.
	4x400m	Relay	First leg	Staggered start. Team of 4 athletes, each running 400m. One athlete must successfully pass the baton to the next athlete in a designated exchange zone.
	4x800m	Relay	No	Staggered start. Team of 4 athletes, each running 800m. One athlete must successfully pass the baton to the next athlete in a designated exchange zone.
	Medley	Relay	First leg	Relay of mixed, progressively longer distances
Racewalk	1500m		No	3 ¾ laps around standard 400m track.
	3000m		No	7 ½ laps around standard 400m track.
	20k		No	50 laps around standard 400m track
	1 hr		No	Race is 1 hour. Competitors drop a marker (beanbag) when device (airhorn, gun) sounds at the 1-hour mark. Competitors receive credit for full laps plus partial lap (distance from start line to marker).
	12 hr		No	Race is 12 hours. Competitors drop a marker (beanbag) when device (airhorn, gun) sounds at the 12-hour mark. Competitors receive credit for full laps plus partial lap (distance from start line to marker).
	24 hr		No	Race is 24 hours. Competitors drop a marker (beanbag) when device (airhorn, gun) sounds at the 24-hour mark. Competitors receive credit for full laps plus partial lap (distance from start line to marker).

Steve Mullaney – USATF South Carolina

* Refer to USATF Competition for exceptions for Youth and Masters



So, what do Officials do in on-track events? Simple. They ensure a fair competition and a level playing field for all athletes, and ensure all athletes have equal opportunity to compete.

- Maintain control of the event
- Ensure a safe event
- Ensure an event free of harassment and intimidation
- Check in competitors, and assign lanes (and heats, if required) and hip numbers
- Ensure all rules are followed
- Watch for fouls
- Count laps
- Record infractions
- For Racewalk, ensure one foot appears in contact with the ground at all times, and ensure proper form.
- Ensure competitors are lined up correctly
- Start the race, and ensure a fair start
- Recall the race if not a fair start
- Move starting blocks as needed
- Help position hurdles and barriers as need

Track Event Special Safety Considerations

As always, safety is a primary concern.

- Always control access to the track.
- Always ensure no people are on or are crossing the track during a track event.
- Never allow anyone to be on or to cross the track on the side where a sprint race or hurdle race is being contested.
- Always keep a safe distance (~8m) from the Starter when the starting gun is being fired.
- Only allow people to cross the track when it is safe to do so.



Track Event Officials

Track Referee

- A more experienced Official with knowledge of all track events.
- Protests, appeals, and disagreements are escalated to the Referee for resolution. The decision of the Referee is final, unless a Jury of Appeals is established. In that case, the Referee's decision may be appealed to the Jury of Appeals.
- Collects and reviews any infraction reports.
- Has sole authority to change order of events in program.
- Has authority to cancel, postpone, or reschedule events due to safety concerns.
- Has authority to cancel, postpone, or reschedule an event (even if it has already started) if, in the Referee's opinion, it cannot be conducted in a satisfactory manner that is fair to competitors and Officials.
- Has authority to warn or disqualify any competitor for improper behavior.
- Verifies track is properly marked.
- Verifies venue is properly set up.
- Ensure positioning of wind gauges.
- Certifies records (must be a National or Master level Official).
- Has no control or authority over Racewalking events.

Starter

- Ensure a fair start for all competitors.
- Maintains control of all competitors on start line.
- Ensure all competitors follow rules regarding starting.
- Determines whether or not a competitor has committed a false start.
- Has sole authority to warn or disqualify a competitor for false start.

Recall Starter

- Watches to ensure fair start.
- Recalls race (if appropriate) if unfair start detected.
- Reports observations to the Starter.
- Does not have authority to warn or disqualify a competitor.

Clerks

- Check in competitors for track events.
- Ensures competitors compete in assigned heats of assigned events.
- Ensures competitors have proper uniform, including shoes and spikes in accordance with established rules.
- Provide competitors with hip numbers corresponding to competitors' assigned lane.



Clerk of Course

- Is the lead Clerk.
- Assigns duties to other Clerks.
- Places competitors in proper lane or position as instructed by the Starter.
- Has authority to change heats or lane assignment. Must notify Starter and timer.
- Supervises movement/transfer of competitors to track at time of competitors' event.

Clerk

- Performs duties assigned by Clerk of Course.

Judges (Umpires)

Chief Umpire

- Briefs Umpires of rules, and any special regulations established by the Games Committee for the meet.
- Assigns Umpires to positions around the track.
- Ensures hurdles and barriers are properly set, and are in place when required, and immediately removed when no longer required.
- Secures from Umpires both oral and written details of any infractions, and immediately submits report to the Track Referee.
- Responsible for assigning duties to other Officials on the crew.
- Mentors other Officials on the crew.
- Has no authority to make final decisions regarding warning or disqualifying a competitor.

Umpire

- Reports to Chief Umpire, who reports to Track Referee.
- Assigned locations on the track by Chief Umpire or Track Referee.
- Watch for violations, raising a yellow flag if a violation is observed.
- Provide both oral and written report to Chief Umpire of observed violations.
- Watch for lane violations in lanes races.
- Watch for breaking too early in races with break line.
- Watch for hurdle and barrier violations in races utilizing hurdles or barriers.
- Watch for proper conduct and proper baton hand-off in relay races.
- Performs duties in Racewalk as assigned, except for technique rules which are the responsibility of certified Racewalking Judges. An Umpire may judge Racewalk technique if the Umpire is a certified Racewalk Official, and is assigned to do so by the Chief Racewalk Judge.
- Assist with placement, adjustment, and removal of hurdles and barriers as needed.

Lap Scorers

- Counts laps, for up to 3 athletes, in races longer than 1 mile.
- Records time each lap completed (for races 3 miles and longer outdoors, and races 3000m and longer indoors).



Wind Gauge Operator

- Reads and records wind direction and wind speed reading for all running events of 200m or less.

Racewalk

Chief Judge

- Responsible for, and has control of, the entire Racewalk event.
- Acts as Referee for the Racewalk competition.
- Assigns other Racewalk Officials (Starter, Judge) and other personnel.
- Has sole authority to disqualify a competitor.

Starter

- Responsible for ensuring competitors are properly aligned, at the direction of the Chief Judge.
- Start the race with some audible (or audible/visual) device (gun, electronic gun, etc.).
- May also act as Recall Starter.

Judge

- Observe and determine whether competitor form is in accordance with established Racewalking rules. One foot must appear to be in contact with the ground at all times, and the knee of the competitor must be straight when directly under the competitor. The Judge shall issue a yellow paddle for the first observed violation of a given type, and again for the second observed violation of that same type. Additionally, a red card shall be issued for the second violation.
- The red card is a Judge's recommendation for possible disqualification.
- A competitor receiving three or more red cards—a red card from at least three different Judges—shall be disqualified.
- No Judge other than the Chief Judge (or the Chief Judge's Assistant at the direction of the Chief Judge) may disqualify a competitor.

DQ Board

- Posts red cards on display board visible to competitors. This position is not required to be a Racewalk Official. A Track Umpire is sometimes used to fill this role.

Lap Counter

- Counts laps for up to six competitors. This position is not required to be a Racewalk Official. A Track Umpire is sometimes used to fill this role.



Off Track Events

	Event	Description
Long Distance Running	5km	~3.11 miles. Also run as a long-distance track event. Also run as a cross country event.
	8km	~4.97 miles. Usually run a road race, trail run, or MT race. Sometime also run as a cross country event.
	10km	~6.21 miles
	12km	~7.46 miles
	15km	~9.32 miles
	21km	Half-marathon. ~13.1 miles. Rarely run as a long-distance track event due to time required.
	42km	Marathon. ~26.2 miles. Rarely run as a long-distance track event due to time required.
	Ultra	Any distance 43km or greater.
	Trail	Distances vary greatly. Generally run on trails through woods, and often mountainous regions.
	XC	Cross-country. Common distances are 5k, 8k, 10k. Youth meets often have 2k, 3k, 4k, and 5k.
Racewalking * **	5k	Sometimes contested on track, sometimes contested on the road.
	10k	Usually contested off-track.
	20k	Usually contested off-track. Olympic event.
	35k	Usually contested off-track. Replaced 50k as Olympic event in 2022.
	50k	Usually contested off-track. Olympic event until 2022
	100k	Usually contested off-track.

* In Racewalk Road Championships:

- Events less than 10k shall utilize a circuit not greater than 1250m
- Events 10k or longer shall utilize a circuit not greater than 2000m
- No circuit shall be less than 1000m.

** Racewalking events shall be held in daylight or with suitable artificial light.



Off-Track Event Officials

Referee

- Has sole authority to warn or disqualify competitors.

Starter

- Responsible for ensuring all competitors are behind the starting line
- Starts the race with some device, such as: gun, cannon, electronic gun, or strobe light, etc.
- Except for Cross-Country races, Off-Track races are not recalled.

Clerk

- Check in competitors for Off-Track events.
- Used in Cross-Country races.
- Sometimes used in Racewalk races.
- Rarely used in road races.

Umpire

- Ensures competitors follow the course. Reports violations to the Referee.
- Observes competitors and reports instances of interference to the Referee.

Finish Line

- Monitors the finish line, particularly watching for interference.

Racewalk

- Utilizes the same Racewalk Officials with the same responsibilities as on-track Racewalk events, except as with LDR events the off-track Racewalk start is not recalled.







Appendix I

Certification as USATF Official

To certify as an official, there are six key steps, each initiated through the USATF website. The first step is becoming a USATF member. It is suggested the steps be followed in the order presented.

Become a Member of USATF

Go to usatf.org

- Click on **Membership** on the red navigation bar.
- In the center pane, find **INDIVIDUAL ADULT MEMBERSHIP**. Click the **JOIN** icon.
- Follow instructions to complete process.
- Be sure to make a note of your e-mail address used and the password you chose.

Complete Background Check

Go to usatf.org

- Click on **USATF Connect Login** on the red navigation bar
- Login using same email and password used when obtaining USATF membership
- Click on the “current” box, then X out of the next box that comes up
- Click on the drop down (down arrow “↓”) to bring up a menu, click on **Background Screening**
- Follow instructions on screen

Note: Background screen may take 4-10 business days to complete. You can complete remaining steps while that is in process.

Complete SafeSport Course On-line

Go to usatf.org

- Click on **USATF Connect Login** on the red navigation bar
- Login using same email and password used when obtaining USATF membership
- Click on the “current” box, then X out of the next box that comes up
- Click on the drop down (down arrow “↓”) to bring up a menu, click on **Center for SafeSport Training**
- Follow instructions on screen

Note: SafeSport training will take approximately 90 minutes



Complete On-line **Rules Review**

Hints:

- USATF encourages officials to work together in a “study group”
- Print the rules review and answer questions on the paper copy. Once finished, complete the on-line rules review using the answers on the paper copy

Completing the USATF Rules Review requires the USATF Competition Rules. The on-line rule book can be found at:

<https://www.flipsnack.com/usatf/2020-usatf-competition-rules/full-view.html> (*Rules review is based on 2020 rules*)

USATF Rules Review are at: <https://www.usatf.org/programs/officials/certification/rules-reviews-for-the-2021-2024-olympiad>

- Select **Basic Review - All Officials, All Disciplines**
- Click on **USATF Connect Login** on the red navigation bar

Notes:

- Once complete, enter the answers in the electronic (On-Line) form.
- Alternatively, you may mail the paper copy to the USATFSC Certification Chair, Norman Venyah.

Complete certification as an official

Go to [usatf.org](https://www.usatf.org)

- Click on **USATF Connect Login** on the red navigation bar
- Login using same email and password used when obtaining USATF membership
- Click on the “current” box, then X out of the next box that comes up
- Click on the drop down (down arrow “↓”) to bring up a menu, click on Officials Certification Status.
- Follow instructions on screen

Complete an **application**

Go to: [usatf.org](https://www.usatf.org) → **PROGRAMS** → Officials → Certification → **NEW OFFICIALS APPLICATION**
(<https://www.flipsnack.com/USATF/new-officials-certification-application-2021-2024/full-view.html>)

Send the completed application to the Association Officials Certification Chair.



Appendix II

Code of Ethics

USATF Officials Shall:

1. Be fair, consistent, and impartial to ensure equitable treatment for all competitors.
2. Have a thorough knowledge of the rules and procedures for the particular event or position assigned and review them prior to a competition.
3. Cooperate with fellow officials to conduct competition in a safe and professional manner. Be courteous and avoid confrontations or making derogatory comments to athletes, coaches, spectators, or other officials.
4. Demonstrate respect and courtesy for other officials. Avoid interfering with duties assigned to other officials or publicly questioning the performance of other officials. Assist in correctly applying rules and support final decisions rendered by chief officials. Provide and accept performance feedback in a positive manner.
5. Honor all assignments and agreements made for performance of officiating and support duties.
6. Not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or other protected characteristic.
7. Not engage in harassment by making unwelcome advances, remarks, or display of materials where such would create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
8. Not fraternize with athletes or coaches, provide tips or comments which could be construed as coaching for any athlete, nor cheer for or provide encouragement to particular athletes or teams during a competition.
9. Not use tobacco products while in the field of competition, nor consume alcoholic products before or during a competition.
10. Not seek recognition or attention during a competition.
11. Conduct an honest self-evaluation after each competition, to identify errors made and areas for improvement; and be receptive to suggestions for conducting events in the best possible manner in the future.

<https://www.usatf.org/programs/officials/code-of-ethics-performance-guidelines>



Officials' Performance Guidelines

The USA Track & Field Officials Committee expects all officials to be prepared and to conduct themselves in a professional manner. These Performance Guidelines outline several characteristics which should be demonstrated by all certified officials.

USATF Officials shall:

1. Comply with the USA Track & Field Officials Code of Ethics.
2. Be punctual in reporting for assigned officiating duties, including allowing adequate time for venue inspection and set-up prior to the warm-up period and competition.
3. Possess the appropriate rule book(s) for the competition.
4. Possess and maintain appropriate uniform items and wear the national uniform or other dress prescribed by meet management, and be prepared to continue duties in all types of weather.
5. Inspect assigned venues to ensure the safety of athletes, officials, and spectators.
6. Correct or report apparent or suspected dangers to meet management before beginning a competition.
7. Be calm, positive, and polite. Refrain from dialog with athletes and coaches regarding disputed calls or decisions, and instead refer them to the referee, protest table, or games committee for resolution. Report abusive behavior toward officials to meet management.
8. Not use any electronic or photographic devices, including cell phones, while officiating.
9. Assist in submitting competition results, cleaning the event area, and returning equipment. Before departing the site, determine if any other venues need officiating assistance.
10. Attend periodic training sessions or clinics to maintain or update officiating skills.
11. Assist, as appropriate, in developing and presenting training materials.
12. Keep physically fit, and advise their association or coordinator of officials of physical limitations on their ability to perform any assigned duty.
13. Mentor less experienced officials by sharing information and techniques, demonstrating use of equipment, identifying potential problems or issues and recommending solutions, and encouraging questions.
14. Assist in recruiting new officials.
15. Consider active involvement with the officials' committees of the local association and USATF.
16. Make recommendations for rules changes as appropriate

<https://www.usatf.org/programs/officials/code-of-ethics-performance-guidelines>



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