

IAAF COMPETITION RULES 2018 -2019

The 2018-2019 IAAF Competition Rule Book has now been published and is available for download here: <https://www.iaaf.org/about-iaaf/documents/rules-regulations>. These revised rules came into effect November 1st, 2017.

The formatting/presentation of the rule book has significantly changed. As highlighted in the “definitions” section below, the IAAF has now included interpretation and guidance notes (*highlighted in green*) that were previously contained in the IAAF publication “The Referee”. The inserts provide a valuable resource for officials and it is therefore highly recommended that we have a close look at these *green* items.

Below is a summary of the changes which will affect the conduct of our competitions. Some of them will only affect the higher level meets. Also, there are a number of “housekeeping” type changes that are primarily grammatical in nature and these have not been included in this analysis.

The highlighted text represents the changed portion or the addition to the rule.

DEFINITIONS

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Note (iii): *The notes in green print (previously in the IAAF publication “The Referee”) provide interpretation to the Competition Rules and practical guidance for their implementation.*

RULE 120

Officials of the Competition

A Note on Safety

Referees and competition officials at athletics events have many important functions, but none is more important than their roles in ensuring the safety of all concerned. The athletics arena can be a dangerous place. Heavy and sharp implements are thrown and pose a hazard to anyone in their path. Athletes running on the track or on runways at high speeds can hurt themselves and anyone with whom they collide. Those competing in jumping events, often land in an unexpected or unintended manner. Weather and other conditions can make athletic competition unsafe either temporarily or for longer periods.

There have been instances of athletes, officials, photographers and others who have been injured (sometimes fatally) in accidents in or near competition and training areas. Many of those injuries could have been prevented. Officials must always be mindful of the dangers that are inherent in the sport. They must be alert at all times, and must not allow themselves

to be distracted. Regardless of their official position, all officials have the responsibility to do what they can to make the athletics arena a safer place. All officials should think about safety whenever and wherever they are in the competition area, and should intervene when necessary to prevent an accident, when they see conditions or a situation that could lead to one. Ensuring safety is of the utmost importance – even more so than strict compliance with the rules of competition. In the rare event when there is a conflict, the concern for safety must prevail.

RULE 125

Referees

5.

In disciplinary matters, the Call Room Referee has authority starting from the Warm-up Area up to the competition area. In all other instances, the Referee applicable to the event in which the athlete is or was competing, shall have authority.

The applicable Referee (where practicable after consulting the Competition director) may warn or remove any other person from the competition area (or other area related to the competition including the Warm-up Area, Call Room and coaches seating) who is acting in an unsporting or improper manner or who is providing assistance to athletes that is not permitted by the Rules.

RULE 126

Judges

General

2. **The Judges may reconsider any original decision made by them if it was made in error, provided the new decision is still applicable. Alternatively, or if a decision has subsequently been made by a Referee or the Jury of Appeal, they shall refer all available information to the Referee or to the Jury of Appeal.**

RULE 143

Clothing, Shoes and Athlete Bibs

Athlete Bibs

7. Every athlete shall be provided with two bibs which, during the competition, shall be worn visibly on the breast and back, **except in the Jumping Events**, where one bib may be worn on the breast or back only.

RULE 144
Assistance to Athletes

Assistance not Allowed

3. (f) Receiving physical support from another athlete (other than helping to recover to a standing position) that assists in making forward progression in a race.

Assistance Allowed

4. (f) Hats, gloves, shoes, items of clothing provided to athletes at official stations or when otherwise approved by the relevant Referee.

RULE 146
Protests and Appeals

4. In a Track Event,
 - (c) if a protest or appeal is based on an athlete's incorrect exclusion from an event due to a false start and it is upheld after the completion of the race, then the athlete should be afforded the opportunity to run on his own to record a time in the event and consequently, if applicable, to be advanced to subsequent rounds. No athlete should be advanced to a subsequent round without competing in all rounds unless the Referee or Jury of Appeal determines otherwise in the particular circumstances of the case, e.g. the shortness of time before the next round or the length of the race.
Note: This Rule may also be applied by the Referee, the Jury of Appeal in other circumstances where it is deemed appropriate (see Rule 163.2).

RULE 147
Mixed Competition

1. Universal competitions such as relays or other team events in which men and women compete together or events in which men and women compete for a single classification are permitted in accordance with the applicable regulations of the relevant body.

The intent of Rule 147.2 is to facilitate the conduct of Field Events and in races of 5000m or longer, when small numbers of athletes of one or both sexes are entered in the case of longer events (i.e. a track race walk of 10,000m or more), where timetabling constraints make it difficult to program separate races. The intent of the Rule is not to provide opportunity for women to compete in races against men to achieve potentially better performance conditions.

SECTION III – Track Events

RULE 160

Track Measurements

1.

Note: all points at which the track changes from a curve to a straight or a straight to a curve shall be marked, in a distinctive colour 50mm x 50mm on the white line, by the surveyor and a cone placed at such points during a race

RULE 161

Starting Blocks

1. Starting blocks shall be used for all races up to and including 400m (including the first leg of the 4 × 200m, the Medley Relay and 4 × 400m) and shall not be used for any other race. **When in position on the track, no part of the starting block shall overlap the start line or extend into another lane, with the exception that, provided there is no obstruction to any other athlete, the rear part of the frame may extend beyond the outer lane line.**

RULE 162

The Start

5.

Where an athlete in the judgement of the Starter,
(c) after the command “On your marks” or “Set” disturbs other athletes in the race through sound, **movement** or otherwise,
the Starter shall abort the start.

The Referee may warn the athlete for improper conduct (disqualify in case of a second infringement of the Rule during the same competition), according to Rules 125.5 and 145.2. **A green card shall not be shown.** However, when an extraneous reason was considered to be the cause for aborting the start, or the Referee does not agree with the Starter’s decision, a green card shall be shown to all the athletes to indicate that a false start was not committed by any athlete.

False Start

6.

Note: When an IAAF certified Start Information System is in operation, the evidence of this equipment shall be used as a resource by the relevant Judges to assist in making a correct decision.

7. An athlete, after assuming a full and final starting position, shall not commence his start until after receiving the report of the gun. If, in the judgement of the Starter (including under Rule 129.6), he does so any earlier, it shall be a false start.

Note (i): Any motion by an athlete that does not include or result in the athlete's foot / feet losing contact with the foot plate(s) of the starting blocks, or the athlete's hand / hands losing contact with the ground, shall not be considered to be the commencement of his start. Such instances may, if applicable, be subject to a disciplinary warning or disqualification.

However, if the Starter determines that prior to receiving the report of the gun an athlete initiated a movement that was not stopped and continued into the commencement of his start, it shall be a false start.

Generally no false start should be charged if the athlete has not lost contact with the ground or foot plates. For example if an athlete moves his hips up, but then moves them down without his hands or feet losing contact with the ground or foot plates at any time, it should not result in a false start. It may be a reason to warn (or disqualify if there has been a previous warning) the athlete for improper conduct under Rule 163.5. However in cases of a "rolling start" where the Starter (or Recaller) is of the opinion that an athlete has effectively anticipated the start through some continuous movement even if he did not move his hands or feet before the gun sounded, the race should be recalled. This can be done by a Starter or Recaller but it will be the Starter who is in the best situation to judge such a case as only he will know the position of his finger on the gun trigger when the athlete began his movement. In these cases where the Starter is sure that the athlete's movement began before the report of the gun, a false start should be awarded.

In accordance with Note (ii) Starters and Referees should avoid being over-zealous in the application of Rule 162.7 to those events started from a standing position. Such instances are rare usually occur unintentionally as it is easier to overbalance from a two-point start. It is not intended that same should be unduly penalised.

If such a movement was considered to be accidental, Starters and Referees are encouraged to first consider calling the start "unsteady" and proceed according to Rule 162.2(c). However repeat practices during the same event may entitle the Starter and/or Referee to consider applying either the false start or disciplinary procedures, as might best be applicable in the situation.

RULE 163

The Race

Drinking / Sponging

15. (c) An athlete who receives or collects refreshment or water from a place other than the official stations, except where provided for medical reasons from or under the direction of race officials, or takes the refreshment of another athlete, should, for a first such offence, be warned by the Referee normally by showing a yellow card. For a second offence, the Referee shall disqualify the athlete, normally by showing a red card. The athlete shall then immediately leave the course.

Note: An athlete may receive from or pass to another athlete refreshment, water or sponges provided it was carried from the start or collected or received at an official station. However, any continuous support from an athlete to one or more others in such a way may be regarded as unfair assistance and warnings and/or disqualifications as outlined above may be applied.

RULE 166

Seedings, Draws and Qualification in Track Events

Rounds and Heats

2. The Qualification Rounds for Track Events shall be arranged as follows by the appointed Technical Delegates. If no Technical Delegates have been appointed they shall be arranged by the Organisers.
- (a) The regulations for each competition should include tables which shall, in the absence of extraordinary circumstances, be used to determine the number of rounds, the number of heats in each round and the qualification procedure, i.e. those to advance by place (P) and time (T). Such information shall also be provided for any preliminary qualifications.
- Tables which may be used in the absence of any provision in applicable regulations or other determination by the Organisers shall be published on the IAAF website.

RULE 168

Hurdle Races

6. All races shall be run in lanes and each athlete shall keep to, and go over the hurdles in, his own lane throughout, except as provided in Rule 163.4. **Unless there is no effect or obstruction upon any other athlete(s) in the race, and Rule 168.7(a) is not infringed an athlete shall also be disqualified if he directly or indirectly knocks down or significantly displaces a hurdle in another lane.**
7. Each athlete shall go over each hurdle. Failure to do so will result in a disqualification.

In addition, an athlete shall be disqualified, if:

- (a) his foot or leg is, at the instant of clearance, beside the hurdle (on either side), below the horizontal plane of the top of any hurdle; or
- (b) in the opinion of the Referee, he deliberately knocks down any hurdle.

Note: Provided that this Rule is otherwise observed and the hurdle is not displaced or its height lowered in any manner including tilting in any direction, an athlete may go over the hurdle in any manner.

Rule 168.7(a) applies to both the athlete's "lead" and "trail" legs. "Knocking down" a hurdle does not in itself result in disqualification. Many athletes knock down the hurdle by hitting the top of the bar when pulling through their back leg. Deliberately knocking down a hurdle (e.g. when the athlete arrives too near the hurdle) is an infringement. The Referee should be satisfied that the action of the athlete was to deliberately knock down the hurdle so as to avoid the key requirement of Rule 168.7 that each athlete shall go over each hurdle. The most obvious example is where the athlete uses his hand. In other cases, such as where it appears the foot or the underside of the thigh may have been used deliberately, the Referee must have a high level of certainty that the action was deliberate and in contravention of the intention of the Rule. An example of where the athlete does not raise his lead leg sufficiently high as to clear the hurdle and as a result knocks it down, could be such a case.

RULE 170 Relay Races

- 3. In the 4 x 100m and the 4 x 200m relays and for the first and second changes in the Medley Relay, each takeover zone shall be 30m long, of which the scratch line is 20m from the start of the zone. For the third change in the Medley Relay and in the 4 x 400m and longer relays each takeover zone shall be 20m long of which the scratch line is the centre.** The zones shall start and finish at the edges of the zone lines nearest the start line in the running direction. For each takeover conducted in lanes, a designated official shall ensure that the athletes are correctly placed in their takeover zone. The designated official shall also ensure that Rule 170.4 is observed.

The Umpires must ensure that each athlete from each team takes his position in the correct lanes or position. The Starter's Assistants will be responsible for the positioning of the first runners and for ensuring that each is supplied with a baton. They may also be assigned to assist at any takeover zones which subsequently occur at the start line. Chief Umpires for each takeover zone and the umpires placed at their disposal will be responsible for the positioning of the subsequent runners. When all athletes are correctly positioned the zone Chief Umpire should advise the relevant other officials by the agreed means of communication – which for major competitions would usually be by radio.

They must also ensure that for all takeovers the outgoing runners' feet are completely inside the zone before they commence their movement which eventuates in the taking of the baton. This movement may not commence at any point outside the zone.

7. The baton shall be passed within the takeover zone. The passing of the baton commences when it is first touched by the receiving athlete and is completed the moment it is in the hand of only the receiving athlete. In relation to the takeover zone, it is only the position of the baton which is decisive. Passing of the baton outside the takeover zone shall result in disqualification.

In determining the position of the baton, it is the whole baton which must be considered. Umpires must be diligent to ensure that they observe any contact by the outgoing runner with the baton prior to the baton entering the takeover zone, particularly in 4x400m relays and longer. If the outgoing runner even touches the baton prior to the baton being inside the zone, the team will be subject to disqualification. They must also ensure that the baton is only in the hand of the receiving athlete before it “leaves” the takeover zone.

SECTION IV – Field Events

RULE 180

General Conditions – Field Events

Practice trials at the Competition Area

1.

Whilst in the past the Rules specified that there should be two practice trials for each athlete in throwing events, there is currently no such specification. Rule 180.1 should be interpreted as allowing whatever number of practice trials that may be included in the warm-up time available. Whilst for major events, two remains a standard practice, this is regarded as a minimum and should time be available and some or all of the athletes request additional practice trials, this can be permitted.

Markers

3. (d) The Judges shall direct the relevant athlete to adapt or remove any marks not complying with this Rule. If he does not, the Judges shall remove them.
Note: Serious cases may further be dealt with under Rule 145.2

Competing Order and Trials

5. Except where Rule 180.6 applies, the athletes shall compete in an order drawn by lot. If any athlete by his own decision makes a trial in an order different from that previously determined, Rules 125.5 and 145.2 shall be applied. In the case of a warning, the result of the trial (valid or failure) will stand. If there is a Qualification Round, there shall be a fresh drawing of lot for the final.

Completion of Trials

8. The judge shall not raise a white flag to indicate a valid trial until a trial is completed.
The judge may reconsider a decision if he believes he raised the incorrect flag.

Time Allowed for Trials

17.
If the time allowed elapses after an athlete has started his trial, that trial should not be disallowed.
If after the time for a trial has begun, an athlete decides not to attempt that trial, it shall be considered a failure once that period allowed for the trial has elapsed.
The following times shall not be exceeded. If the time is exceeded, unless a determination is made under Rule 180.18, the trial shall be recorded as a failure:

Individual Events

	High Jump	Pole vault	Other
More than 3 athletes (or for the very first trial of each athlete)	0.5min	1min	0.5min
2 or 3 athletes	1.5min	2min	1min
1 athlete	3min	5min	-
Consecutive trials	2min	3min	2min

Interpretation:

½ minute (30 seconds) if more than three athletes AND in the first round for ALL athletes

1 minute for 2 or 3 athletes after the first round.

2 minutes for consecutive trials.

A yellow flag or timer should be used with a 15 second warning.

Combined Events

	High Jump	Pole vault	Other
More than 3 athletes (or for the very first trial of each athlete)	0.5min	1min	0.5min
2 or 3 athletes	1.5min	2min	1min
1 athlete	2min	3min	2min
Consecutive trials	2min	3min	2min

Note (iv): When only one athlete (who has won the competition) remains in High jump or Pole Vault and is attempting a World Record or other record relevant to the competition, the time limit shall be increased by one minute beyond those set out above.

Particular circumstances which should be taken into account are the availability of the runway for an athlete's trial in High Jump and Javelin Throw (when Track Events are being

held simultaneously in the same competition area) and the distance for athletes to walk to and through the cage to reach the circle to take their trial in discus Throw and Hammer Throw.

Substitute Trials

18.

There are several situations in which it may be appropriate for an athlete to be given a substitute trial including where because of procedural or technical failure a trial is not measured and it is not possible for a re-measurement to be accurately made. Whilst this should be avoided by good systems and backups, with technology being used more and more provision needs to be made for when things do go wrong. As no change in the competition order should be permitted (unless the problem is not immediately discovered and the competition has continued), the Referee must decide how long should be allowed for the substitute trial taking into account the specific circumstances of each particular case.

Absence during Competition

19. An athlete may not leave the immediate area of the event during the progress of the competition, unless he has the permission of, and is accompanied by, an official. If possible a warning should be given first, but for subsequent instances or in serious cases the athlete shall be disqualified.

A. VERTICAL JUMPS

Rule 181

General Conditions – Vertical Jumps

Crossbar

7.

It shall be coloured so as to be visible to all sighted athletes.

B. HORIZONTAL JUMPS

RULE 185

Long Jump

Competition

1. An athlete fails if:
 - (a) he while taking off, touches the ground (**including any part of the plasticine board**) beyond the take-off line with any part of his body, whether running up without jumping or in the act of jumping;

C. THROWING EVENTS

RULE 187

General Conditions – Throwing Events

14. (b) after he has stepped into the circle and begun to make a throw, touches with any part of his body the top (or the top inside edge) of the rim or the ground outside the circle;

Note: However, it will not be considered a failure if the touch is made without providing any propulsion and occurs during any first rotation at a point completely behind the white line which is drawn outside the circle running, theoretically, through the centre of the circle.

It is clarified that the top inside edges of the rim of the circle and of the stop board are considered to be part of the top of the rim and stop board respectively. This means that should an athlete make contact with the top inside edge of either the rim or the stop-board then he will be considered thereby to have made a failure.

The addition of the Note to Rule 187.14(b) applies to rotational techniques used by athletes in Shot Put, discus Throw or Hammer Throw. It should be interpreted that any “incidental” touch of the top of the rim or the ground outside in respect of the back half of the circle during the first rotation should not of itself be regarded as a failure. However it is clear that any technique which thereby obtains an advantage through leverage or propulsion would constitute a failure.

15. Provided that, in the course of a trial, the Rules relative to each throwing event have not been infringed, an athlete may interrupt a trial once started, may lay the implement down inside or outside the circle or runway and may leave the circle or runway. Note: All the moves permitted by this paragraph shall be included in the maximum time for a trial given in Rule 180.17.

In these circumstances, there is no restriction on how, or from which direction, an athlete may leave the circle or runway if he chooses to do. The relevant requirement is that no other Rule is or has already been infringed.

16. It shall be a failure if the shot, the discus, the hammer head or the head of the javelin in contacting the ground when it first lands touches the sector line or the ground or any object (other than the cage as provided in the Note to Rule 187.14) outside the sector line.

It should be noted that for the purposes of this Rule, the position of the hammer wire or handle is not relevant. For example, the wire could land or be lying on or outside the sector line and it would not matter, provided that the head had landed correctly. The same applies in respect of determining the point from which the measurement is taken under Rule 187.20(a).

Distance Measurement

As long as no irregularity has been committed, each trial must be measured whatever the distance reached, including for the reasons that other trial measurements may become critical in determining countbacks or whether an athlete will proceed to subsequent rounds. Except where Rule 146.5 is applied, under normal practice no trial during which an irregularity has been committed should be measured. Judges should carefully use their discretion in applying any alternate practice and usually only in special cases. Unless video measuring is being used, for every valid trial a marker (usually metal) should be placed in a vertical position at the place of the imprint left by the implement in the landing area nearest to the take-off line. The marker is passed through the loop at the end of the graduated metal tape so that the “zero” is on the mark. The tape should be pulled out horizontally taking care not to place it on any rise in the ground.

For individual events, there is now a listing of the team of officials. This was present in the Referee book, but is now laid out in the General Rules book. It is not, however, a rule, but a recommendation.

RULE 190 Discus Cage

3.
The height of the netting panels or draped netting at their lowest point should be at least 4m and it should be 6m for the 3m nearest the front of the cage on each side. [from 1 January 2020].

5. **The maximum danger sector for discus throws from this cage is approximately 69°, when used by both right and left handed throwers in the same competition (calculated by assuming that the discus is released from a circumscribed circle of 1.5m radius). The position and alignment of the cage in the Field of Play is, therefore, critical for its safe use.**

Note: The method used to determine the danger zone is illustrated in Figure 190.

SECTION V – Combined Events Competitions

RULE 120

Combined Events Competitions

Ties

12. If two or more athletes achieve an equal number of points for any place in the competition, **it shall be determined as a tie.**

SECTION VI – Indoor Competitions

RULE 218

Conduct of the Races

1. In the 4 X 200m race, all the first leg and the first bend of the second leg up to the nearer edge of the breakline described in Rule 214.6, shall be run in lanes. **Each takeover zone shall be 20m long and the second, third and fourth athlete shall start within this zone.**

SECTION VII – Race Walking Events

RULE 230

Race Walking

Disqualification

7. (c) A Pit Lane shall be used for any race where the applicable regulations for the competition so provide and may be used for other races as determined by the relevant governing body or Organisers. **In such cases, an athlete will be required to enter the Pit Lane and remain there for the applicable period once they have**

received three Red Cards and are so advised by the Chief Judge or someone delegated by him.

The applicable period in the Pit Lane shall be as follows:

Races up to and including	Time
5000m/5km	0.5min
10,000m/10km	1min
20,000m/20km	2min
30,000m/30km	3min
40,000m/40km	4min
50,000m/50km	5min

Drinking / Sponging and Refreshment Stations in Road Events

10 (d) Refreshments, which may be provided by either the Organisers or the athlete, shall be placed at the stations so that they are easily accessible to, or may be put by authorised persons into the hands of, the athletes. Refreshments provided by the athletes shall be kept under the supervision of officials designated by the Organisers from the moment that the refreshments are delivered by the athletes or their representatives. Those officials shall ensure that the refreshments are not altered or tampered with in any way.

(h)

Note: An athlete may receive from or pass to another athlete refreshment, water or sponges provided it was carried from the start or collected or received at an official station. However any continuous support from an athlete to one or more others in such a way may be regarded as unfair assistance and warnings and/or disqualifications as outlined above may be applied.

November 21, 2017