

2013 National Senior Games, Cleveland, Ohio . Race Walk Chair report

We had approximately 100 male and 88 female Race Walkers registered for the 2013 National Senior Games in Cleveland. We completed eleven (11) 1500m Race Walks on the track in approximately 4 hours with a race going off every 20 minutes. All eleven races were gender specific, starting with the oldest Men then the oldest Women and alternating until we got to the youngest. The day after the 1500M races the 5K road races were held on a certified 1K course. The 5K started at 8:00am for all the Women then the Men's race began at 9:30am. We had enough time between races to notify all those who had been disqualified. There were a total of *14 different RW judges from five states* working the RWs, some working only one day.

We posted the Judges Summary Sheets for approximately one hour prior to presenting awards for the races. This was true for both the 1500m races and the 5K races. This went smoothly for both venues, the awards for the Women's 5K started just after the Men's 5K finished.

Approximately 25% (45-55) of the athletes were DQ'd on both days: however, we had no protests. We believe that this was because of the way the 1500M races were structured:

1. two teams of five RW Judges each (one for the Women, one for the Men), plus there was
2. an **additional Master level RW judge who did all the pre-race instructions**. We also had
3. both a certified RW official as head recorder, a RW judge as asst. recorder, and
4. 8 volunteers assisting them. This is a total of 12 RW judges and 1 RW official for the 1500Ms.
5. the clerks brought down the Walkers 10 minutes prior to the start of their specific 1500M race to receive instructions. (this was done in the middle of the track near the start, **eleven times**)
6. **all eleven pre-race instructions for the 1500m included:**
 - a. Warning that Walkers would be judged on both time and technique
 - b. Information about where the judges were and what they were wearing (uniform)
 - c. Warning that speed walking, jogging, etc. are not Race Walking (RW) and could result in a red card (explained what that was)
 - d. What RW technique is: knee and foot (Note: all athletes were offered the NARI brochure in the clerk's tent. The clerks said walkers were asking for them after a time.)
 - e. What the yellow paddle means: *danger, you are losing technique*
 - f. What the red paddle was and reminder that a yellow paddle meant *%keep going+*
 - g. Where the Judges summary sheets would be posted, and what they were
 - h. Where awards would be given out and
 - i. Time to answer questions, the athletes had many!

Note: This laborious instruction technique seemed to help keep things safe and sane for the athletes, many had never been judged before. The 5K races had eight judges on the course with four at the recorder's table, plus volunteers and two bicyclists.

The only thing I would change is having dates for the walks set at least 8 months in advance so that Certified RW Judges could be secured far in advance of the date. There aren't that many Certified Judges and changing dates after they have agreed to work means they might not be able to come. Judges won't even consider a commitment until the dates are set.

Hope this helps the next Senior Games RW chair.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolee Stephens

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