

THE MARSHALS



BY SHELBY SHARPE

Update by JOHN LUPPES in 2002 & GEORGE KLEEMAN IN 2006

2006

This manual is part of the USATF National Officials Monograph Series on how to officiate. Each monograph covers the various techniques for each officiating assignment. These monographs are intended for more in depth understanding of each job. They are intended for both the novice and seasoned official. They cover the real details of the job and how it should be performed. They summarize various techniques to accomplish the job. These monographs can be copied and used for officials training only.

THE MARSHALS

by

J. Shelby Sharpe & update by John Luppés

Marshaling an athletic competition is hard work but it can be fun, if you do it right. It is necessary that you keep a cool head at all times and know your event, which includes the timetable for the event and the layout of the competition area. You need to know the location of the check-in areas, bull-pen, bath rooms, lost and found, medical tent, awards area, officials entrance, athletes entrance, maintenance personnel, meet management, clerk of the course, head umpire, meet referees, protest table, and security personnel.

This monograph covers the use of marshals at major meets. Rule 133 of the USA Track & Field Competition Rules states that the marshals "shall have full charge of the enclosure or course and shall prevent anyone but officials and actual competitors from entering or remaining therein." Competition rules issued by other organizations have similar descriptions.¹⁾ This includes seeing that coaches, inactive officials, non-competing athletes, photographers and other individuals are kept in the appropriate areas so "they do not interfere with the proper conduct of the meet." In order to accomplish this, the Chief or Head Marshal needs to assign marshals to do the following eleven basic activities at a track competition. Marshals can and should be inconspicuous to those watching the meet but can be easily found by meet management and chief officials when needed. Most often a marshal can be seated in a chair at the edge of the area of responsibility.

1. Secure access to the competition area so that only authorized officials, competitors and other authorized individuals are permitted entry.

The chief marshal should identify every entrance to the competition area and see that it is secured. Those entrances that are being used by competitors and officials should have a marshal or security person to check every individual coming in to the competition area. Unless a competitor or official has responsibilities at the time access is sought or will within a reasonable period of time access is sought, access should be denied. All other entrances to the competition area should be locked.

The chief marshal shall assign and rotate marshals. He or she will communicate needs for security and/or law enforcement personnel when needed because of spectators, coaches, athletes or officials who will not follow instructions.

Act as an on the field liaison for the media in the competition area. Coordinate with the competition officials and the media director for safe placement of media for pictures and/or interviews.

2. Secure the start of each race including sound encroachment as well as physical encroachment jeopardizing the start.

The marshal must protect the starters and the competitors to ensure a fair race. Sound

¹⁾ See Rule 3.15 for NCAA, Rule 3-12 for NFSHSA and Rule 133 for IAAF.

encroachment can be a significant problem. The marshal must control any sound close to the start that can interfere with a fair start.

The starters must also be protected from individuals walking between them and the competitors on the track. When cameras are permitted to be close to the runners, the marshal must see that they are not moving and not obstructing the view of the starters.

If a runner is disqualified and refuses to leave the track, the marshal must request that the disqualified runner accompany the marshal from the track. Should the runner refuse, the marshal has the responsibility to call security, immediately pull that runner's blocks, stand in the position where the runner would have started, and stay there, if need, without moving until the race is properly started.

Once a race begins where there are umpires looking down through the lanes, the marshals are responsible to see that no one steps in front of the umpires until the race is completed.

3. Secure the finish of each race so that order of finish and timing can be accurately determined.

The marshal must see that no one interferes with the automated timing system being used and such timers and judges of the finish as may be used. Primarily this involves preventing individuals other than the competitors in the race from crossing the finish line or interfering with the timing and observation of the finish by those timing and judging the race. If the timing device is situated off of the track so that spectators walking along the concourse may interfere with it, this will require stopping the traffic for that concourse during a race until it is completed. Particular attention should be paid to officials or other individuals, who are authorized to be within the field of competition, from inadvertently walking through the finish line area during the race.

4. Secure every field event competition area to protect the competitors and officials as well as media.

At least one marshal should be assigned to every field event to assure that the competitors and officials incur no interference. The marshal needs to be certain that no one is within an area where an implement could strike an individual. Safety is paramount in field event competition. Although the media will be afforded proper vantage points for covering the event, they must be protected from injury.

5. Secure meet administration areas when they are within the competition enclosure.

If there is a meet administration area within the competition enclosure, one marshal or security person should be assigned to that area to prevent individuals from coming into the area who do not have responsibilities there. This is not a proper area for off-duty officials or persons other than those working there.

6. Secure every area where an injury occurs to permit access to the injured person only by appropriate personnel.

When an injury occurs, the marshal should immediately converge on the area and deny access to the injured person except those who are designated to treat injuries. The paramount responsibility is to see that the injured person receives prompt attention from appropriate personnel without interference. Well-intended individuals and the media must be kept from the area.

7. Provide escort service for the competitors during competition or following competition when no other escorts are available.

Certain competitions require that competitors during the competition not receive unauthorized assistance. Therefore, a marshal should be in attendance and accompany the competitors at any time they may have contact and receive this unauthorized assistance. At times a marshal may have to act as a steward or escort in situations where a steward is not available.

8. See that competitors, coaches, or trainers do not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct within the competition area. Bring under control as quickly as possible any altercation occurring within the competition area.

The marshals must respond promptly to unsportsmanlike conduct within the competition area. A marshal should never physically touch an individual who is acting in an unsportsmanlike manner. If the situation reaches the point where the individual will not respond to the verbal directions of the marshals and physical force is necessary to eliminate the problem, local law enforcement should be called and should be used as an absolute last resort and where physical injury is imminent. Anyone acting in an unsportsmanlike manner should be informed of the potential consequences of the conduct as to that meet and future competitions. Such conduct should be reported to the referee and meet management.

9. Assist in the enforcement of competition uniform rules where applicable.

In any competition governed by NCAA Track & Field Rules there is a rule requiring all competitors while in the field of competition to wear the appropriate uniform. The marshal is responsible for reporting to the referee any non-conformance.

10. Every marshal should have writing materials comparable to the umpires. A violation of unsportsmanlike conduct or a uniform rule, where applicable, must be reported in writing to the Meet Referee.

When there is a violation of a uniform rule or unsportsmanlike conduct occurring in the presence of a marshal, the marshal should turn in a written report using materials comparable to those used by the umpires. These written reports should be given to the chief or head Marshall who in turn must deliver it to the Meet Referee.

11. Any individual refusing to follow directions of a marshal should be reported to the Chief Marshal, the Meet Referee and/or the Coordinator of Officials, if appropriate.

This responsibility is another form of unsportsmanlike conduct. It requires a written report to the meet referee or the coordinator of officials as appropriate.

Equipment Needs:

Chair
Distinctive Badge, Hat or Band
Marshal Report Form
Pens
Radio

Clip board

Marshals like other officials need to be at the competition site before the athletes and spectators arrive. Normally that will be at least an hour before warm-up for the first event of the meet is scheduled.

The number of marshals that are needed will depend on the size of the meet, the time schedule and the layout of the event. For a typical national championship track and field meet the following number of marshals might be recommended:

Needs

Areas/Venues to Cover	Identity
Finish Line	1 2
Starting Line	3 4
Entrances/Stands	5 6 7
Long Jump	8 9 10
Triple Jump	8 9 10
Discus	11 12 13
Hammer	11 12 13
Shot	11 12 13
Javelin	11 12 13
High Jump	14
Pole Vault	14 15
Medical	16
Practice Field	17 18
Clerks Area	19
Head Marshal/Assistant	20 21
Floater	22 23

Sample Assignment Sheet

Name	Hour 1	Hour 2	Hour 3	Comment
Official A	1	3	5	
Official B	2	6	8	
Official C	3	8	16	
Official D	4	16	14	

You may be able to get by with less but it will depend on the schedule. Other officials not currently working can be used as marshals to shave peak demands. However, about 5-6 are needed for track events and 7-9 are needed for field events depending on the number of media. The rest are for general areas. Note a number of these, such as positions 5, 6, 7, 16, 19, can be filled with security people since they don't need as much track and field knowledge.