

THE ROLE OF CHIEF TIMEKEEPER'S STEWARD

1. Introduction

This note is to help those timekeepers who have never been a chief timekeeper's steward before as well as those chiefs who have never previously used a steward.

1.1 Main purpose of a steward

Some athletics meetings are busier than others. The steward helps the chief timekeeper to avoid delaying the programme by communicating the times recorded by the chief timekeeper as quickly as possible to those who need them.

1.2 Secondary purposes

The steward may also be asked to undertake one or more of the following:

- 1) Assistance with administrative tasks the chief timekeeper needs to undertake on the day of the meeting before the racing begins and after it has finished.
- 2) Keeping the chief timekeeper informed of the number of heats per event and the number of runners per heat.
- 3) Where photofinish is in operation, communication of the photofinish results to the chief timekeeper and the rest of the timekeeping team.
- 4) Taking times in certain limited circumstances.

2. A Steward's Day

The following sections describe how these purposes are met in practice during an athletics meeting.

2.1 Before the racing begins

Here are the tasks that may be allocated and in order to be available to carry them out it is advisable to arrive for the meeting an hour before the first race or earlier still if requested by the chief.

- 1) Putting labels on seats to show where each member of the timekeeping team is to sit and/or checking this has been done correctly.
- 2) Making arrangements for transferring times to the track steward's pad or checking what the arrangements are, or if there is photofinish, making arrangements for times to reach photofinish or checking what the arrangements are. This may still involve transferring times to the track steward's pad or sending the times directly to photofinish.
- 3) Making arrangements for receiving seeding sheets or checking what the arrangements are. A seeding sheet gives information on the number of heats per event, the number of runners in each heat and the criteria for qualifying for the next round.
- 4) If there is photofinish, making arrangements for receiving photofinish results or checking what the arrangements are.

2.2 During the racing

When the first race is due the chief should be equipped to record the times of the athletes when it takes place. In a meeting with a steward it is likely that the chief will use two boards with recording sheets on which to record times. This will allow the chief to have one board for the next race while the steward has the other to deal with the results from the race just finished.

The process for dealing with each event is:

- 1) If there is a seeding sheet, tell the chief the number of heats in the event and the number of runners in each heat so that the chief is able to communicate this information to the timekeeping team. On occasion a revised seeding sheet may be issued, for example when an additional runner is added, so such changes need to be forwarded to the chief.
- 2) As soon as the race is over and the chief has written down the agreed times on his recording sheet, take the board from him and give him the second board. The chief must always have a board on which to record the result of the next race.
- 3) If the result is to go directly to photofinish, the times for the race are copied onto a recording pad and sent to photofinish by whatever means has been agreed. The particular means depends on the location of photofinish in relation to the timekeepers' stand and the availability of someone to run results. The photofinish may be near enough for the steward to run the result or if the photofinish is on a level above the timekeepers' stand the result could be raised to photofinish by a string with a bulldog clip on the end. The result may be handed to a runner, where there is one available.
- 4) If the result is to go onto the track steward's pad, which will be the normal arrangement where there is no photofinish, it is good practice to read the times to the track steward to write on the pad and for the track steward to repeat the times as they are written to minimise the chance of a transcription error. The track steward should also read out the numbers of the finishers in finishing order to go on the chief timekeepers' recording sheet so that if there are any queries on results it is possible to see exactly how the results have been put together.
- 5) When a photofinish result is sent from photofinish to the steward, the hundredths are written onto the chief timekeeper's recording sheet immediately below the returned hand times. A comparison is then made between the hand times and photofinish times and wherever the rounded photofinish time is more than one-tenth from the hand time this is drawn to the attention of the chief. The chief may well want such times highlighted in red or some other bright colour. The chief may decide to query such a discrepancy with the photofinish team. The priority is always to send handtimes to photofinish so recording photofinish times should be done only when there are no hand times waiting to be sent to photofinish.
- 6) The steward may be asked to take times. In meetings under IAAF rules the steward may well be asked to take first place as the Alternative 1 time. In other meetings it may be necessary to use the steward to take times if there are few timekeepers on the team but in busy meetings it is difficult to take times and fulfil all the other duties expeditiously.

2.3 After racing is finished

Once the racing is over all paperwork used by the timekeeping team is collected. This includes team leaders' and other timekeepers' recording sheets, which will be used to analyse the performance of each timekeeper against photofinish, and lap splits and lap charts that may be needed for ratification of records.

3 Conclusion

The chief timekeeper should provide a brief note setting out precisely what duties are to be performed by the steward. An example of this is given below. It is also advisable to give verbal briefing to ensure the steward knows what is required. It is often beneficial to contact the steward before the meeting and to send the briefing note in advance so that any uncertainties over the stewarding process to be used can be resolved in good time.

**NOTES FOR TIMEKEEPER'S STEWARD
JUNIOR INTER-REGIONAL MATCH
5TH SEPTEMBER 1999**

Before the start of the meeting

1. Check the arrangements for receiving photofinish results.
2. Check the seat numbers with the team layout.
3. Check the source of information on numbers in each race.

During the meeting

4. Provide me with information on the numbers in each race as soon as it is available.
5. Ensure that I always have one of my two boards available on which to record the times of the next race.
6. Receive the board from me as soon as I have recorded all the finishing times of the race, and exchange the times and the finishing order with the runner from the track judges.
7. Receive the photofinish results and transfer them to my boards.
8. Check photofinish times against the manual times returned and note any differences of greater than 0.10 secs on my board by ringing the differences in question.
9. Pass the photofinish results to me. Do not release them to anyone else until I have seen them.
10. Take times as requested.
11. Circulate the sweet tin at regular intervals!

After the meeting

12. Collect all the team leaders' recording sheets, lap splits and other paperwork from the timekeeping team.