



Oh No!

You have been asked to
be the
Field Referee

The UKA Rule Book (Appendix D) and "How to judge Field Events" (by M. Parmiter) both give very useful information about the running of athletics meetings at higher levels, when there is generally a full complement of Field Officials, including (often two) Field Referees, a Technical Manager, an Equipment Officer and Clerks of the Course. However, in practice, for many meetings at lower levels, the official who is asked to be Field Referee for the day (sometimes at relatively short notice) may have to face up to the need for a somewhat more pragmatic approach.

In these circumstances, it is likely that the Field Referee will have to be realistic about the organization of the meeting and to prioritise, with SAFETY the prime consideration. As a Field Judge moves through the Levels, certainly once Level 3 is reached, the phone call only a few days before a meeting with the words "can you be Referee?" may become all too familiar. The following checklist may therefore be of assistance to the official who is faced with this situation. It is assumed that the Field Referee in such cases will not have the luxury of assistance from a Technical Manager or a Clerk of the Course, and the guidance given here should therefore be read in conjunction with the guide "How to be a Technical Manager" produced by the SEAOA Field Events sub-committee.

BEFORE THE DAY

If time permits, liaise with the host club / meeting manager to determine:

- Is there a valid track certificate? Hopefully so (ideally this can be inspected on site, but the British Athletics website at <http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/governance/facilities/track-certification/listings/> should provide an indication). If the certificate is restricted, it is important to adhere to its conditions and advisable to check if visiting clubs are aware of any impact that this may have on the timetable, e.g. pole vault inside the track may cause this event to be held earlier than usual. In cases where there is no certificate, a temporary one may sometimes be issued. If in doubt on any of this, contact facilities@britishathletics.org.uk. Note that the track certificate is not of itself a guarantee that all is in order (for example, circumstances may have changed since the date of the last inspection), and the track certificate, while it may highlight issues, is not a substitute for a check of the facilities on the day (see below).
- At the time of writing this guide, UKA has announced that it is making **major revisions** to its Facility Certification process, with a new system being introduced in 2015. While the existing Certificate details continue, at the time of writing this booklet, to be published on the British Athletics website, there will thus be a transitional period at the end of which any information being displayed will reflect the new regime. It is expected that this will reinforce recognition that the responsibility for checking the safety and suitability of each facility lies with the facility owner / operator and the meeting organiser / officials. There is also potential for the (currently very out of date) track listings at <http://www.runtrackdir.com/> to be updated and improved.
- With the introduction of a Permitting regime for Track & Field meetings by UKA (see <http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/competitions/rules/> under "Permitting"), the meeting promoter may have been required to address and deal with any restrictions as part of obtaining the permit for the meeting in question.
- Has the facility owner / operator carried out a local Risk Assessment specific to the layout of the facility in question (see "on the day" below re generic risk assessment produced by UKA)? If so, this may highlight any unusual factors.
- Officials' room (Technical room/area): is there an appropriate area for weighing and measuring implements? Have the scales been calibrated during the current year? If not, be careful about rejecting anything that is light by 5gms or less. Are there sufficient stadium implements of the appropriate weights available? Are some of the more sophisticated items (e.g. wind gauge, scoreboards) available? If there are problems, ensure that all the clubs are aware in advance.
- Paperwork: A copy of the timetable, a list of attending officials, will the clubs provide scorecards? The host club should also ensure that there are the appropriate accident forms: if they need to be completed, the relevant people need to sign on the day.
- Throws Sectors: How will these be marked? Ensure that sector lines will be visible and marked out correctly for each competition.
- Long / triple jump pits: Will these be dug and watered? How will double long / triple jump pits be divided?

This can be time consuming to address on the day. All of the above are ideally addressed by visiting the track in advance of the meeting, but most can be dealt with by telephone / e-mail if that is not practicable.

ON THE DAY

Advance preparation prior to the meeting should have identified and addressed many potential problems, but preparation on the day is paramount.

- Arrive early: at least 2 hours ahead of the first event (subject to stadium booking times).
- Inspect the arena, looking at pits, circles, cages, checking for problems.
- Seek out the ground staff. Find where they are situated and how they work, who is their leader and their priorities.
- Ensure that you have tools to help you mend and fix equipment, e.g. pliers, cord, wedges for take-off boards, and WD40.
- Sort out timetable priorities in conjunction with the ground staff: e.g. putting up the pole vault stands may be more urgent than setting out the hurdles.

And, above all CHECK THE SAFETY OF THE VENUE!!

The full generic Risk Assessment prepared by UKA is contained within the Code of Practice booklet (2007 version) that is now distributed to attendees at Level 2 Officials courses. See also <http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/governance/health-safety/code-of-practice/>. But some of the key items include:

Throwing areas: are they roped off as required by UKA rules?

Horizontal jumps:

- Is there enough sand in the pit, is it watered & dug?
- Are the edges of the pits safe? Ideally, these should be of rubberised material.
- Are the take off boards secure, and readily moveable in the case of Triple Jump?

Vertical jumps:

- check beds, landing areas, pallets (including whether they are blocked off underneath).

Javelin and all jumps:

- has moss, mud been removed from run-ups?

Do a risk assessment, bearing in mind weather conditions. In the final analysis, take responsibility: postpone or cancel an event until the situation can be resolved, send a formal report to British Athletics/ England Athletics if there is a dispute that cannot be resolved.

EQUIPMENT

- Obtain the timetable: this will help with prioritisation.
- Check the sectors: preparation before the meeting should have ensured there are no problems, but...
- Repairs (e.g. to throwing cages): are the ground staff doing them? Is there any need to postpone the event?
- Calibration of the High Jump and Pole Vault "verniers" and uprights is the Field Referee's responsibility. Mark / tape these after setting. Watch for bent uprights and brief officials accordingly.

Stadium implements

- check and mark/label as far as time permits, but focus should be on safety, so visual inspections (e.g. are discus smooth?).
- Pay special attention to the safety of hammers: spindles, taping of wires.
- Check weights and if there is time, check length and centre of gravity of javelins.
- Personal implements: as for stadium implements, and retain after checking in a place from which they cannot be stolen. Be careful about rejecting, especially if the scales have not been recently calibrated.
- Extras: towels may be of more use than brooms for throwing circles on a wet day

STARTING THE MEETING

At least 30 minutes before the first event:

Officials:

- check that they have all arrived and signed in.
- Finalise assignment to events (for many inter-club meetings, this is determined in advance by club/event).
- Try to establish if any will require log books to be signed.
- Ensure that there is a licensed official (Level 1 and Level 2 "In training" do not count in this respect: they are registered but not licensed) for each event, especially on long throws and vertical jumps. As a last resort, supervise yourself!

Equipment:

- are the implements and tapes ready and delivered to each event in time for warm-up?
- Check that the officials have all the necessary extras: spikes, horn, lifters etc.

Announcements:

- ask the announcer to remind officials when they need to be at their events, including time for warm ups. If necessary, do it yourself.

DURING THE MEETING

- Walk round and observe.
- Give advice, but be diplomatic and do not undermine the authority of officials, unless there are issues of immediate safety.
- Pay particular attention to the use of the horn and acknowledgement: ensure officials know about this.
- Check and sign cards and provide to the scorers / announcer.
- Should an accident or incident (see British Athletics website at <http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/governance/health-safety/what-to-do-in-the-event-of-an-accident-or-dangerous-incident/> for definitions) occur involving a field event, you must ensure that the facility operator is informed and that the relevant details are recorded in writing immediately. The necessary forms are required to be submitted (probably by you or the meeting manager) to British Athletics within seven days. Also revisit your earlier risk assessment in the light of the accident / incident and take action (can the event continue safely?), if appropriate.
- Ensure that there is a thank you message to officials and ground staff near the end of the meeting.

In summary:

- State of areas: checking for hazards is vital.
- Anticipation: most problems can be identified in advance.
- Flexibility: be prepared to consult with clubs and then make decisions.
- Equipment: again, health and safety is paramount.
- Timetable: helps to prioritise.
- You! Plan ahead, arrive early and be decisive as and when required.

If you wish to find out about the South of England Athletics Officials Association then please write to the Membership Secretary at: membership@SEAOA.co.uk .