



Oh No!

I have been asked to be

the

Field Referee

Produced by the South of England
Athletics Officials Association
Field Sub-Committee

Issue 5
May 2019

The UKA Rule Book (Appendix 3) 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) The UKA website should provide an indication (scroll down to 'Certification of Competition Venues and Equipment' in the Governance / Facilities Section – latest update appears to be 5th April 2017) at <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/facilities/>
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. 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). See also UKA Rule book Rule 140.
- Safety Guidance for Cages - Refer to UKA website / Governance / UK Athletics Approved Code of Practice / Throws safety
- 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, timing clocks, EDM) 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 2-3 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, Allen Keys 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!!

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).

All events:

- 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
- Ensure the leaders of each event do a full safety briefing

STARTING THE MEETING

At least 45 minutes before the first event:

Officials:

- Check that they have all arrived and signed in.
- Give a formal briefing to all Field Officials, highlighting any issues and distribute scorecards as appropriate.
- 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 an appropriately licensed official for each event; on long throws there must be a Level 2 to lead. NB – refer to Safe Athletics 2018 p27 for full details of requirements for Long Throws. As a last resort, do the supervision yourself!
- Be prepared to redistribute qualified officials as required

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.
- What to do in the event of an accident or near-miss

As part of UK Athletics' ongoing commitment to provide a safe sport, anyone who has witnessed either an accident or near miss is asked to complete a short online report.

This is done using UKAs [online Accident/Near Miss Report Form](#). The information that you provide will help to prevent future occurrences of similar incidents and also provide an overview of the type and frequency of accidents when they do occur. Compiling our accident/incident information in this way is useful for many reasons and most significantly helps us to identify any specific issues or trends with regards to accidents or injuries. Once completed, you will receive a text version of your accident/incident report via email. Please ensure that you retain a copy for your own records. Note: If an accident has resulted in serious injury, or a hazard is so serious that it could result in an accident in the immediate future, it is important that these facts are reported immediately to the relevant Facility Operator, Race Director or Local Authority Health & Safety Manager.

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 using the contact form on the website at

<https://seaoa.co.uk>