

INWA NORDIC WALKING COMPETITION RULES 2023

1. Definition of Nordic Walking

INWA's Nordic Walking is an intensification of regular walking thanks to the active use of a pair of specially designed Nordic Walking poles, whilst maintaining the characteristics of natural, bio-mechanically correct walking and appropriate posture.

Therefore, whilst walking with the poles, a natural rhythm is experienced in the fluid movement of the arms and legs. Indeed, Nordic Walking involves the same 'opposite arm to leg' natural coordination of ordinary walking. The arms should never come further forward than they are in brisk walking without poles. During each forward step, the body experiences a pelvic rotation and opposite shoulder rotation; thus, the arms move alternately forwards and backwards.

Active and controlled trunk movements together with correct body alignment and core stability are important parts of Nordic Walking. It is important that the arm movement follows the rotation of the trunk, and the trunk rotation is a logical effect of the leg movement.

2. Nordic Walking Competitions

Nordic Walking competitions are sporting events in which fitness comes first and competition second. The goal is to preserve a good technique and gain the benefits of this activity through a fun competitive sporting experience. Nordic Walking competitions can become a motivation for regular Nordic Walking training, walking in the outdoors, enjoying nature, keeping an active lifestyle, and ultimately improving fitness.

Competitions can have individual and relay categories. In the relay, the number of the team members is 4. The categories are established separately for each event by INWA and local organisations.

3. Nordic Walking Technique

To comply with INWA Race Nordic Walking rules, every participant must use the correct technique. Special attention should be paid to the high lighted points when considering the penalty cards:

- 3.1. Ensure that the arms and legs move alternately in a natural manner.
- 3.2. **Ensure that at no point both feet or both poles are off the ground at the same time. Running is forbidden.**
- 3.3. Ensure the poles contact the ground at the same time as the opposite heel.
- 3.4. Ensure the **poles are placed on the side of the distance and longitudinal area between the toes of the front foot and the heel of the rear foot** with the exception of ascending or descending steep rises or steps.
- 3.5. Ensure that the **centre of gravity is not abnormally lowered.**
- 3.6. Ensure that there is an active push through the poles to propel the body forward. **When pushing** through the pole there should be arm extension without elevation of the shoulder girdle and the **hand should at least reach the bodyline but ideally cross the bodyline backwards.**
- 3.7. Ensure that the **leading hand holding the grip of the pole passes the body line when placing the pole in front.**
- 3.8. Ensure that the poles are gripped when placing them on the ground and actively released when pushing with an open hand at the back.
- 3.9. Ensure that non-use of the poles by any participant is only allowed at the drinking stations according to the specific course rules.
- 3.10. Ensure that the participants wear the straps of the poles correctly.
- 3.11. Ensure that each participant wears their race numbers (provided by the organiser) correctly, one on the back and one on the chest.
- 3.12. Ensure that the participant is not allowed to block the path of other participants.

4. Race Entry

Race Entry is open to all Nordic Walkers who completed the required entry form and terms and conditions form, and can assure the organisers that they are capable of completing the distance of the race in a reasonable time and that they accept all liability for any injury, illness, loss or damage that they may suffer or incur as a result of entering the race.

5. Age Categories

The following age categories shall apply to both men and women.

Age categories, 2023.

| Male age group | Female age group | Age | Year of Birth |
|----------------|------------------|---------|---------------|
| M Junior | W Junior | 18 - 19 | 2004 - 2005 |
| M Senior | W Senior | 20 - 34 | 1989 -2003 |
| M35 | W35 | 35 - 39 | 1984 - 1988 |
| M40 | W40 | 40 - 44 | 1979 - 1983 |
| M45 | W45 | 45 - 49 | 1974 - 1978 |
| M50 | W50 | 50 - 54 | 1969 - 1973 |
| M55 | W55 | 55 - 59 | 1964 - 1968 |
| M60 | W60 | 60 - 64 | 1959 - 1963 |
| M65 | W65 | 65 - 69 | 1954 - 1958 |
| M70 | W70 | 70 + | < 1953 |

Note: You belong to M 45 even if you age 44, if you are born 31.12.1978.

6. Nordic Walking Poles

Only specific Nordic Walking poles may be used in a competitive event. The length of the pole should be your own height multiplied by 0.68 +/-10 cm.

Measuring is done from the top of the grip to the end of the spike tip. Correct pole length may be verified after the finish line.

7. Other Equipment:

7.1. Participants should dress appropriately so that judges can assess their Nordic Walking technique and footwear for the event.

7.2. Participants are not allowed to use earphones as they reduce the ability to hear directions from officials and other participants.

7.3. Participants are allowed to take electronic equipment, water containers, gels, and energy bars. Communication by electronic equipment is prohibited among participants and referees and the technical service of the competition.

8. Withdrawal from an Event

8.1. It is expected that all participants who enter an event have adequately prepared themselves to successfully complete the event. However, a participant may withdraw from an event if they suffer any medical complication or they believe that they cannot complete the event.

8.2. Any participant who withdraws shall advise or has to arrange to advise a Race Official that they are withdrawing

8.3. Participants who withdraw shall be recorded in the Official Results as “DNF” (Did Not Finish)

9. Warnings and disqualification

The warning and disqualification system ensures that a competitor cannot be disqualified by the action of one sole Race Official.

9.1. The Race Officials have the sole authority to determine the fairness or the unfairness of warnings and disqualifications, and their rulings thereon shall be final and without appeal.

9.1.1. The appointed Race Official shall elect a Chief Race Official (who has to be a certified National Nordic Walking Referee) that acts as the Recorder and should be the judge of the video in the finish area.

9.1.2. All Race Officials shall act in an individual capacity and decisions are made as seen by the human eye, except in the start/finish area where Video Assistant Referee (VAR) is set up.

9.1.3. Irrespective of the distance of the event there should be a minimum of 5 Race Officials.

9.1.4. All Race Officials operate independently and should not discuss the competition with others.

9.1.5. A Race Official can only show 1 yellow card per participant.

9.1.6. A Race Official should be clearly visible to all participants.

9.2. A yellow card will be issued to participants by Race Officials when participants fail to comply with the technique points described in point 3. The focus should be especially on the highlighted points.

9.3. A disqualification RED card will be issued to participants by Race Officials when the participant:

9.3.1. Fails to keep to the course.

9.3.2. Fails to follow the specific directions of a Race Official.

9.3.3. Verbally or physically abuses any official or other participant.

9.3.4. Behaves in a disorderly or inappropriate manner.

9.3.5. Has already been shown 2 yellow cards and breaks the rules the third time. Three yellow cards equal a disqualifying red card.

9.4. Disqualification procedure:

9.4.1. All yellow and red cards must be immediately communicated to the participant issuing the appropriate card alongside the reason for the call. Yellow and red cards must be communicated to the Chief Race Official who acts as Recorder. When the participant gets a yellow card, this will be marked on his bib with a visible line.

9.4.2. When the red card is given as a consequence of 3 yellow cards being issued, the red card will be shown immediately to the athlete and the Chief Race

Official will be informed of this.

The Race Official will ask the participant to stop the competition and the racing bib will be taken away.

9.4.3. Disqualification is immediate when the participant is issued a red card.

9.4.4. Disqualified participants must immediately withdraw from the event.

9.4.5. The scoreboard, which is visible to participants in the start/finish line must be updated by the Chief Race Official.

9.5. The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) must be positioned in the start/finish area to check the techniques of participants.

10. Aid stations

10.1. There should be at least one aid station at the start/finish line. They must be marked and can be of a maximum of 40 metres long. The assistance should be provided from 10 m.

11. Damaged poles

If a pole is damaged during the race the participant should continue observing all technical points outlined in point 3 if possible, till the nearest aid station where spare poles are located.

If this is not possible the participant should at least observe the technical points with the undamaged pole.

12. Protests

Written protests concerning the technique judgments must be made by the team representative or individual within 30 minutes after the last participant has finished the race. The protest is delivered to the Chief Race Official with a protest fee of 100€.

13. Safety

13.1. All participants must be aware that the poles are not to be lifted in any other direction than that specified by the Nordic Walking technique, except at the water stations, according to the race rules.

13.2. In case the participant has to remove the poles during the race, it should be done at the side of the course.

13.3. Participants must leave sufficient space in between each other to avoid collisions, especially at the start, when overtaking, or when going through narrow timing points near the start/finish line.

14. Health

When participants register for the race, participants should prove their health conditions below and should submit prior consent, providing the race organisation with a signature.

14.1. You are responsible for your own health in the Nordic Walking races.

14.2. Do not participate if you are sick or do not feel well.

14.3. Do not risk your health if you are recovering from an injury.

14.4. Get a doctor's permission if you have just recovered from any illness.

14.5. Consult with your physician if you have diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or any other symptoms that may affect your physical performance.

14.6. Take all necessary medications with you.

14.7. Do not participate in the Nordic Walking race with a full stomach.

14.8. Drink fluids at every aid station.

14.9. Report all injuries or people needing medical attention to the staff members.

14.10. Call the local emergency number immediately to report any serious occurrences.

15. Results

The event results will be published on INWA's website and social media.
Individual competitors or teams will get points from each World Cup event.

INWA Nordic Walking World Cup Point system:

| Place | Points | Place | Points | Place | Points |
|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| 1 | 100 | 11 | 24 | 21 | 10 |
| 2 | 80 | 12 | 22 | 22 | 9 |
| 3 | 60 | 13 | 20 | 23 | 8 |
| 4 | 50 | 14 | 18 | 24 | 7 |
| 5 | 45 | 15 | 16 | 25 | 6 |
| 6 | 40 | 16 | 15 | 26 | 5 |
| 7 | 36 | 17 | 14 | 27 | 4 |
| 8 | 32 | 18 | 13 | 28 | 3 |
| 9 | 29 | 19 | 12 | 29 | 2 |
| 10 | 26 | 20 | 11 | 30 | 1 |