
RACE WALKING COMPETITION PROGRAMME

After careful consideration the Race Walking Committee has agreed to recommend some key competition changes to the IAAF Council, which it believes will help to secure the future of race walking at the highest international level.

The proposed change to distances (as outlined below) will be presented and discussed during the next IAAF Council Meeting in Doha (QAT) on 10-11 March 2019.

- Equality between the sexes should be achieved in Olympic Games and maintained in all major international competitions, with two men's and two women's events included on championships programmes;
- Distances for senior competitions should be changed from 20km and 50km to 10km and 30km from the 2023 World Championships
- RWECS electronic chip insole technology should be incorporated into competitions from 2021

Event	Men	Women
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games	20km / 50km	20km (*)
Oregon 2021 World Athletics Championships	20km / 30km	20km / 30km
2022 Race Walking Team Championships	10km / 30km	10km / 30km
Budapest 2023 World Athletics Championships	10km / 30km	10km / 30km
Paris 2024 Olympic Games	10km / 30km	10km / 30km

(*) At its December 2018 meeting, Council made a recommendation to propose to the IOC that the women's 50km be added to the Tokyo programme.

The decisions and associated recommendations in Monaco on February 2, 2019, were made after considerable thought, discussion, and deliberation both in the meetings and, importantly, throughout the preceding two years (and more). In fact, the consultation process with the elite athletes started in September 2016 for the development of the Race Walking strategic plan.

The RWC is proud of the unprecedented efforts made to engage stakeholders (including athletes, coaches, judges, other IAAF Commissions and Committees, fans, sponsors, meet promoters, broadcasters, and others). This was accomplished in part through a worldwide bilingual survey (conducted in early 2018) that attracted input from over 1650 individuals and 100 IAAF Member Federations, as well as (more recently) through opportunities for input on a draft outline of proposals. The RWC carefully balanced the input from all stakeholders in arriving at its proposals for change.

Of significance, the members of the RWC are delighted that several current leading athletes took the time to provide their input and suggestions. The RWC was impressed by the thoughtful responses received and its members will continue to work diligently with internal and external partners to ensure that the following athlete recommendations are brought to fruition:

- Improved promotion and presentation of the discipline including on-screen graphics, knowledgeable announcers and commentators, and the portrayal of athlete biometric data

- Creatively promote the speed and technique of the discipline by engaging public participation in an interactive event on race day, for example “walk this way, race the champions”
- The development of mass participation walking events (in conjunction with major Championships, other IAAF World Athletics Series events, or as stand-alone promotions) to leverage the indisputable health and community benefits of walking.
- Promotion of race walking’s current star athletes and, as a means of honouring the tradition of the discipline, its all-time greats
- A review of the current rules that will, as appropriate, incorporate the implementation of new technology
- Improved education and training for international and (by extension) national level judges to help ensure more uniform application of the rules
- The promotion of the universality and accessibility of race walking
- Highlighting race walking’s worldwide competitiveness and proven potential for athletes from all six IAAF Areas to excel at the podium level.

In proposing changes to Championship distances, the RWC is acutely mindful that this will affect the preparation of current athletes. However, in providing at least two years’ advance notice, the RWC is confident that the adaptability, mental fortitude, and resourcefulness of athletes within the discipline will once again be proven.

The proposals to modify the distances and incorporate technology will help ensure greater participation at the development level, while also providing a pathway for the next generation of race walkers that encourages more athletes to continue practising the discipline (and competing more often) as they age.

While many members of the RWC were exponents of the longer distances that have been on the international programme since the 1930s, these same individuals recognized that today’s sports environment is operating under different competitive pressures for athletes, fans, media, and sponsors than was the case even 10 years ago. Each member of the RWC recognises that the longer distances have provided excitement at the elite level in the Olympic Games or World Championships but the decrease in numbers at development and elite level is an issue that cannot be overlooked.

In order to survive in this environment, the decision to propose a change in Championship distances was made in concert with several other modifications that were supported by today’s elite athletes and other stakeholders (as outlined above). It should be reiterated that the proposal to change the distances, if approved, would occur over time, and the 10km event would only be introduced once the technology has been proven effective in providing greater consistency in judging.

IAAF Race Walking Committee

Monaco, 6 February 2019