



By Michael Roth, Race Walking Vice Chair & WA RW Judge

The Importance of Recording and Post-Event Review

The non-judging officiating roles in the Race Walks are critical for a successful event. Most important is the Recorder who acts as the secretary for all judging and administrative decisions. When hosting multiple races consecutively, the added complexity makes the Recorder pivotal in ensuring the fair and timely application of the rules of race walking.

The Recorder's main job is to manage the Red Cards coming in from judges and alerting the Chief Judge, or their Assistant, when action should be taken. Large fields or multiple heats make the task much more difficult. Errors are reduced by pre-event preparation and having an efficient paperwork flow both during and after each race.

Pre-populating the Judging Summary Sheet with the assigned positions for the Judges and athlete bib and/or hip numbers in ascending order for each race will save time and facilitate documenting Red Cards as they arrive. Having the Judges pre-populate their Tally Sheets to match the athlete order on the Judging Summary simplifies cross-checking calls post-race. The Chief Judge and/or Recorder should obtain a copy of the heat sheet for each race to share with the Judges to pre-populate forms.

During the race, the Recorder makes note of each Red Card received on the Judging Summary and communicates with the Posting Board Assistant to be sure the marks displayed are in agreement. The Red Card Summary Form, tracking only red cards, may be used during the race if there is a large field, or if the final Judging Summary will be made on the computerized form. The complete set of Race Walk Judging Forms can be found [here](#).

Red Card management systems vary and may depend on the size of the field or amount of available workspace. Typical systems include using: a cork board with pushpins, a magnetic board with magnets, or a set of binder or metal clips along a wire, bungee, or cord. Any method that holds the cards in place, allows the Recorder to sort the Red Cards by athlete, and quickly identify when three or more Red Cards have been submitted is essential. The Recorder must accurately and swiftly notify the Chief Judge (or their Assistant) when Red Cards for a particular athlete should be reviewed for potential action — either to send the athlete to the Penalty Zone or to inform them of their disqualification.

Immediately post-race, each Judge must submit their Tally Sheet to the Recorder so any disqualifications can be confirmed. This is done by the Recorder comparing the Red

Cards written on the Judge's Tally Sheets against the physical Red Cards received during the race and noted on the Judging Summary. When all Red Cards have been verified, the Chief Judge shall inform the Referee and Timers of any disqualifications and, when applicable, time penalties to be added.

Once this primary task is complete, it is customary for the Recorder to add all of the Yellow Paddles shown by each Judge, as marked on their Tally Sheet to the Judging Summary. The Chief Judge then reviews the Tally Sheets against the Judging Summary to confirm the data is correctly entered. An image of the completed Judging Summary shall be posted and made available to athletes, coaches, and the judging panel. Judging Summary Sheets for U.S. National Championships and other events needing to be posted to the USA Race Walking website shall be emailed to [**racewalkvicechair@usatf.org**](mailto:racewalkvicechair@usatf.org).

Whenever possible, the Chief Judge should hold a post-event meeting to review how the Race Walk judging panel performed. This meeting can occur as soon as possible after the Judging Summary sheets are completed if officials don't have other duties after the events of the day are done, or via zoom if scheduling requires. This meeting is an opportunity to review all aspects of the race, discuss agreement and disagreement between judging calls, and for less-experienced judges to ask questions and learn from those with more experience. The Judging Summary shows the full history of the race and provides useful data on decisions made by individual judges. Taking time to evaluate the Judging Summary helps Judges to understand what other Judges were seeing and how they functioned as a team.

In an ideally-judged race, there should be similarity between Judging calls — those athletes shown Yellow Paddles, those receiving Red Cards, and those receiving no calls at all. During a race, Judges only view a sample of an athlete's form and generally an athlete will maintain comparable form throughout the race. However, there are often outliers when a Judge observes a specific incident where an athlete violates race walking form. Common occurrences are on turns, at aid stations, on downhill sections, at the start of the race, or during the closing laps. When reviewing the Judging Summary, the focus should not be solely on Red Cards. It is a positive finding when all judges agree that an athlete(s) did not warrant a Yellow Paddle or Red Card. These instances demonstrate consistency between judges and should be acknowledged.

The [**Summary Sheet**](#) from the 2026 USATF U20 Championship/Nike Outdoor Nationals provides a great example of Judges seeing the same race and the Recorder completing the paperwork properly.

For more examples of completed Summary Sheets, refer to the archive on the [**USA Race Walking website**](#).