

USATF Road Running Technical Council Road Race and Finish Line Management



APPENDIX B GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Alternate Watch: a watch which is designated as a back-up for an official watch in the event the official watch fails (see USATF Rule 37.5).

Arrival Rate: the rate at which runners arrive at the finish line (in runners per minute).

Auxiliary Watch: any timing device which is not an "official" or "alternate" watch (see Official Watch).

Awards Search: any system designed to identify those runners qualifying for awards.

Bar Code: standard set of vertical lines used to convey bib- number information directly to a computer.

Batch (of runners): a group of runners that finishes and enters the same processing chute between successive switches in the multiplex system.

Bib-Number: aka "competitor" number, that number worn as identification by a runner which should be worn on the runner's FRONT.

Card: any hand-carried item, not intended to be peeled or spindled, that carries finish order information, e.g., a place card.

Chip: transponder device worn on the runner's shoe.

Chute Build-Up: the build-up of runners waiting to be processed in the finish area (in numbers of runners).

Chute Captain: worker assigned to direct the opening and closing of processing chutes in the multi-plex system.

Chute Cards or Tags: used for opening (Chute Open Card or Tag) or closing (Chute Closing Card or Tag) processing chutes between switches in the multi-plex system.

Chute Card Director: worker assigned to hand Chute Open Card to Chute Plug.

Chute Monitor: workers assigned specifically to insure that runners do not change positions in the processing chutes before the proper finish order has been recorded.

Chute Plug: worker assigned to "plug" the entrance to closed processing chutes and, when that chute is opened, to carry the "chute open" tag or card down the chute, leading the runners through the chute.

Color Coding: a system of assigning different color identifications to each age/sex division to assist in the "awards search".

Deceleration Zone: aka "funnel" area, the zone between the finish line and the head of the processing chutes in which runners slow from their running speed to a walking speed as they enter the processing chutes.

Digital Display Clock: an electronic timing device which displays times in the form of 6 to 9 inch high numerals suitable for viewing from a distance, usually battery operated.

Digital Watch: an electronic timing device in the form of a hand- held watch or a wrist watch which provides a digital time display, usually as a liquid crystal display (LCD).

Electronic Timing Device: any timing device which relies on an electronic circuit (quartz crystal) to provide times.

Entry Blank: that part of the entry form to be filled out by the entrant.

Entry Roster: list of race entrants in either alphabetical or bib- number order.

Finish Line Back-Up: when the queue of runners awaiting processing extends back to and across the finish line (to be avoided).

Finish Line Sub-System: that part of a finish line system that is designed to provide a specific set of information, e.g., a list of places and finish times.

Finishing Speed: the speed at which a runner finishes the race (in meters per minute).

Fully Automatic Timing (FAT): any method of timing that does not rely on human reflexes to produce finishing times, i.e., both the start and finish must be automatic. Normally used only in track races.

Hand-Out System: any system for recording finish order that relies on "handing" something to the runner.

Hand Timing: any method of timing that relies on human reflexes to produce finish times.

Ideal Chute Length: that chute length required to keep the finishers walking past the recording station at the same rate they are being recorded.

Interloper: aka "unregistered runner," aka "turkey," aka "bandit," a term used to refer to a runner who "participates" in a race without officially entering the race.

Interpolated Time: a time assigned to a finisher that does not represent a time actually recorded at the finish line.

Lap Time: the time elapsed since the last "lap," i.e., each time a lap time is displayed, the running watch automatically resets to zero. Note that digital display watches that offer only "split" times may erroneously refer to split times as lap times. (see Split Time).

Late Registration: refers to registration just prior to the race which is not early enough to prepare race packets for as in "preregistration".

Letter Coding: a system of assigning letter/number codes to each age/sex division to assist in the "awards search".

Mechanical Watch: any timing device which relies on mechanical movements such as a pendulum driven by a wound spring.

Mega-Race: a term used to describe any very large race, usually with more than 10,000 entrants.

Mixed Race: a race in which both men and women compete.

Modulating Rope: a moveable rope used in the pre-finish area to modulate the number of runners choosing different finish lines in the "toll-booth" method.

Multi-Plex Method: any finish system that uses more than a single processing chute for a given finish line.

Normal Distribution: aka "bell-shaped" distribution, a convenient description of the number of runners finishing as a function of finish time.

Number Blocking: a system of assigning bib-numbers according to the age/sex division to assist in the "awards search".

Official Timer: any of the two or three persons designated to operate an official watch.

Official Watch: any one of the two or three watches designated as official PRIOR to the start of the race and started at the race start OR the designated alternate in the event of failure of a designated official watch.

Official Winning Time: the time reported by the slower of two official watches or the middle watch of three for the winner, in accordance with USATF Rule 37.7.

Pace Sign: a sign used at the start of large races to help runners line up by estimated finish time, keeping the fastest runners at the starting line and progressively slower runners toward the rear.

Packet Pickup: refers to that place and time where pre-registered runners may pick up their "race packet".

Parallel Processing: any method of processing two or more streams of runners simultaneously.

Peak Arrival Rate: the highest arrival rate or rate that runners cross the finish line that occurs in a race (in runners per minute).

Place Card: a 3x5 card with the finish place written or printed on it, usually handed to each runner as they finish.

Place Board: a large, rigid board with pre-marked boxes on which place cards are affixed for the awards search and/or results display.

Place Stick: a tongue depressor on which the finish place has been written, usually handed to each runner as they finish.

Position Shifting: when one runner passes another runner AFTER finishing the race but BEFORE the proper finish sequence has been recorded.

Pre-Race Registration: refers to those runners who register in advance, usually by mail, for whom race packets are prepared.

Primary Timing System: that system used to time the majority of your runners.

Printing Timer: an electronic timing device with printed output which documents places and times in response to manually depressing a remote timing button. Some models are capable of timing multiple finish lines and print the place and time for each finish line as well as the overall place.

Processing Chute: a chute in the finish area used to control runners before and while their finish order is being recorded.

Processing Rate: the rate at which runners are "processed" in the finish area (in runners per minute) which may include timing or recording.

Pseudo-Starting Line: a "fake" starting line, prominently marked 5 to 30 meters BEHIND the true starting line, used to help manage the start in large races.

Pull-Tag: any "tag" designed to be "pulled" or taken from the runner which is usually attached to or a part of the bib-number.

Race Flyer: that part of the entry form which contains the information you wish to convey to prospective entrants.

Race Packet: the envelope containing a runner's bib-number and other items to be distributed to the runner prior to the race.

Real Times: as opposed to "interpolated" times, those times actually recorded at the finish line.

Reliability: a term used to describe the accuracy of the information that is being recorded.

Robustness: a term used to describe how well the information gathered at the race finish will survive normal errors and accidents.

Running Time: any time that is read from a "running" watch whose display is not "frozen" to permit reading of fractions of seconds.

Secondary Rope: a moveable rope located in the deceleration zone used to open and close processing chutes (but not used for switching) in the multi-plex system.

Seeded Runner: a "top" runner for whom you may wish to provide place on or just behind the starting line.

Seeding: a process of segregating runners on the basis of projected or estimated finish times PRIOR to the race.

Select Timing: aka "synch" timing, aka "tic-sheet" timing, aka "random" timing, aka "check" timing, any system of timing that directly matches finish times with specific runners (by name or by bib-number).

Select Timing Only: a method of timing only selected finishers and then "interpolating" times for the rest of the finishers.

Sequential Processing: any method of processing runners that is limited to processing them one-at-a-time in their order of finish (not the same as sequential timing).

Sex Separator: a worker assigned in the pre-finish area to direct male and female runners to different finish lines.

Single-Sex Race: a race in which EITHER men or women compete but not both.

Spindle: a device used to hold the tags gathered at the end of the processing chutes, in their proper sequence.

Split Time: aka cumulative split time, refers to a time for which the display is frozen but the option to return to the "running" time is available. Note that digital watches may offer both a "lap" time and a "split" time. In this case, the split time may be referred to as a "cum" time.

Stanchion: a sturdy support post, roughly one meter in height, used to define the deceleration zone and processing chutes.

Starting Pistol or Horn: that pistol or noise-making device used to start the runners.

Stopped Time: any time taken where the watch is actually stopped, i.e., the display is frozen AND the running time is stopped.

Substitute Runner: a worker who takes the place of a runner requiring medical attention or a wheel-chair finisher.

Substitute Tag: tag used to identify registered runners who for whatever reason do not have a pull-tag.

Switching Rope: a moveable rope located in the deceleration zone used to switch runners from one processing chute to another in the multi-plex system.

Tag: any item designed to be "spindled" or peeled and affixed to something else, e.g., to a place card.

Take-From System: any system for recording finish order that does not hand something to the runner but rather takes something attached to the runner.

Tic Sheet: a sheet used for timing that is arranged in columns with a space for "tic" marks or "bib-numbers" next to each numbered second.

Time Tag: a tag on which a finish time has been written, to be spindled in sequence with the finish order.

Toll-Booth Method: any finish line system that employs two or more finish lines with a SINGLE processing chute for each finish line.

Walk-Thru Rate: the rate at which runners can WALK THRU or walk past a given point (in runners per minute).

Walk-Thru Speed: the speed at which runners can WALK THRU or walk past a given point (in meters per minute).

Wave Start: a starting system which employs several sequential starts, each start comprising a fraction of the total field of runners in the race.

Worker Lane: a lane, one to two meters in width, located between processing chutes for the chute workers to stand or sit.

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