

NWANA RULEBOOK & TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Nordic Walking Association of North America

1. Purpose of the Rulebook

The NWANA Rulebook establishes the national technical, competitive, and officiating standards for Nordic Walking in the United States and North America. It serves as the primary reference for athletes, coaches, judges, organizers, and clubs operating under the NWANA system.

2. Scope of Application

The rules apply to:

- All NWANA competitions and sanctioned events
- Selection events for the NWANA U.S. Representative Team
- Regional and local events under NWANA sanctioning
- Evaluation and control tests for athlete selection
- Demonstration events with NWANA technical oversight

NWANA aligns its standards with international developments and best practices used by U.S. national sport-governing bodies.

3. Structure of the Rulebook

The rulebook consists of these core sections:

3.1 General Principles & Definitions

Key definitions (Nordic Walking, course, official, technique), athlete responsibilities, and principles of fairness, integrity, and safety.

3.2 Technical Rules of Nordic Walking

Requirements for correct technique, including:

- Use of poles for propulsion
- Proper placement and push-through
- Diagonal movement pattern
- Continuous ground contact
- Correct posture and body control
- Prohibited actions (running, skipping, unsafe behavior, carrying poles without active use)

3.3 Competition Regulations

Rules governing:

- Distances and event formats
- Age categories
- Start procedures (mass start, waves, seeded starts)
- Course zones and staging areas
- Checkpoints, aid stations, refreshment zones
- Finish-line procedures

3.4 Judging & Officiating System

Roles and responsibilities:

- Chief Judge
- Sector Judges

- Starter
- Finish Referee
- Course Marshals
- Timekeepers

Includes judging signals, card system, documentation, briefings, and reporting procedures.

3.5 Penalty System & Disqualification

Covers:

- Categories of violations (minor, major, critical)
- Warning procedures
- Time penalties
- Conditions for disqualification (DQ)
- Communication of penalties to athletes and teams

3.6 Course Design & Measurement

Standards for:

- Accurate distance measurement
- Course layout and signage
- Turnaround points and marking
- Surface and terrain restrictions
- Start/finish zone configuration
- Safety buffers and spectator control

3.7 Timing & Results

Includes:

- Approved timing methods (manual, chip, hybrid)
- Wave start handling
- Gun vs. net times
- Publication of provisional and official results
- Correction procedures
- Integration with future NWANA rankings

3.8 Appeals & Protests

Defines:

- Who may file protests
- Submission deadlines and formats
- Fees or deposits (if used)
- Jury roles and authority
- Communication and publication of decisions

3.9 Health, Safety & Environmental Conditions

Covers:

- Medical support requirements
- Heat protocols
- Severe weather procedures
- Air quality thresholds
- Event modification, postponement, or cancellation

3.10 Updates & Transitional Provisions

The rulebook is a living document. Updates may be introduced:

- To align with international systems
- To incorporate lessons from sanctioned events
- To improve clarity and consistency
- To enhance athlete safety

NWANA will publish updates with clear effective dates.

4. Technical Rules (Short Summary)

The following principles guide competition technique:

- Active use of poles for propulsion
- Diagonal locomotion pattern
- No running or skipping
- Continuous ground contact
- Stable posture with controlled forward lean
- Efficient, safe movement throughout the race

Illustrations and video examples will appear in the full technical appendix.

5. Competition Operations

Covers:

- Call-room protocol
- Athlete check-in and equipment control
- Course inspections
- Warm-up areas
- On-course supervision and incident reporting

6. Judging Principles

NWANA's judging philosophy emphasizes:

- Fair and consistent enforcement
- Transparency in decisions
- Safety and athlete protection
- Constructive feedback to support technique improvement

7. Penalties & Disqualification Framework

Examples:

- Incorrect pole use – warning → time penalty
- Running – progressive warnings → DQ if repeated
- Dangerous behavior – immediate DQ
- Course cutting – immediate DQ
- Unsportsmanlike conduct – warning or DQ depending on severity

8. Course Requirements

- 100% measurable distance
- Safe, continuous surface
- Clearly marked boundaries
- Adequate width for starts and passing

- Medical access points
- Lighting or reflectors if visibility is low

9. Results Management

- Results posted as provisional first
- Official results confirmed after resolving protests
- Corrected results must be timestamped and archived

10. Appeals Process

- Inquiries must be submitted within designated time limits
- Jury reviews documentation and judge reports
- Final decisions are binding for that event

11. Publication of the Full Rulebook

The first complete edition will be published after the initial NWANA Technical Committee session. It will be released as:

- A downloadable PDF
- An online rulebook
- Integrated modules in NWANA education and certification courses

Until publication, NWANA events may operate under provisional rules focusing on:

- Athlete safety
- Fair play
- Clear communication