



# UAE ATHLETICS FEDERATION

## ROAD RACE/WALKS/RUNS MINIMUM STANDARDS

### Terminology

**Road Race** implies run or walk that is competitive or non-competitive.

**Runners** implies any participants that will be part of the event.

When runners gather to participate in running events there are certain things they expect from these races. These are the normal, minimum requirements that make road race/walk/run “legitimate”. On rare occasions a road race is held that fails to meet the normal and usual expectations of the participants. A race that doesn’t provide the BASICS that runners expect reflects poorly on the community, the sponsors and the running community of that area. In an effort to protect the integrity of road racing the UAE Athletics Federation has developed the following minimum standards that road races should meet in order to gain and maintain the enthusiasm of runners and to reflect favourably on the local running community.

### RACE PLANNING

Extensive planning is required prior to putting on a road race. Allow, at minimum, three months for planning before your event. This time frame must allow for securing permits from the governing bodies and/or police and for gathering the numerous volunteers needed.

### ACCURATE COURSE

Regardless of the length of the race the course **MUST** be accurate. It can be measured either by using a “wheel” such as contractors use, or a Jones Counter mounted on a bicycle that is calibrated. The course should be measured to the advertised length, i.e., a 5k course should be measured to 5,000 meters, not 3.1 miles. Automobile odometers do not qualify as accurate instruments. Larger running clubs have teams that, for a small fee, will “certify” race courses, giving prestige to an event. ( The Federation can supply contacts to assist you.)

### T- SHIRTS

Registration fees should include a free T-shirt for each registered runner. Tasteful advertising on the shirt is acceptable. Remember, the races that have the best designs and most colors on their t-shirts are the races that draw runners back year after year.

### DATE OF EVENT

When picking a date for your event, check with the Federation to make sure the date you pick does not conflict with other established races. Road races have enough to compete with without competing with each other. Runners frequently travel 50-75 miles to attend a run, so your run will have a shot at drawing from a wider area than you may imagine. Make sure you don’t split the available runners by conflicting with an established road race.

## **FUNDRAISING**

It's perfectly legitimate to use your road race as a "fundraiser". Do bear in mind, however, that the costs of holding a race are fairly substantial and the most frequent reason for the demise of road races is that expenses exceed income. Please note the Red Crescent must be contacted and proper documentation must be filed.

## **SAFETY AND MEDICAL**

The Organising Committees shall ensure the safety of athletes and officials. The Committee shall ensure that the roads used for the competition are closed to motorised traffic in all directions.

There must be hands-on medical team available during the progress of the event with stand-by Ambulance team available. The official medical staff appointed by the Organising Committee must be identified by armbands, vests or similar distinctive apparel shall.

An athlete shall retire at once from the race if ordered to do so by the Medical Delegate or a member of the official medical staff.

## **HYDRATION**

It is imperative that runners be given an adequate supply of fluid replacement. This should include water before, during and after a race. Isotonic drinks, like PowerAde and Gatorade, should be provided, at minimum, after the race.

*IAAF Road Race Rule:*

(a) Water and other suitable refreshments shall be available at the start and finish of all races.

(b) For all events up to and including 10km, drinking water/sponging shall be provided at suitable intervals of approximately 2-3km if weather conditions warrant such provision.

(c) For all events longer than 10km, refreshment stations shall be provided at approximately every 5km. In addition, drinking / sponging stations for water only shall be placed approximately midway between the refreshment stations or more frequently if weather conditions warrant such provision.

## **AWARDS**

Awards have long been expected at road racing events not including fundraising walk/ runs. Trophies or plaques, should be given AT LEAST three-deep (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place) in each age group, both male and female. Additionally, overall awards should be given AT LEAST to the first three finishers, both male and female. Most races also give awards for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the wheel chair division, male and female. Also, most races give a separate award to the top masters (40+) runners, again, both male and female. Awards for male and female categories should be of equal value. There should be no duplication of awards between the overall winners (including masters) and the age group awards. The overall awards (including masters) are, obviously, more prestigious than the age group awards, and the trophy/plaques should reflect this.

## **RACE NUMBERS**

Race numbers are not absolutely necessary in small races/walks/runs as the simple methods of scoring don't require them. However, race numbers do lend authenticity to your race and they help in dispensing prizes.

## **TRAFFIC CONTROL**

Race organizers have a RESPONSIBILITY to have adequate traffic control to protect runners while on the course. Runners trying to shave a few seconds off their P. R. (personal record) are in intense concentration and are likely not watching for traffic.

An unsafe course could be a cause for legal action that could affect organizers and sponsors alike.

### **DISTANCE**

Runners compete both with other runners and with the course. They like to compare what their “time” for the event is versus another race of the same distance (yet another reason for an ACCURATE course). There are specific distances that new races normally adhere to. Most are either 5k or 10k races (approximately 3.1 or 6.2 miles). New races would be wise to choose a common distance such as these. Runners will likely not be excited about an unusual length.

### **ENTRY FORMS**

Entry forms should be attractive, simple and easy to understand. If possible, a course map should be included in the race brochure

### **RACE COURSE**

One of the most difficult responsibilities of race organizers is to pick a good, safe course. Whether rural or urban, the route should be as scenic as possible and should attempt to show off the best areas of the community where the race is held. DON'T have the course cross a highway or Hilly courses, they are not popular. Safety, of course is paramount.

Permits are required for ALL Runs/Walks or Road Races in the UAE. Be sure to check with the Federation for all governing bodies which you will need permits.

Courses can be either “loops” where the runners basically don't retrace their route, or “out-and-back” courses where runners go out half the distance then reverse their course and return via the same route they went out on. Either course layout is acceptable.

The very term “road” racing tells us that the route should be paved, or the race should be specifically designated as an “off-road”, “trail run”, “cross-country” race.

The course must be WELL MARKED, either by arrows on the street and/or by course volunteers that direct the runners. A “lead” vehicle should guide, and stay well ahead of, the lead runner. Traffic control personnel should know the course within their areas so they can help keep runners on the proper course. Nothing is more embarrassing than for runners (or part of the runners) to take a wrong turn and get off the course.

Each mile should be **boldly** marked so runners can check their times as they progress through the race.

Other considerations that may aid in selecting a site are:

1. Ease of traffic control
2. Runner safety
3. Availability of parking
4. Location for pre or post race activities
5. Restroom availability

### **TIMING**

Methods abound for timing of the runners. It can be as simple as a stop watch and numbered index cards or as complex as computer chips. Regardless of which method chosen, accuracy is absolutely imperative. Make sure your "timing committee" knows exactly what they are doing. It is very good to have timers at each mile mark on the course calling out lapsed times, but in any event, the mile marks on the course should be very visible to the runners.

### **ASK FOR HELP**

There are resources you can call on to help you organize your race. These include , The UAE Athletics Federation, Running Clubs, other Race Directors and long time runners experienced in road racing. Some running clubs have teams that will put your race on for you or do your timing, all for a small fee. ASK questions as you proceed with your planning. Remember, it benefits all when you put on a well planned run...and it hurts everyone when you don't. So for the sake of your community, the sponsoring organization, the running community and the sport, plan well and adhere to the minimum standards.