

The general role of athletics officials

Just like coaches, officials play an important role in the development of athletes. Coaches guide athletes toward greater strength, endurance, agility, balance and coordination, along with instruction on technique. Officials can educate athletes on the rules of competition and guide them through the processes used in league meetings and national championships. This will result in athletes who are better prepared to reach their full potential, earning personal bests and perhaps, championship medals.

Officials required at an athletics meeting and their individual duties

Indoors and *back of house* i.e. not within the track

Declaration/Registration – record athlete’s intentions to compete, issue bib numbers, and remind athletes of the call room details, e.g. where and when to report.

Seeding – allocate athletes to heats from information provided and *seed* subsequent rounds.

Call Room – prepare athletes to compete, ensuring the correct numbers are worn and worn properly; ensure spikes are legal; inform of qualifying requirements and escort or transfer athletes to event site or to starter’s assistants.

Results – collate results and enter them into results software; forward to relevant areas.

Control Room – copy results and distribute as required.

Announcer – relay event information to athletes, officials, and spectators via PA system.

Within the track officials and functions

Starter’s Assistants – prepare the athletes at the race site to compete. Ensure correct athletes are present and place them in the correct lanes. Check all are correctly dressed and numbered. Allow blocks to be placed and check athletes are ready. Signal race ready to starter. Issue warning or disqualification cards as asked for by starter.

Starter – start the race fairly for all athletes according to the timetable, recalling unfair starts. Issue instructions to the starter’s assistant to execute their decisions

Track judge – ensure correct and fair results in track events by judging, umpiring, and operating equipment as required to assist the athletes.

Timekeepers – accurately record athlete’s race times by starting stopwatch on signal and stopping when the nearest part of the athlete’s torso *touches* the start side of the finish line.

Photo finish – read and accurately interpret the picture on the screen to confirm or adjust the race results and times.

Field judge – ensure a fair result in numerous field events, e.g. throws and jumps, by judging and umpiring; ensure safety procedures are followed; and operate equipment including modern technology e.g. EDM (Electronic Distance Measuring) for the benefit of athletes.

Desired personal qualities in officials

Athlete-centred	Sensitive	Firm	Decisive
Fair	Diplomatic	Focused	Consistent
Unobtrusive	Systematic	Objective	Calm