



SPEED SKATING CANADA

Officials Manual for clerks of the course

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Clerks of the Course have both defined and implied responsibilities which place them in what many consider the most important position to influence the orderly and smooth conduct of races.

Using the Manual

In this manual some of the Speed Skating Canada (SSC) Policies and Procedures will be stated. There is a need to check the rule to ensure there has not been a revision since this manual was written.

It is not essential to use the specific forms which have been provided in this manual. Any form designed for the convenience of the users and containing all the relevant data may be used.

Overview of Officials Development Program

O1-100

Terms of reference for the Chair of the Officials Development Committee and for the Committee itself are specified in article VII-203.

Duties shall include:

- ❑ the development of a quadrennial plan to ensure the availability of qualified officials across Canada;
- ❑ the development of an annual work program in support of the quadrennial plan;
- ❑ the development of educational material for the training of officials;
- ❑ the implementation of an evaluation system for officials;
- ❑ the monitoring, implementation and review of the Officials Certification Program (OCP);
- ❑ the appointment of Starters, Referees and other officials (i.e. Coordinators, Competitors Stewards) as appropriate to designated national and international competitions;
- ❑ the organization of training seminars for officials;
- ❑ the selection and submission of qualified Canadian officials to the I.S.U.;
- ❑ the maintenance of permanent records on all Level 3 and above officials.

Certification Requirements

O2-101

The OCP consists of five levels for Referees and Starters, four levels for Meet Coordinators and three levels for Timers, Finish Line Judges, Announcers, Recorders, and all other officials. Each level has specific technical, practical and performance requirements (see charts at the end of Annex A). Responsibilities for certification are as follows:

- ❑ Certification at Levels 1 and 2 is the responsibility of the Branch. Certification should follow the OCP requirements.
- ❑ Certification at Levels 3B (SSC sanctioned meets) and 3A (National Age Class Championships/Junior Trials) is the responsibility of SSC.

- ❑ Certification at Level 4 (International Competitions, including ISU sanctioned Can-Am competitions, Senior Trials) and Level 5 (World Cups, World Championships and Olympic Games) is the responsibility of both the SSC and the I.S.U.

O2-106

- ❑ Certification requirements for Recorders, Timers, Finish Line Judges, Announcers, and all other officials at Level 3 are as follows:
- ❑ Certification as a Level 3 official shall require satisfactory performance as a chief official at three or more SSC sanctioned provincial/regional meets and satisfactory performance as a chief official at one or more SSC sanctioned national/international meets.

ROLE OF A CLERK OF THE COURSE

As a Clerk of the Course, you must become thoroughly familiar with:

- 1) All rules and regulations which pertain to clerking
- 2) Rules and regulations which may be applicable to another position but which impact on clerking duties
- 3) Procedures and tricks to make the job easier and the competition run smoothly for all. These are often gleaned from other clerks, personal experience or more senior officials. A good rule of thumb here: "If it works, use it." The clinic conductor can be a good source of information in this area as well as a sounding board for new ideas.

QUALITIES OF A CLERK OF THE COURSE

Importance of the Clerk

The rules and regulations for Clerks of the Course are fairly comprehensive yet they don't cover the importance of the clerk:

- in setting the flow or tempo of a meet
- as the only official in constant contact with skaters, on and off ice officials and spectators/parents.

While poor performance by any official will disrupt a competition, poor clerking can not only sabotage the entire meet but will almost surely upset and antagonize those who interact with the Clerk of the Course, which is virtually everyone.

Personality of the Clerk

Personality is a most important consideration when choosing a Clerk of the Course, for the person must:

- relate to skaters
 - be pleasant, fair and have a good sense of humour
 - understand and deal with different pressures which affect competitive/elite or young and new competitors
 - be committed (and show it) to giving each skater the best opportunity to show his/her potential (remember, meets are for skaters)
 - remain firm, calm, steady and objective under pressure
- work with other officials
 - know his/her rules and do not hesitate to initiate changes when necessary, but keep close liaison with the Meet Coordinator and Referee
 - remain mindful of the Meet Coordinator's responsibility and authority
 - be perceptive of and receptive to, the Referee's need to maintain or to speed up the tempo of the meet
- manage inquisitive parents and spectators
 - understand parents' concern for young skaters while tactfully restricting them from the heat box area
 - answer reasonable queries when time permits, put off others (tactfully) until time becomes available

Clerking is mostly an art which entails a fine line between helping competitors, controlling them and ensuring that racing is not delayed because skaters are not ready. The Clerk of the Course deals primarily with people; in such cases, how the job gets done is often as important as the job itself. Every skater has "war stories" concerning clerks who were either "screamers" or "wafflers".

DUTIES

Formal Duties

Formal duties of the Clerk of the Course are covered in the ISU Regulations, the SSC P&R's and in some provincial regulations. The primary reference depends on the sanction granted to the competition. For cases which are not covered in the main reference book, it is customary to refer to the next higher manual for guidance. The Referee and the Meet Coordinator can also provide advice and direction.

The following SSC rules define the Clerk's formal duties:

N2-100

- ❑ The following officials at the Canadian Championship event or a SSC sanctioned meet must hold a current SSC Membership Card: Announcer, Meet Coordinator, Referee, Assistant Referee, Clerk of the Course, Starter, Assistant Starter, Chief Finish Line Judge, Chief Timer, Track Stewards and Chief Recorder.

N2-101

- ❑ Prior to the competition, the Chief Recorder and Meet Coordinator may share with the Clerk of the Course part of the responsibility for making up the heats for each event.
- ❑ During the competition, the Clerk of the Course in consultation with the Referee and/or Meet Coordinator and/or Chief Recorder may change the heats if the number of competitors in a division is reduced to a point where this is feasible.
- ❑ The Clerk of the Course or designated assistant shall supervise the draw for starting positions in each race, unless such positions are computer generated.

The Job Itself

Before the meet the Clerk of the Course must:

- ❑ Attend the meet program planning meetings, usually called by the Meet Coordinator, prior to the competitions.
- ❑ Assist the Meet Coordinator and Recorder with the preparation of the heat cards.
- ❑ Visit the meet location with the Meet Coordinator and choose an appropriate marshalling area. Ideally, this area should be close to the ice surface and easily accessible to skaters coming from the changing rooms and have easy access to the door. The Clerk of the Course should also be able to see what is going on on-ice, hear announcements and talk to the Referee from the marshalling area.
- ❑ Arrange with the Meet Coordinator and the equipment manager for provision of benches, chairs, ropes or barriers as required.

The morning of the meet the Clerk of the Course must:

- ❑ Receive from the Recording Office the completed "race cards". The Clerk of the Course should never have to leave the "heat box" to get more race cards from the Recording Office. Runners should provide this service.
- ❑ Marshal skaters 3-4 races ahead of their event. There should be one group on the ice, one ready to go on and a third being checked in. It is usually prudent to marshal all heats in a given age class at the same time so that changes can be made, if necessary, before they begin to race.

- ❑ Check that skaters are wearing their correct racing number and proper safety equipment. This should be done early in the marshalling procedure to allow sufficient time to recover forgotten articles before the race.
- ❑ Carry out or supervise the drawing of the starting lanes by your assistant. If starting lanes have been assigned by computer, inform skaters of their starting order.
- ❑ Remind young skaters (especially) of distances to be skated (number of laps, start and finish positions).
- ❑ Give “race card” to one of the skaters as they enter the ice surface. The skater gives the “race card” to the Starter.
- ❑ Ensure skaters’ safe entry to and exit from the ice surface. If possible have the skaters’ entrance to and exit from the ice surface at two different locations. This will help eliminate some of the congestion in the “heat box”.

After the meet the Clerk of the Course must:

- ❑ Clean-up the marshalling area and safeguard any reusable supplies, signs etc.
- ❑ Attend the wrap-up meeting called by the Meet Coordinator. Give a brief verbal report and provide feedback and suggestions in writing, if appropriate, for inclusion in the Meet Coordinator’s own report.

ISU Competitions

Short Track

At ISU short track competitions, Clerk of the Course duties are carried out by the Competitors Steward and his/her assistant. The Competitors Steward is primarily responsible for making up the races as per ISU Rule 290 - 10. The detail of his/her responsibilities is beyond the scope of this manual. The Assistant Competitors Steward (ISU Rule 290 - 11), however:

- ❑ Works in a designated area called the heat box
- ❑ Marshals the competitors
- ❑ Checks that the competitors are wearing their number and correct uniform

In practice, the Clerk of the Course is responsible to the Meet Coordinator and the scope of his/her duties often depends on how much the Meet Coordinator delegates.

Long Track Olympic Style

This is one occasion where the Clerk’s job is simple and straight forward.

- ❑ Depending on the distance being skated, call out the competitors 1 – 3 races before their turn and ensure that they are issued and wear the correct armband. When racing is run in quartets, marshal two pairs of skaters at a time.
- ❑ Olympic style skaters often like to warm-up well ahead of their races and usually warm-down on ice afterward. If armbands are in short supply, either station an assistant at the start to issue and retrieve them, or position yourself at the start line.
- ❑ Be aware of any re-skates announced and ensure you receive the paper from the Recording Office.

OTHER RULES WHICH AFFECT CLERKING

Clerks must also familiarize themselves with several rules or procedures which apply to skaters or other officials in order to discharge their duties competently. Often these rules will be peculiar to the type or even the level of the competition held and may not be published in the main rule book. Other times, these will be rules of thumb pertaining to timings or adjustments expected because of the temperature or ice conditions. These can be gleaned from experience and from other officials. Experienced Referees and Meet Coordinators will be your best advisers here.

The following list, while not exhaustive, will detail some of the considerations referred to in the previous paragraphs:

- ❑ Rules governing the equipment which must, or must not, be worn by skaters (N4–103 and N4–104 and ISU Rule 273, 291).
- ❑ Rules dealing with the seeding of heats and advancement to semi-finals or finals (SSC Competition Hosting Manual, HPC High Performance Bulletins, SSC Website, ISU Short Track Speed Skating Rule Book and appropriate ISU Memoranda) to seed skaters at world level meets.
- ❑ Rule N1–105 which applies to skaters who miss a race since the Clerk will be in the best position to inform the Referee.
- ❑ Rules of thumb used by Referees and Meet Coordinators to predict breaks, forecast meet length, etc. in order to judge the temp required to accomplish the day's program. Such information can be gleaned from clinics, the Level 1 Officials' Manual and from the officials concerned.

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR EFFECTIVE CLERKING

The next few paragraphs cover some tips which are mostly peculiar to specific types of competitions. Several are also meant to help prevent problems and should be viewed in that light rather than negatively as someone else's responsibilities. All together, they are suggested as an aid to establishing effective relationships with and control of competitors. Use them as appropriate to your situation and use your own experience to supplement them. In time you will develop your own "style".

Mass Start – General

- ❑ Keep a small supply of "replacement parts" on hand to assist skaters when time is short. Some examples: safety pins, string to make temporary repairs to helmet straps; laces, neck protectors; etc.
- ❑ At important meets, most competitors (often the very elite) may wish to put on skates in the heat box. Allow this as long as it does not interfere with your work or other skaters.
- ❑ If changes to heats are necessary and the class concerned is ready to skate, it is often preferable to by-pass the entire class while you sort out the problem with the Meet Coordinator, than to delay racing. Be certain to advise the Referee and to marshal the next class promptly.
- ❑ Be understanding; accidents happen and skaters will repay you for small favours. Tailor these, of course, to the skaters, the situation and the competition.
- ❑ Make sure you have a race program and schedule of events. The Clerk is the only person the skaters and parents have direct contact with.

Short Track

- ❑ Pay particular attention to the location of the entrance/exit gate. Ensure no unnecessary delays are caused by skaters entering or leaving the ice. Ensure the gate is closed promptly as soon as the outgoing skaters are off the ice. It helps to have an able, well informed assistant at the gate.
- ❑ If relays are held, the Clerk of the Course is responsible for issuing helmet covers. Ensure you have them.
- ❑ For pursuits, ensure that skaters are issued the correct armband and advise them of their starting position.

Long Track Mass Start

- ❑ If weather permits, set up outside near the entry point to the ice surface. Provide benches and blankets for waiting skaters.
- ❑ In very cold or windy weather, set-up indoors and send skaters out at least two races before their turn. Marshal heats earlier than short track as skaters will often wish to warm-up before their race.
- ❑ Don't forget to check that skaters are wearing the correct number.
- ❑ Ensure that skaters are adequately protected against the cold before allowing them out (a small supply of toques or balaclavas is useful here)
- ❑ Inform or remind younger skaters especially of the number of laps to be skated and the location of the start/finish line (a map of the oval is useful).

CONCLUSION

At the risk of being repetitive, one cannot over emphasize that the Clerk of the Course position is pivotal at all mass start competitions, long and short track. Good Clerks know seeding and advancement rules I detail and are thoroughly familiar with competition paper flow; they also understand the roles of the other officials with whom they interface. The rest is organization, common sense, personality and communication.