

Eddie, The Mechanic

Appendix I Track Meet Officials

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This section describes the officials found in the typical track meet. Not all meets have officials assigned to the positions described below. In smaller meets, many of the positions described below may overlap. For example, the Head Timekeeper may also fill the position of Meet Director. As another example, Timekeepers may also fulfil the role of a Lane Judge or Starter.

Meet Director

The Meet Director is responsible for the overall smooth running of the track and field meet. The Meet Director is an administrative position, and is responsible for directing the other officials and volunteers. If there is any conflict, the Meet Director is consulted for a resolution.

Meet Announcer

The Meet Announcer does exactly that, announces whatever needs to be announced. The Meet Announcer typically opens the meet and offers the opening prayer. During the meet, the Meet Announcer makes the call for contestants to prepare for their events. The initial call is usually 15 minutes before the event, and the final call 5 minutes before the event. In some meets, the Meet Announcer announces the winners of each event at the end of the meet.

Starter

The Starter issues the start commands. The first command, “on your marks,” is only for races in which starting blocks are utilized. Once the runners appear to be ready, the Starter announces, “set,” or, “get set.” After the runners are set, usually one to three seconds, the Starter fires the gun or sounds the buzzer. In any given meet, there may be multiple Starters for each event. If so, the second Starter, aided by the Lane Judges, issues the signal for any false start.

Meet Clerk

The Meet Clerk compiles and maintains statistics. Based upon these statistics, the Meet Clerk assigns the lanes to the runners. Higher seeded runners are awarded what is considered to be the more desirable lanes.

Head Timekeeper

The Head Timekeeper starts the clock when the start device, either a gun or buzzer, sounds. In smaller meets, the Head Timekeeper could also take the role of the Meet Clerk.

Timekeepers

Timekeepers time each runner. One Timekeeper is usually assigned for each lane. This, however, is not practical in middle school and high school. After the event has completed, the Timekeepers report the times to the Head Timekeeper or the Meet Clerk. In larger meets, Timekeepers may be aided by automated electronic devices. In modern day meets, such as the Olympics, the Timekeeper is completely replaced by electronic devices.

Lane Judge

The Lane Judge is responsible for reporting any infractions during a race. This includes, but not limited to, infractions such as leaving a lane, interfering with another runner, or handing off a baton outside the transition zone during a relay race. Wearing a watch during a race, incidently, is an infraction.

Field Judge

Field Judges manage the field events. Field Judges may have specific titles which more accurately describe what they do. The various responsibilities of a Field Judge may include measuring distances (javelin, discus, shot-put, etc.), watching for fouls, or setting the height of the bar (high jump, pole vault).