

# **Cross Country and Road Running Guidelines**

## **SECTION 1: GENERAL**

- (a) These guidelines are intended to give a lead to Centres and Clubs conducting Cross Country and Road Races for children.
- (b) These events shall be conducted under IAAF Rules in conjunction with the appropriate Athletics New Zealand Supplementary Rules, with the exception of (i) Race Distances and (ii) the maximum depth of any water obstacle within a cross country course.

## **SECTION 2: COURSES**

### **(a) CROSS COUNTRY RACING**

- (i) Courses should be confined as far as possible to open country, fields, grasslands etc with the traversing of roads or other paved areas kept to a minimum.
- (ii) Courses should be clearly marked and shall not contain high obstacles, deep ditches, dangerous ascents or descents, thick undergrowth, in general any obstacle which would constitute a difficulty beyond the aim of the competition.
- (iii) There should be no obstacle or a sharp bend closer than 90-150m from the start of a race or closer than 60-80m to the finish. If desired the start and finish may be within recognised athletic grounds.
- (iv) The depth of any water hazard within a cross country course should be about 300mm for children, (less for younger athletes) and never exceed 500mm
- (v) Prior to the commencement of an event, a briefing should be held with the athletes, as well as with Club or Team Managers, Coaches and Caregivers to ensure that the course and race rules are understood.
- (vi) It is the responsibility of the Race Organisers to appoint sufficient officials to cover the course and its obstacles.
- (vii) The measurement of the course shall be taken along a line which is the shortest distance that could be covered by a competitor running within the course boundaries. The published distance of the course shall not be greater than this measurement.
- (viii) Water for drinking and sponging should be available at the start and finish of all events and where deemed necessary should be available at authorised fixed station(s) on the course.

### **(b) ROAD RACING**

- (i) Road races should be confined to roadways or paths with paved surfaces, with the exception that the start and finish, if desired, may be within recognised athletic grounds.
- (ii) When planning a course including areas of public access, the Organisers must take all steps to reduce the risk to competitors and the public alike. Obviously each situation may be different, however the main steps should be:
  - (a) Co-operation with the local Council and Traffic authorities
  - (b) Clearly marking the course
  - (c) Information for the general public
  - (d) Having sufficient knowledgeable officials, who are clearly visible, controlling the course.
- (iii) Prior to the commencement of an event, a briefing should be held with the athletes, as well as with Club or Team Managers, Coaches and Caregivers to ensure that the course and race rules are understood. A plan of the course including any special areas and instructions should be available to the competitors before they enter the event.
- (iv) The measurement of the course shall be taken along a line which is the shortest distance that could be

covered by a competitor running within the course boundaries. The published distance of the course shall not be greater than this measurement.

- (v) Water for drinking and sponging should be available at the start and finish of all events and where deemed necessary should be available at authorised fixed station(s) on the course.

### **SECTION 3: HEALTH & SAFETY**

- (a) The welfare of the young athletes is to be paramount.
- (b) **EXTREME WEATHER EXPOSURE AND BODY TEMPERATURE REGULATION**
  - (i) Organisers, Coaches and Officials have a responsibility to protect junior athletes. They should cancel or postpone activities if conditions endanger the participants. In making decisions, they should act as they would as a caring and prudent parent.
  - (ii) Compared with adults, children and teenagers have a larger ratio of skin surface area to body mass and their sweat glands are immature making them more susceptible to heat loss or gain.
  - (iii) Organisers should maximise the provision of shaded, wind free and covered areas at venues.
- (c) **FLUID**
  - (i) Children and teenagers do not instinctively drink enough to replace the fluids they lose during activities.
  - (ii) Water is the preferred fluid and participants should be encouraged to bring their own drink bottles.
  - (iii) Sharing of drink bottles shall be banned.
  - (iv) Avoid giving sweet drinks to athletes prior to competition.

### **SECTION 4 - RACE DISTANCES**

- (a) The table below sets out distances based on current Centre Championships, along with Age group championships from Australia, USA, Canada and the United Kingdom and in consultation with the ANZ Director of Coaching.

#### Cross Country

U12 Boys and Girls	1500m-2000m
U14 Girls	2000m-3000m
U14 Boys	3000m-4000m

#### Road Racing

U12 Boys and Girls	1500m-2000m
U14 Boys and Girls	3000m-4000m

- (b) It is recommended a variety of distances (within the above limits) are programmed during the season.
- (c) When Race Organisers are programming Centre or Inter-Club Events, they should allow 7 days gap from major Inter-School events.
- (d) It is recommended that the distance is considered in conjunction with the topography and difficulty of the course. ie. For a tough course shorten the distance for children.
- (e) The course (except the start and finish area) should be about 1.5m wide, to allow athletes to pass each other

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **ADDITIONAL MATERIAL**

#### **Notes Re Footwear for Cross Country & Road Racing**

It has been suggested that the following notes re foot-wear be added to the Notes for Guidance for Cross Country and Road Racing.

##### **(1) FOOTWEAR**

- (i) Taking into account IAAF Rule 143.2, it is recommended that competitors use shoes for both cross country and road racing events.
- (ii) For the hard paved surface encountered in road racing, shoes with resilient heels will reduce the impact of each foot strike and therefore the chance of lower leg and joint problems. A ribbed or pimple tread pattern particularly at the heel and toe will improve grip in wet conditions.
- (iii) For cross country racing a firm sole will give support to the foot on uneven surfaces. A much deeper tread pattern or spikes may be necessary for sufficient grip. Spikes less than 9mm in length will have very little advantage on most cross-country courses.

