

20. Seedings, Draws and Qualification in Track Events

Rounds and Heats

20.1 Qualification Rounds shall be held in Track Events in which the number of athletes is too large to allow the competition to be conducted satisfactorily in a single round (final). Where Qualification Rounds are held, all athletes must compete in, and qualify through, all such rounds except that the relevant governing body may, for one or more events, authorise the conduct of additional preliminary qualification round(s) either at the same competition or at one or more earlier competitions to determine some or all of the athletes who shall be entitled to participate and in which round of the competition. Such procedure and any other means (such as achieving entry standards during a specified period, by specified placing in a designated competition or by specified rankings) by which an athlete is entitled to participate, and in which round of the competition, shall be set out in the regulations for each competition.

Note: See also Rule 8.4.3 of the Technical Rules.

20.2 The Qualification Rounds for Track Events shall be arranged as follows by the appointed Technical Delegates. If no Technical Delegates have been appointed, they shall be arranged by the Organisers.

20.2.1 The regulations for each competition should include tables which shall, in the absence of extraordinary circumstances, be used to determine the number of rounds, the number of heats in each round and the qualification procedure, i.e. those to advance by place and time. Such information shall also be provided for any additional preliminary qualification round(s).

Note (i): Tables which may be used in the absence of any provision in applicable regulations or other determination by the Organisers are published on the World Athletics website.

Note (ii): The applicable regulations may specify how vacant positions due to withdrawals in semi-finals and finals may be filled in by athletes ranked next following the previous round after those qualified.

- 20.2.2 Whenever possible, athletes of each Member or team and the best performed athletes shall be placed in different heats in all Qualification Rounds of the competition. In applying this Rule after the first round, the required exchanges of athletes between heats should, to the extent possible, be made between athletes seeded in the same “group of lanes” according to Rules 20.4.3 to 20.4.5 of the Technical Rules.
- 20.2.3 When heats are being arranged, as much information as possible about the performances of all athletes should be considered and the heats drawn so that, normally, the best performed athletes reach the final.

The Qualification Rounds should determine in the best possible way the athletes who will take part in the next round and eventually the final. This includes avoiding where possible the clashing of the best performed athletes (determined generally on performance in the qualification period but also taking into account such matters as outstanding recent career records) in the same heats as also applies to athletes from the same Member or team.

II Unless the applicable regulations determine otherwise, for major competitions, at least, the basis of the seeding should be the best times achieved by each athlete in valid conditions (including with wind readings for the relevant events) during the pre-determined period. This period may be specified in the applicable regulations or in the document setting out the entry conditions and standards for the competition. Where there is no such specification, then the “Season Best” should be used unless the Technical Delegate(s) or the Organisers decide that for one, some or all events the circumstances justify an alternate period or other criteria being applied.

Such factors as performances achieved during training or tests, even if they appeared to look like competition or notions about what an athlete might “be worth” but has never achieved, should not be taken into account in seeding.

The requirements of the Rule in relation to the “best performed athletes” does require some deviation from the strict protocol outlined above. For example, an athlete who might normally be seeded in a high position might not have any, or only a poor, valid performance in the predetermined period (through injury, illness, ineligibility or in the case of Short Track meetings only have 400m Standard Oval Track Stadium results). Whilst they would normally be placed lower or at the bottom of the seeding list, adjustment should be considered by the Technical Delegate(s). Similar principles should be applied to avoid a clash in a Qualification Round between athletes considered to be the favourites to place highly in the event if the results of the previous round would strictly dictate that they should be in the same heat. At this same time any adjustments to ensure as much as possible that athletes from the same Member or team are in different heats should also be made.

In all such cases, adjustments of the seeding should be made after the initial allocation to the heats but before any draw is made for the lanes. After these changes are made, a final check should be made to ensure that the heats are as equal as possible.

In applying these principles, exchanges of athletes should be made:

- a. in the first round, between athletes with a similar ranking on the list of best valid performances during the pre-determined period; and
- b. in subsequent rounds, between athletes seeded in the same “group of lanes” according to Rules 20.4.3 to 20.4.5 of the Technical Rules.

Following these principles is more important in competitions in which the number of rounds has been reduced in some events - making accurate and well considered seeding vital to achieving both a fair and an athletically appealing outcome.

For lower level competitions, the Technical Delegate(s) or the Organisers may consider using different principles to achieve a similar final outcome.

Ranking and Composition of Heats

20.3 Ranking and Composition of Heats, as follows:

- 20.3.1 For the first round, the athletes shall be ranked with the seeding determined from the relevant list of valid performances achieved during the predetermined period or in accordance with the applicable regulations.

20.3.2 After the first round:

- a. for events up to and including 400m, and relays up to and including 4 × 400m, seeding shall be based upon placings and times of each previous round. For this purpose, athletes shall be ranked as follows:
- Fastest heat winner
 - 2nd fastest heat winner
 - 3rd fastest heat winner, etc.
 - Fastest 2nd place
 - 2nd fastest 2nd place
 - 3rd fastest 2nd place, etc.
 - (Concluding with)
 - Fastest time qualifier
 - 2nd fastest time qualifier
 - 3rd fastest time qualifier, etc.
- b. for other events, the original performance lists shall continue to be used for seeding, modified only by improvements in performances achieved during the earlier round(s).

20.3.3 In each case the athletes shall then be placed in heats in the order of seeding in a zigzag distribution, e.g. three heats will consist of the following seedings:

A	1	6	7	12	13	18	19	24
B	2	5	8	11	14	17	20	23
C	3	4	9	10	15	16	21	22

20.3.4 In each case, the order in which heats are to be run shall be determined by draw after the composition of the heats has been decided.

For the first round, in order to reduce the number of heats required, it is acceptable and normal for additional available lanes (for example a ninth lane on a straight or oval track) to be used in races up to and including 400m and to have more than one athlete in a lane at the start of an 800m race.

The random draw to determine the order in which the heats are conducted is based on fairness. In middle and long distance races the athletes running in the last heat will know as far as qualifying by times the performance they have to realise in order to qualify. Even with the shorter races there is a fairness aspect as weather conditions can change (rain suddenly falling or an alteration in wind strength or direction). Fairness dictates that order be determined by chance.

Draw for Lanes

20.4 For events up to and including 800m, and relays up to and including 4 × 400m, where there are several successive rounds of a race, lanes will be drawn as follows:

20.4.1 Unless the applicable regulations provide otherwise, for the first round and any additional preliminary qualification round as per Rule 20.1 of the Technical Rules, the lane order shall be drawn by lot.

20.4.2 After the first round, athletes shall be ranked after each round in accordance with the procedure shown in Rule 20.3.2(a) or, in the case of 800m, 20.3.2(b) of the Technical Rules.

For an eight-lane track, three draws for lanes will then be made. When there are fewer or more than eight lanes, the principles in the following system with the necessary modifications should be used.

20.4.3 For straight races:

- a. one draw for the four highest ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 3, 4, 5 and 6;
- b. another for the fifth and sixth ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 2 and 7, and
- c. another for the two lowest ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 1 and 8.

20.4.4 For 200m races:

- a. one draw for the three highest ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 5, 6 and 7;

- b. another for the fourth, fifth and sixth ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 3, 4 and 8, and
 - c. another for the two lowest ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 1 and 2.
- 20.4.5 For 400m races, all relays up to and including 4 x 400m and 800m races started in lanes:
- a. one draw for the four highest ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 4, 5, 6 and 7;
 - b. another for the fifth and sixth ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 3 and 8, and
 - c. another for the two lowest ranked athletes or teams to determine placings in lanes 1 and 2.

Note (i): In competitions under paragraphs 1. (d), (e) and 2. of the World Rankings Competition definition, the 800m event may be run with one or two athletes in each lane, or with group start behind an arced line. In competitions under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, this should normally be applied only in the first round, unless because of ties or advancement by the Referee or the Jury of Appeal, there are more athletes in a race of a subsequent round than were anticipated.

Note (ii): In any 800m race, including a final, where for any reason there are more athletes competing than lanes available, the Technical Delegate(s) shall determine in which lanes more than one athlete will be drawn.

Note (iii): When there are more lanes than athletes, the inside lane(s) should always remain free.

With regard to Note (ii), there is no exact specification as to how the Technical Delegates should act as the situations which may give rise to it may vary greatly. However, this issue only affects the running of the first bend of the race and is not as important as the allocation of lanes in a shorter race. Technical Delegate(s) are advised to place the additional athlete(s) in the lane(s) where the “double-up” will cause least inconvenience - usually the outer lanes so that the athletes are not running around a tighter bend together.

As to Note (iii), where a stadium has more than eight lanes available, the Technical Delegate(s) (or if none the Organisers) should decide in advance which lanes are to be used for this purpose. For example, in the case of a nine-lane oval track, lane one would not be used in cases where less than nine athletes are taking part in a race. Consequently, for the purposes of Rule 20.4 of the Technical Rules, lane 2 is regarded as lane 1 and so on.

- 20.5 In competitions under paragraphs 1. (a), (b), (c) and 2. (a), (b) of the World Rankings Competition definition, for events longer than 800m, relays longer than 4 × 400m and any event where only a single round (final) is required, lanes / starting positions shall be drawn by lot.
- 20.6 Where it is decided to conduct a series of races in an event rather than rounds and finals, the regulations for the competition shall set out all relevant considerations including seedings and draws and the method by which the final results will be determined.
- 20.7 An athlete shall not be allowed to compete in a heat or lane other than the one in which their name appears, except in circumstances which, in the opinion of the Technical Delegate(s) or the Referee, justify an alteration.

Progression

- 20.8 In all Qualification Rounds, the tables should, where practicable, allow at least the first and second places in each heat to qualify for the next round and it is recommended that, where possible, at least three in each heat should qualify. Except where Rule 21 of the Technical Rules applies, any other athletes may qualify by place or by time according to Rule 20.2 of the Technical Rules, the applicable Technical Regulations, or as determined by the Technical Delegate(s). When athletes are qualified according to their times, only one system of timing may be applied.

Note: In races longer than 800 metres where rounds are conducted, it is recommended that only a small number of athletes qualify by time.

Where tables are prescribed in the regulations for a competition, it is usual that the principle set out in Rule 20.8 of the Technical Rules will have been incorporated. Where not, the Technical Delegates or Organisers should follow same when establishing the progression table to be used.

There will, however, be occasions when Rule 21 of the Technical Rules may cause a variation to be applied, particularly where there is a tie for the last qualifying position based on place. In such cases, it may be necessary for one less athlete to progress on time. In circumstances where there are sufficient additional lanes available, or in the case of the 800m (where a lane at the start may be used for more than one athlete) or a non-laned race, the Technical Delegate(s) may decide to progress an additional athlete(s).

Because of the provision within Rule 20.8 of the Technical Rules that for time qualification only one system of timing may be applied it is important for back-up timing systems to be available for Qualification Rounds in case the primary system (usually photo finish) fails. In the event that only times from different timing systems are available for two or more heats, the Technical Delegates, in conjunction with the Running and Race Walking Events Referee, should determine, within the circumstances of the particular competition, the fairest method for determining those athletes who should proceed to the next round. Where additional lanes are available, it is recommended that this option be considered first.

|| Invitation Meetings

20.9 In competitions held under paragraphs 1. (d) and 2. (d) of the World Rankings Competition definition athletes may be seeded, ranked and/or allocated to lanes in accordance with the applicable regulations for the competition or any other method determined by the Organisers but, preferably, notified to the athletes and their representatives in advance.

In invitation meetings, if there is only a “final” round but with more than one race, the races should be arranged according to any applicable regulations for the meeting or the series of meetings of which it is a part. If there are none then it is usual for allocation of athletes to the various “races” to be undertaken by the Organisers or if requested by the appointed Technical Delegate(s).

Similar considerations apply to how the final ranking of the athletes in such events will be made. In some meetings the “race(s)” other than the main race are regarded as separate races and are not considered for the overall ranking but in others the results of more than one race are “combined” to give the overall ranking. It is highly advisable to ensure that whichever is to apply for the competition is also notified to the participants in advance as it may affect prizes and other considerations.

Minimum Times between Rounds

20.10 The following minimum times must be allowed, when practicable, between the last heat of any round and the first heat of a subsequent round or final:

Up to and including 200m	45 minutes
Over 200m up to and including 1000m	90 minutes
Over 1000m	Not on the same day

21. Ties

21.1 If the Judges or the Photo Finish Judges are unable to separate the athletes for any place according to Rules 18.2, 19.17, 19.21 or 19.26 of the Technical Rules (as may be applicable), it shall be determined to be a tie and the tie shall remain.

Tie for ranking position (according to Rule 20.3.2 of the Technical Rules)

21.2 If there is a tie for any ranking position under Rule 20.3.2 of the Technical Rules, the Chief Photo Finish Judge shall consider the actual times recorded by the athletes to 0.001 second and if it is equal, it shall be determined to be a tie and lots shall be drawn to determine the higher ranking position.

Tie for last qualifying position based on place

- 21.3 If after the application of Rule 21.1 of the Technical Rules, there is a tie for a last qualifying position based on place, if there are lanes or positions available (including lane sharing in 800m races) the tying athletes shall be placed in the next round. If that is not practicable, lots shall be drawn to determine which athlete(s) shall be placed in the next round.
- 21.4 Where qualifying for the next round is based on place and time (e.g. the first three in each of two heats plus the next two fastest), and there is a tie for the last qualifying position based on place, placing the tied athletes in the next round shall reduce the number of athletes qualifying based on time.

Tie for last qualifying position based on time

- 21.5 If there is a tie for a last qualifying position based on time, the Chief Photo Finish Judge shall consider the actual times recorded by the athletes to 0.001 second and if it is equal, it shall be determined to be a tie. If there are lanes or positions available (including lane sharing in 800m races) the tying athletes shall be placed in the next round. If that is not practicable, lots shall be drawn to determine which athlete(s) shall be placed in the next round.

APPENDIX 5

Tables to determine the number of rounds, and heats in each round, to be held and the qualification procedure, i.e. those to advance by place (P) and time (T), for each round of Track Events.

8-lane Straight Tracks:

60m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 60m H, 100m H, 110m H, 400m H, 4 × 100m, 4 × 200m, Medley Relay, 4 × 400m – 8 in Final

Declared Entries	First Round			Semi-Finals		
	Heats	P	T	Heats	P	T
9-16	2	3	2	-	-	-
17-24	3	2	2	-	-	-
25-32	4	3	4	2	3	2
33-40	5	4	4	3	2	2
41-48	6	3	6	3	2	2
49-56	7	3	3	3	2	2
57-64	8	2	8	3	2	2
65-72	9	2	6	3	2	2
73-80	10	2	4	3	2	2
81-88	11	2	2	3	2	2
89-96	12	2	0	3	2	2
97-104	13	1	11	3	2	2
105-112	14	1	10	3	2	2

400m Standard Track, 8-lane Oval Tracks:

1500m – 12 in Final

Declared Entries	First Round			Semi-Finals		
	Heats	P	T	Heats	P	T
16-30	2	6	0	-	-	-
31-45*	3	8	0	2	6	0
46-60	4	6	0	2	6	0
61-75	5	5	0	2	6	0

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31-45	3	4	0	-	-	-
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2000m SC, 3000m, 3000m SC – 14/15 in Final

Declared Entries	First Round			Semi-Finals		
	Heats	P	T	Heats	P	T
20-34	2	7	0	-	-	-
35-51	3	5	0	-	-	-
52-68	4	7	0	2	7	0
69-85	5	6	0	2	7	0

5000m – 16 in Final

Declared Entries	First Round			Semi-Finals		
	Heats	P	T	Heats	P	T
21-42	2	8	0	-	-	-
43-63	3	10	0	2	8	0
64-84	4	8	0	2	8	0
85-105	5	6	0	2	8	0

10,000m – 20/21 in Final**Declared First Round**

Entries	Heats	P	T			
28-54	2	10	0	-	-	-
55-81	3	7	0	-	-	-
82-108	4	5	0	-	-	-

200m Standard Track (Short Track), 6-lane Oval Tracks:**200m sh, 400m sh, 800m sh, 4 × 200m sh, 4 × 400m sh – 6 in Final****Declared First Round**

Entries	Heats	P	T	Semi-Finals		
				Heats	P	T
7-12	2	2	2	-	-	-
13-18	3	2	0	-	-	-
19-24	4	1	2	-	-	-
25-30	5	2	2	2	3	0
31-36	6	2	6	3	2	0
37-42	7	2	4	3	2	0
43-48	8	2	2	3	2	0
49-54	9	2	0	3	2	0
55-60	10	1	8	3	2	0

1500m sh – 9/10 in Final**Declared First Round**

Entries	Heats	P	T	Semi-Finals		
				Heats	P	T
12-18	2	5	0	-	-	-
19-27	3	3	0	-	-	-
28-36	4	2	1	-	-	-
37-45	5	4	0	2	5	0
46-54	6	3	0	2	5	0
55-63	7	3	0	2	5	0

3000m sh – 12 in Final**Declared First Round**

Entries	Heats	P	T			
16-24	2	6	0	-	-	-
25-36	3	4	0	-	-	-
37-48	4	3	0	-	-	-