

IV. Race Officials and Volunteers

Biathlon races require many more officials than ordinary running races. Having a large and well-informed staff of volunteers is a must.

Source of Volunteers. Lots of people enjoy helping with athletic competitions. The trick is finding them. The following list of sources should help.

- A. Local biathlon, running, and X-C skiing club members
- B. Civic clubs
- C. Your friends
- D. Parents and family members of competitors
- E. National Guard Marksmanship Unit
- F. Police
- G. Shooting/Sportsmen Club Members

You might want to advertise on all race announcements that volunteers are welcome. Depending on budget restraints, you might provide all volunteers with a free T-shirt. Remember to acknowledge them at the awards ceremony.

Volunteer Job Descriptions. Depending on the size and format of your event, you will need to fill the following positions.

- A. Event Director (presumably this is you)
- B. Chief of Competition
- C. Chief of Range
- D. Range Officials (1 per firing point)
- E. Penalty recorders (1 per 3 firing points)
- F. Timers (may double as registration people)
- G. Registration People
- H. Result Calculators
- I. Course Marshals (number dependent on length and complexity of course)
- J. Starter
- K. Extras (to cover unexpected problems or absentees)
- L. Optional People (first aid person, feed station person, sign maker)
- M. Publicity Chairman
- N. Treasurer

Responsibilities of Volunteer Positions. Prior to the actual competition you will need to conduct at least one meeting to inform your volunteers of their responsibilities. Don't wait until the morning of the event when the pace is too hectic. Begin the meeting with a general description of how the entire event will transpire, and then spell out in great detail exactly what you expect from each person. Run through the event as completely as you can. This will familiarize everyone with their job, and may reveal problem areas—or ideas—that might not otherwise be apparent until

race day. For many of them it will be their first biathlon experience, and they will feel more comfortable if you are very thorough. If you have elected to appoint a Chief of Competition, this person should preside over this meeting. The volunteers will work for the Chief of Competition.

A. Event Director. This person is responsible for coordinating and integrating every major aspect of the event. This includes designing the event, promotion, communicating with sponsors, course layout, range preparation, gathering needed equipment, assigning volunteers, managing the actual event, publishing results, cleaning up, and thanking everyone for their participation.

Although Directors will delegate many of these duties to their staff, they retain the final responsibility for each aspect. Directing an event provides a rewarding sense of accomplishment as all these diverse activities come together on race day. Appendix B is a chronological checklist for the Event Director.

B. Chief of Competition. This is the person who really takes over on race day. He/she insures that it is a fair, enjoyable, and well managed event from the viewpoint of the competitors. Duties include:

1. Overseeing volunteers.
2. Insuring that the running course is marked.
3. Insuring that the range is ready.
4. Insuring that the registration is going smoothly.
5. Insuring that the competitors are informed.
6. Starting the race on time.
7. Insuring that all needed equipment is present (stop watches, garbage cans, tables, etc.).
8. Controlling the start and finish areas.
9. Insuring that the race is run in accordance with biathlon policies & rules (available through the USBA).
10. Announcing the pre-race instructions to competitors.

C. Chief of Range. The Chief of Range is responsible for everything that happens from the time the competitors approach the range until they exit. He also coordinates setting up and tearing down the range. Duties include:

1. Insuring that the targets are on site and set up.
2. Arranging for extra rifles to be available.
3. Distributing ammunition to firing points.
4. Presenting the safety briefing (Appendix A).
5. Overseeing range officials and shooting penalty recorders.
6. Watching for safety violations during the race.
7. Keeping a record of all range penalties given for violations and time credits given to the competitor for equipment or target malfunctions.
8. Maintaining an inventory and control of all spare rifles.

D. Range Officials. A range official presides over every firing point. They stand 10 to 15 feet behind the firing point until a competitor comes to their point. Then they assist the shooter and serve as an on-the-spot safety officer. Duties include:

1. Becoming familiar with how the rifle operates on their firing point.
2. Having ammunition ready for arriving shooters.
3. Directing the runners to a vacant shooting point.
4. Handing the rifle to the shooters after they arrive at the firing point.
5. Handing the ammunition to the shooter after the rifle is pointed downrange (prone shooters will already be lying down.)
6. Insuring that all shooting is done in a safe manner.
7. Reminding the shooter to shoot on the right target (particularly relevant when using breakable targets).
8. Resetting the targets (when using breakable targets).
9. Calling out the number of penalties to the penalty recorder (breakable targets).
10. Loading magazines in preparation for other shooters.

E. Penalty Recorders. These volunteers are only needed if you use breakable targets. Duties include:

1. Recording the number of misses for every competitor who shoots on one of their assigned firing points.
2. Reporting the number of penalties to the people calculating the results.

F. Timers. The timers are responsible for determining the elapsed time from start to finish for each competitor. (Biathlon requires a staggered start to prevent congestion at the range.) The names of experienced timers can be obtained from a local running club. Duties include:

1. Recording start and finish times for each competitor.
2. Picking up the stop watches, clip boards, pencils, and timing forms (Appendix C) from the Chief of Competition.

G. Registration People. These people set up a table in a visible spot and register all entrants. Duties include:

1. Insuring that all entrants fill out and sign registration form.
2. Collecting entry fees.
3. Handing out T-shirts.
4. Serving as an information source.

H. Result Calculators. At a big race the timers are too busy to be calculating times as they record them. To avoid timing errors, assign the responsibility for calculating the elapsed time to someone who can escape to a quiet place. The Result Calculator will subtract the start time from the finish time, and then add the penalty times to determine the total time. Duties include:

1. Collecting the time recording sheets from the timers.

2. Collecting the penalty recording sheets from the range recorders.
3. Calculating the finish order for each classification.
4. Delivering the race results to the Chief of Competition.
5. Posting scores on scoreboard.

I. Course Marshals. Murphy always comes to athletic events; if a racer can go the wrong way he/she will. Place a Course Marshal at all confusing intersections or dangerous highway crossings. Duties include:

1. Directing runners in the right direction.
2. Monitoring traffic for safety of competitors.

J. Starter. There is always a mass of people around the start and it is wise to have someone in control of the start area. Duties include:

1. Announcing 10 and 5 minute warnings preceding the start.
2. Insuring that the competitors are at the starting area on time.
3. Starting competitors on designated intervals or mass start.

K. Extras. This is a polite term for "Go-Fers". They go for this and go for that, plus fill in for volunteers who fail to show up on race day. Plan on having some no-shows.

L. Optional People. If you have a large event, it is very helpful to have a first aid area and qualified medical personnel to handle any running injuries. You can also set up a feed station for the 10K race and will need people to hand out food to the competitors.

M. Publicity Chairman. Having one person solely responsible for publicity will greatly increase the amount of coverage for your event. See Chapter V for a full explanation. Duties include:

1. Writing and distributing pre-race press release.
2. Calling local media for race day coverage.
3. Helping collect prizes from local merchants for the race.
4. Meeting with media people on the event day.
5. Writing and distributing post-race press release.

N. Treasurer. You will need someone to handle all the incoming race fees from competitors. Duties include:

1. Depositing all funds.
2. Helping with race day registration.
3. Paying any expense bills.
4. Writing final income statement for the event.