



Due to the specialized nature of this issue's Practical Theme, race walking, this instalment of the NSA Round Table features three experts who have not previously appeared on our panel. Reg Wells (GBR) is a coach and member of the Panel of International Walking Judges. He has served twice as Technical Delegate for the IAAF World Cup of Race Walking. In addition to his answers in this Round Table he has contributed an article on shoes for race walkers to this issue of NSA. Peter Marlow (GBR) is a member of the IAAF Walking Committee. As a competitor, he took part in the Games of the XXth Olympiad, Munich, 1972. He was the Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the IAAF World Cup of Race Walking in both 1977 and 1985. His article "A Brief History of Race Walking" appears in this issue of NSA. Robert Bowman (USA) is also a member of the IAAF Walking Committee. He is the Walking Editor of Track and Field News. From 1984 to 1988 he was a Vice President of The Athletics Congress of the USA. As a competitor he was national champion in 1963 and 1964 and set an American record in the 50 km walk.

1. Should video be used for judging race walking?

BOWMAN: No, it is just too impractical. It is not like filming a stationary point: race walking takes place over varying courses with competitors often walking in groups. To use video would require many cameras with playback monitors. An experienced human eye can see and react more quickly to obvious rule violations.

MARLOW: No, as it is impossible to cover every walker in the race. The human eye is still the most efficient method of judging.

WELLS: In my opinion, judging should be by human eye only, and indeed the rules should specify this. Verdicts should be given as soon as possible; i.e. not after examination of video film. However, video film could be used to assess the ability of the judges, and to assist in training judges.

2. In major championships, are you in favour of staging the women's 10 km and men's 20 km walk on the track?

BOWMAN: Yes, I feel the advantages outweigh any disadvantages. It would ensure better exposure for our sport (a good example of this was last year's Goodwill Games in Seattle, where the crowd went wild over both the men's 20 km and the women's 10 km walks on the track) and it is better for judging. The field would have to be limited, however, and time standards would be required.

2. In major championships, are you in favour of staging the women's 10km and men's 20km walk on the track?

3. Should there be an additional 20 km walk for women in the World Cup?

4. Race walking is a weak event in Africa. How can we improve this situation?

5. Do you agree that all international race walking judges should pass a written and practical exam?

MARLOW: In theory I am in favour, but practically there will be problems if heats are required for the men's 20 km.

WELLS: Major championships over 20 km and 10 km should be held on the track to increase the sport's publicity and to improve the standard of judging.

BOWMAN: This may be a good idea to encourage women to race this longer distance. However, it would complicate an event which is already difficult to stage.

MARLOW: Yes, 100% in favour. I think it will transform the Eschborn cup.

WELLS: There should be a 20 km race for women included in the Eschborn cup.

BOWMAN: The IAAF should conduct clinics and coaching seminars in these countries. We have seen South American countries - which have been weak not only in race walking but in all athletics - become fairly strong in race walking in a short period of time. They need encouragement from the stronger walking countries.

MARLOW: Walking already has a strong base in Kenya and Algeria, and we should use those countries as a launching pad for conducting seminars and clinics in the rest of the continent. The potential for race walking in Africa is tremendous.

WELLS: Coaches and judges should be sent to African countries to promote race walking. Films should be used as much as possible. There are potential competitors, but generally they do not know that the event exists.

BOWMAN: Yes, I feel that this is a good idea, even for experienced judges, since race walking rules do change from time to time. It is a good way for judges to keep up to date and to demonstrate the level of their knowledge.

MARLOW: Again, I agree in theory; but whether it is possible to have a common exam world-wide is doubtful. I think it is far wiser to ensure that all Member Federations *have their own written and practical exams.*

WELLS: All judges should undergo both written and practical exams, particularly when hoping to attain international standard. Judges should not be selected because of who they are, but for what they know and what they are capable of.

