

Snowsport England



A Guide to the Rules of Ski Races

A GUIDE TO THE RULES OF SKI RACING

The rules for ski racing in Britain are based on the International rules published by the FIS. Different rules are put in place only when there is a very good reason (for example, FIS rules do not encompass plastic slope racing). The reason for keeping as close to FIS rules as possible is to make it easier for racers and officials to turn up at any venue and know what they have to do. The rules both enshrine racers' rights and present a common framework to which all must adhere.

OK, so you're going to a ski race, which basic rules do you really need to know and why? This guide is primarily intended for those involved in plastic slope racing but most of the rules are common to racing on all surfaces. They represent the minimum that you need to know.

BEFORE THE RACE

Racers.

You need to ensure that your equipment conforms to the rules for ski shape and length, binding height, and boot design. These rules are there for your safety and to ensure fairness. You can find those rules on the web at <http://www.gbski.com/docstore/BACR/BACR%20VI.pdf> .

You need a helmet designed and approved for ski racing.

Your ski poles need to have a diameter at the tip of at least 15mm. This is to minimise the risk of a penetration injury in the event of a fall.

You need to ensure that your race clothing covers your body from ankles to wrists. You must also wear gloves at all times on the slope. This is to minimise the risk of abrasion injury in the event a fall.

During inspection you need to wear your bib so that the number is visible. This is to show that you are entitled to be in the course area and to identify you.

During inspection you may not ski the course or go through any of the gates apart from the finish line. This means no practice starts (although you can view the course from the start gate) and no snow-ploughing through the course. The so-called '3 gate rule' does not exist. This is to ensure fairness for all racers and to test your ability to read the course.

You can inspect on skis or snowblades but not on foot. This is to prevent damage to the matting and to stop mud being brought onto the surface.

Officials.

You should be aware of the above rules and be prepared to advise racers or to note and report any contravention of the rules. However, the TD and Jury are the adjudicators in such matters.

AT THE START

Racers.

Be at the start in good time. It gives you time to get yourself ready and prepare your gear.

You may be denied a start if you have illegal equipment or if you behave in an unsportsmanlike manner in the start area.

Ski preparation must take place well away from the start gate. This is to protect the start officials from inhaling potentially harmful substances.

On artificial slopes, you may carry your skis into the start gate and put them on there.

For an artificial slope race, you must be ready to enter the start gate as soon as the racer before you has started. If you are late, you may be sanctioned.

You must wear the bib issued to you with the number clearly visible.

For a slalom, the start happens like this:

You will be called into the gate.

You will be given a reasonable but limited time to put on your skis and get ready.

The starter will say 'Ready'. This is not a question; it is information that the course is clear for you and that you will get the start order very soon.

The starter will say 'Go'. You must start no more than 10 seconds after this order or you will have committed a false start. Similarly, if you start before the word 'Go', you will have committed a false start.

Officials. You need to know the above rules and to apply them fairly. There is a balance to be struck between maintaining the programme of the event and allowing racers the opportunity to prepare themselves for the upcoming challenge.

ON THE COURSE

Racers.

You must go through each gate with the tips of both skis and both boots or, if you have lost a ski, with the remaining ski tip and both boots.

If you do not go through the gate correctly, you may stop, climb back, and correct the fault.

You may ask a gate judge if you have committed a fault and the gate judge must inform you if you have committed a fault that could lead to disqualification. You cannot receive any other assistance.

Irrespective of advice given, you are responsible for your own actions and, in this respect, you cannot hold a gate judge responsible

If you commit a fault, and do not stop and go back you are not allowed to go through any more gates and you must leave the course as soon as you safely can.

Once you have left the course, you may not re-enter it, nor should you cross the finish line. This is on safety grounds; when officials see a racer leave the course, they may start course repair activity, or they may start the next racer. If you go back into the course, an accident may happen. If you do re-enter the course, you may be sanctioned.

If you commit a fault very close to the finish, it may be impossible to leave the course safely without crossing the finish line. It would be unreasonable to sanction you in such circumstances; racer safety is paramount but the jury will decide.

The finish line is different from all other gates; you can go through it on both skis, or one ski, or with no skis at all. For example, if you lose both skis close to the finish without committing a fault, the momentum of the fall must carry you across the line. You are not allowed to fall, stop, get up and cross the line on foot.

You are entitled to a clear, safe course. If you want to claim a re-run because you think that you have been impeded at any time on the course (for instance by an official repairing a gate or by an animal running across the course), you must stop immediately. You should report to the nearest official and tell him/her what happened. You will then

be sent to the Finish Referee (Do NOT cross the finish line) who will contact the Jury for consideration of a re-run. If you are given a re-run, it will be what is known as a provisional start, and the Jury will decide later whether the re-run will count.

If you cross the finish line (other than because you cannot stop as outlined above), you are considered to have accepted the run and you will not be granted a re-run.

If you are given a re-run, get back to the start as soon as you can. You will be given time to prepare yourself and then be slotted into the running order at the earliest opportunity. The race will not be delayed unreasonably for you, so don't delay or you may not get the re-run. This is because it would be unfair to keep other racers waiting, because of the pressure to get the race finished in reasonable time/conditions, or because it would be unsafe to do so.

Officials.

Again, you need to know all the above rules so you can both assist the racer and ensure that all abide by the rules on grounds of fairness to everyone. You should only report a fault if you are absolutely convinced that it occurred.

AFTER THE RUN

Racers and Officials. After the run, the officials will collate all available information and the Referee will prepare and publish a Report (sometimes known as 'the Protocol'). The report lists those who did not start (DNS), those who did not finish (DNF) and those who committed a fault leading to disqualification (DSQ).

The contents of the Report will also normally be read out over the PA.

A copy of the Report will be placed on the Official Notice Board. All racers need to read the report. If a racer is on the list and thinks that s/he did not commit the fault, s/he is entitled to protest the decision. However, this must be done within 15 minutes of the Report being published.

Racers who want to protest must contact the race office and tell an official (preferably the Race Secretary), complete a form, and pay a fee that is refundable if the jury agree with you. The jury will look at the incident and consider all the evidence including any statement made by the racer. They may overturn or uphold the decision on the protocol.

DSQ or DNF racers may be allowed a further run. This will take place before all the racers with a valid run. Such racers are no longer in the competition but all the rules still apply. Racers must treat this run in exactly the same way as any other.

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Chairman Seeding & Technical Panel

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