

Race Organizer Guide:

Integrating Visually Impaired Skiers with Guides into Your Race



Race Entry

Guides should not be required to pay for a race entry but can be required to sign waivers and any other paperwork that is required of athletes.

Seeding

- Athletes should be seeded according to their earned points. If the athlete has no points, we would recommend they be seeded as the last starter(s) in the entire field. For a new visually impaired (VI) racer, it can reduce stress to have a less chaotic start area.
- In a mass start, the athlete should be seeded in their earned start position in the start grid, with the guide in front of them. In a regulation start, there is ample room for the guide to fit between rows. If space is tight, the guide should start in the spot in front of athlete, with the rest of the skiers in that row being displaced by one spot. If this is the case, make sure the race office assigns bibs accordingly (skipping the number in the start grid where the guide will be starting, so to keep the bib numbers consistent with the correct place in the grid).

Start Procedure (Interval Start Races)

- Guide (with "Guide" bib) proceeds forward to the start line in late start lane (so not to trip wand).
- Guide will position themselves in front of the visually impaired (VI) skier. If they are not able to see and/or hear the start clock from that position, the starter should give a verbal countdown.
- Starter or assistant starter should take special care to place poles of VI skier in front of the wand so to avoid broken poles and equipment on start gates. Make sure athlete is informed of any assistance provided.
- Starter or assistant starter should put their hand on the shoulder of the VI skier and release on "0".
- It is helpful for starters to explain their process to the athlete, even if the athlete is experienced.

Start Procedure (Mass Start Races)

- Guides and athletes line up according to seeding (for options, see above).
- No special considerations are necessary in start commands or procedures.

Finish Procedures (for races with electronic beam at finish)

- Guides should not receive a finish time.
- Since guide will cross the finish line, they will trip the beam, but additional timing systems (i.e. plunger) should not register/input the guide crossing the line.
- Order of finish teams should note the guide's order with a "G" on order of finish sheets.
- Timer should be notified of this irregularity so they can remove the impulse they receive from the guide crossing the finish beam.

General notes for TD and Jury

- Guides are required to follow all rules and are subject to the same sanctions as any athletes when those rules are broken.
- Exceptions to the rules for guides are:
 - Different starting procedure (as explained above).
 - Guides are permitted to cut off sections of course or switch guides in order to stay in front of the athlete they are guiding. They are not allowed to obstruct any other racers when doing this and are otherwise subject to the same rules as any athletes.

Prizes

It is customary for guides to receive medals along with the visually impaired athlete.

For more information, contact FIS/WPNS TD Eileen Carey: eileen.carey@usopc.org.
Additional resources are available at team.usa.org/usparanordicskiing/resources.