

RELAY EVENT OFFICIATING

National Officials Training Session

Events Covered:

Outdoor 4×100m | Outdoor 4×400m

Indoor 4×200m | Indoor 4×400m

World Athletics Rules · UK Athletics Rules

SECTION 01

General Relay Officiation Overview

Roles · Responsibilities · Indoor vs Outdoor Differences

Relay Events at a Glance

Event	Setting	Lanes Kept?	Changeover Zone	Break from Lanes	Indoor Track Note
4×100m	Outdoor	Yes – all legs	30m (merged zone)	N/A – full lanes	N/A
4×400m	Outdoor	Leg 1 + part of Leg 2	20m zone	After first bend Leg 2	Break-line prisms go down after first leg has passed break line
4×200m	Indoor	Leg 1 + part of Leg 2	20m (merged zone)	After first bend Leg 2	Break-line prisms go down after first leg has passed break line
4×400m	Indoor	Leg 1	20m zone	400m break line on leg 1	N/A

WA TR24 (Relay Races) | UKA Section 170 — apply to all events above. Indoor events also governed by WA Part V (Short Track).

Officials' Roles at Each Relay Exchange

Recommended: Minimum 4 Umpires per exchange zone (2 at takeover in, 2 at takeover out)

Takeover In Officials (×2)

- ▶ Monitor outgoing athlete does not leave start of zone early
- ▶ Check athlete is positioned in the correct order
- ▶ Signal to track referee if an infringement occurs
- ▶ For 4x200m, 4x300m, 4x400m and medley: manage athlete order before the incoming runner arrives

Takeover Out Officials (×2)

- ▶ Monitor the baton exchange occurs within the zone
- ▶ Watch position of baton — NOT feet — to judge legality
- ▶ Watch incoming runner remains in lane after exchange
- ▶ Note lane number of any infringement for reporting

Indoor Relay: Additional Considerations

Indoor 4×200m

- 20m takeover zone (WA TR24.11) - same merged zone applies
- Officials must be vigilant of tight bend - assess baton position carefully
- With shorter straights, athletes reach zones faster - officials must be attentive earlier
- Leg 1: In lanes
- Leg 2: Lined up in lanes behind starters
- Legs 3: Lined up as if they are the next heat beside the break line
- Leg 4: Lined up on inside of the track
- When leg 3 starts, leg 4 should move to outside of track and be in position for getting put into their order.

Indoor 4×400m

- Leg 1 run in lanes and break at usual 400m break line
- 20m takeover zone — same as outdoor 4×400m (WA TR24.12)
- Athlete ordering is critical — more congested on small tracks
- Leg 1: In lanes
- Leg 2: Lined up like next heat
- Legs 3 & 4: Grouped into legs on inside of track
- When leg 2 starts, leg 3 should move to outside of track and be in position for getting put into their order. Same process for leg 4.

1 2 3 4

SECTION 02

Sorting Athletes into Correct Order









ABERDEEN
JH
Joma
392

JH
Joma
644

JH
Joma
577



SUPERTEAMS 2026









Why Correct Athlete Order Matters

THE RULE

WA TR24.19 / UKA Rule 170

In the 4x200m and 4x400m, waiting athletes must line up in the same order as their teams are placed with 200m remaining on the incoming leg – from the inside of the track outwards.

The official is responsible for marshalling athletes into this order as the incoming runner reaches the final 200m point.

CONSEQUENCES OF ERROR

1

Team receives baton in wrong lane → obstruction risk

2

Athlete starting in wrong position → DQ (WA TR24.19)

3

Team loses competitive advantage, potential protest

The Vest Identification Problem

⚠ The Challenge at National Level

At national level, competitions involve clubs from across Scotland and the UK — many with similar or unfamiliar vest designs. Officials cannot be expected to know every club's colours. This creates real risk of ordering errors that lead to disqualification.

Don't Rely On

- Vest colour alone — similar shades are common
- Verbal confirmation from other athletes
- Memory from previous events
- Coaches' instructions shouted from trackside

Always Use

- Official team declaration sheet
- Competitor bib number as primary ID
- Co-ordinate with your zone partner official

Best Practice

- Brief athletes: 'I will tell you what order you must stand in. If you change order after I have told you, you will be disqualified.'
- Brief fellow officials before the event begins

SECTION 03

Common Issues

Key rules & common violations

Common Changeover Violations & DQ Triggers

Baton passed outside the zone

DQ

WA TR24.14

Most common DQ. It is the baton position — not the athlete — that determines legality. The exchange commences when the incoming runner first touches it; it is complete when only the outgoing runner holds it.

Outgoing runner starts outside zone

DQ

WA TR24.19

The waiting athlete cannot begin their run from outside the zone. Even if the exchange itself occurs inside the zone, starting position outside causes DQ.

Wrong starting position (4×400m)

DQ

WA TR24.18

In the 2nd and 3rd exchanges of 4×400m, athletes must line up in race order from the inside out. Wrong position = DQ for that team. This is the key ordering error.

Obstruction of another team after exchange

DQ

WA TR17.1.2

A runner who has completed their exchange must not move into another team's path. Moving across lanes to exit the track can impede a live exchange.

Baton dropped and retrieved outside zone

DQ

WA TR24.14

If dropped, only the person who dropped it may retrieve it. Retrieving outside the zone and continuing without returning to where it was dropped is illegal.

Incoming runner fails to carry baton to zone

DQ

WA TR24.14

The incoming runner must physically carry the baton within the zone for a legal exchange. You cannot begin the exchange before the zone start line.

Video Reference: Changeover DQ Examples

▶ USA Men's 4×100m DQ – Rio 2016 Olympics

Mike Rodgers passed baton to Justin Gatlin outside the first exchange zone. Appeal rejected. Classic example of the baton position rule. Shows how marginal zone violations are judged.

WA TR24.14 – Baton must be passed within the takeover zone

[!\[\]\(76a3e8b971e3f4e3e7bf4f40612c8a29_img.jpg\) Click to open search](#)

▶ USA Mixed 4×400m DQ & Reinstatement – Tokyo 2021

USA initially DQ'd after receiver Lynna Irby positioned outside the zone. DQ was later overturned on appeal. Excellent case study for protest procedure and ordering errors.

WA TR24.19 – Athletes must start within their takeover zone

[USA 4x400m DQ](#)

▶ USA Women: 4×100m Protest

[USA Women 4x100m Protest](#)

WA TR24.14

▶ Search: 4×400m relay athlete ordering DQ

Search for examples of teams DQ'd for incorrect positioning in the exchange zone. Useful to reinforce the ordering rules in Slides 4–6 of this session.

WA TR24.18 – Wrong starting position

[!\[\]\(1ee9500f722bcabf6161b47e0c714cbe_img.jpg\) Click to open search](#)

SECTION 04

Handling Video Protests & DQs

Protest process · Appeals · Key rules

Protest Procedure – Step by Step

WA Competition Rule CR26 (Protests & Appeals) | UKA Rules for Competition Section 4.3

1

Disqualification Made

Following the race, if any infringements are raised by officials, the track official should review the report and then determine if this merits a disqualification. If a disqualification is confirmed, this must be reported to photo finish for the official results.

2

Protest Lodged

Must be made within 30 minutes by the athlete. Verbal protest to the Track Referee if required.

3

Referee Decision

The Track Referee considers the protest. May consult the umpires at the zone. May refer to video footage if available. Decision communicated to athlete / team manager.

Handling DQ'd Athletes & Protests at the Zone

✓ DO

- ✓ Remain calm and professional — keep your own composure
- ✓ Explain clearly what rule was infringed if asked — refer to your notes
- ✓ Direct team manager or athlete to the Track Referee immediately
- ✓ Inform the athlete of their right to protest verbally to the Referee
- ✓ Complete your written report accurately and promptly

✗ DON'T

- ✗ Do NOT engage in extended debate with athletes or coaches
- ✗ Do NOT speculate on whether the decision will be overturned
- ✗ Do NOT share your written report with athletes before the Referee sees it
- ✗ Do NOT make promises about protest outcomes
- ✗ Do NOT allow yourself to be pressured — stand by your observation
- ✗ Do NOT leave the zone area until released by the Track Referee

Quick Reference: Key Rules for Relay Officiating

WA TR24.11	30m takeover zone for 4×100m & 4×200m (merged zone — November 2017 change)
WA TR24.12	20m takeover zone (10m each side of leg start) for 4×400m events
WA TR24.14	Baton must be passed within the zone. Position of BATON is decisive, not athletes' feet
WA TR24.18	In 4×400m: 2nd & 3rd exchange receivers line up in race order from inside out
WA TR24.19	All athletes must START from within their takeover zone — beginning outside = DQ
WA TR17.1.2	Obstruction/jostling after exchange — DQ if runner blocks another team's exchange
WA CR26	Protest procedure: verbal immediately, written to Jury of Appeal with deposit
UKA Rule 170	Relay races — mirrors WA TR24. UK competitions governed by UKA rule where applicable
UKA Section 4.3	Protest & appeal procedure for domestic competitions — written deposit required £10

SESSION WRAP-UP

Key Takeaways & Discussion Points

- 1** It is the BATON position, not feet, that determines whether a changeover is legal
- 2** Remain calm during protests — direct to the Track Referee, complete your written report
- 3** Video is a tool — your eyes at the zone are the primary evidence