How to Host a Snowshoeing Competition

Special Olympics Newfoundland & Labrador

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1 FACILITIES:

- Snowshoe Track or area for a track
- Area inside with electricity (GMS Team)
- Washrooms
- Accessibility

2 VENUE REQUIREMENTS

- Track (Groomed)
- Marshaling Area (6 rows of 6-8 chairs with tents)
- Sound System (Microphone or Megaphone)
- Warming area
- Parking (team buses and volunteers)
- Medical area
- Painted lines on track
- Spectator Area

3 NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

- Stop Watches (8)
- Recording Sheets
- Clapper or Gun (for starting races)
- Whistle (False Start)
- Clipboards (25)
- Pencils (40 Sharp)
- Large Ziplock Baggies
- Pylons/markers (40-50+) – various sizes
- Bell (lap count)
- Umpire Flags (2 for False Start)
- Club signs
- Bibs and safety pins
- Stop Signs/False Start Flags/Rope

4 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

- Tents (for marshalling area)
- Benches/seating (for marshalling area)
- Barriers/Barricades as needed around track/parking etc.
- Megaphone or sound system
- Identifiable safety vests for volunteers/officials
- Chair/Benches
- Results Board/Area (Large – preferably for coach access only)
- Photocopier access (High-speed preferably)
- Medals/Ribbons
- Podiums (if available)
- 2-way radios for official use
- Proper Signage
- Security barriers

5 OFFICIALS

- **Convener or Meet Manager** - Organizes all aspects of meet. Finds and books venues.
- **Sub Committee**
    - Looks after volunteers – all aspects of meet (medals, food, medical etc.)
    - Head Officials
    - Facility Management – person who volunteers or works at track facility
    - Communications – sends out results
    - Safety – Oversees security and prepares an Emergency Action Plan
    - Facility support – often town officials who can prepare venue:
        - Provide barriers
        - Setup tents
        - Set up chairs/benches
        - Salt/Sand for walkways and parking lots

6 GENERAL

- **Runners** (1-2 for each discipline) – To bring result sheets from finish line/field event to Games Management System. To bring documented results to viewing/positing area.
- **Announcer** (1-2) – to call athletes to marshalling area for a given event. To announce awards as presented.
- **Statisticians/Results Input** (Games Management System) **–** Input results and provide in a prudent manner.
- **Medal presenters** (MHA, deputy Mayor and representatives from LETR)

7 TRACK

- **Starter (2)** – Uses clapper or gun to start races
- **Starter Assistant (1)** – Help place racers in lanes prior to race start

- **Marshall (6-8)** – Organizes athletes by race/heat etc. in marshalling area. Bring athletes to start area from designated marshalling area (by division or in larger groups) and helps organize them in divisions at start area. Does so in a safe manner. May also return athletes to finish area to join teams following relay races.
- **Umpires (2-3)** – Has multiple roles
    - Stop athletes from running following a false start. Would be about 10m past the start line.
    - Positioned around infield to track & watch for infractions; out of lane, interference or obstruction, stop coaches from running with athletes, stop people from crossing over track during race, tend to an injured athlete until medical arrives.
    - On turns for distance events to ensure athletes do not cut corners.
    - In relays placed in transfer zones to ensure transfer done in designated transfer zone.
- **Timers (1-3 per lane)** – use stopwatches to time racers
- **Chief Timer** – ensures times of timers are accurate prior to documenting
- **Bell Ringer** – rings bell for final lap of each runner in races greater than 800m
- **Track Judges (1 per lane)** – Has several roles
    - Determines finish order and has athletes stay in own lane at finish line following race or in order of finish when lanes not used.
    - Counts laps for athletes in long distance races starting with high number to low number. Notifies bell ringer for bell or final lap for each race.
- **Recorder (1)** – records time & finish placement for each racer. Would, also record DQ's or other relevant information before submitting heat sheets to timing area crew.

8 VENUE VOLUNTEERS

- Security
- Venue set up and cleanup

9 AWARDS

- 2-3 people to prepare awards, designate presenters.
- Marshallers (1-2) – to assist with marshalling athletes to and from award area.
- Announcer- to announce all awards

10 MEDICAL

- 2-3 people with a background in emergency first aid and CPR
- Chair / cot where possible
- First aid kit and medical supplies
- Medical area (Heated)

11 MEALS

- Venue large enough to hold all team members / volunteers etc.
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Washrooms

- PA System (in case announcement need to be made)
- Close to sport venue when possible
- Ensure meals are suitable for all in attendance (notes dietary/allergy needs)
- Healthy Meals when possible
- # of volunteers needed will depend on # of individuals responsible for during meals
- Volunteers to set up meals, provide meals and clean up form meals

12 SOCIAL

- DJ or equivalent with appropriate clean lyric music provided
- Space is large enough for all attendees
- Washrooms
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Access to water (either fill station provided, or teams asked to bring their own)
- Note if appropriate indoor footwear is required
- Supper followed by dance and medals (Good transition from supper to dance)
- Communicate to visiting clubs any equipment needed (i.e. indoor shoes for dance)

NOTES / EVENT FEEDBACK

13 VENUE SIGN OFF FORM

14 RULES/PROTOCOL FOR LARGER COMPETITION

SNOWSHOEING
Venue Sign-Off Form

Facility Name: _____

Location: _____

Trail name: _____

Course profile:

- ☐ Profile map showing rise and fall
- ☐ 100m straight, flat course - eight lanes
- ☐ 200m – part of 400m loop, minimum seven meters in width
- ☐ 400m – 400m looped course, minimum seven meters in width
- ☐ 800m - 400m looped course, minimum seven meters in width
- ☐ 1600m – over varied terrain, may use the 400m course as start and finish
- ☐ 5k – over varied terrain, may use the 400m course as start and finish
- ☐ 10k - over varied terrain, may use the 400m course as start and finish

Special Requirements:

- ☐ Map of venue & trails
- ☐ Electronic timing
- ☐ Certified officials
- ☐ Fenced stadium area
- ☐ Public Address System
- ☐ Marshalling area

Support Facilities:

- ☐ Restroom facilities
- ☐ Warming huts
- ☐ Locker/change rooms
- ☐ Officials room
- ☐ Security

- ☐ Medical/1st Aid Room
- ☐ Awards Podium
- ☐ Results Room
- ☐ Results Posting Area
- ☐ Athlete/coach only eating and lounge facilities
- ☐ Honoured Guest services
- ☐ Media services
- ☐ Family Services
- ☐ Computer & Photocopier

Recommended spectator area for 50-100

GOC Representative: _____

SONL Staff: _____

Date: _____

Rules/Protocol for Larger Competitions *(Written By Tom Sobal)*

For larger events the following procedures are suggested. If possible, smaller and local competitions can use as many of these guidelines as possible.

Snowshoe measurement
The easiest way to measure snowshoe size is to build a simple wooden rectangular box with opposite sides exactly 20.5 cm×64 cm (8”×25”) apart. A snowshoe inserted into the box should have at least 4 points of its outer frame touching (or overlapping) each of the 4 sides of the box at once.

After a snowshoe is found to meet the minimum size requirement, it can be marked with a colorful plastic zip tie fastened (and then trimmed) around the front toe of the frame. This allows easy identification of official snowshoes at a glance throughout the remainder of the competition, and the marking can be cut off later.

Numbers
Stretchy pull over Bib numbers are desirable, but only if they are sized large enough to fit over jackets and other heavy clothing.

Starting Position
Snowshoers shall be lined up at the starting line in designated lanes or starting positions according to their 1) qualifying time or 2) preliminary times or 3) by lot (random drawing), if no time exists. For races involving a turn (200 meters and up and both relays) individuals or teams with the fastest times should start closer toward the inside edge of the track than those with slower times. Officials should be aware of snow conditions and the inner lanes do not have to have faster teams assigned to start in them if the snow is uneven or loose so that starting there will be a disadvantage. If snow conditions are not equally favorable in all lanes, then the lanes with the best conditions shall be used first. If all lanes are needed, the fastest athletes will be placed in the lanes with the better snow conditions.

The inner lanes can be kept open/unused or the race or start if the snow conditions warrant this to ensure fairness fair.

For straight events, snowshoers should be assigned starting positions with the fastest qualifying individual in lane 5, second fastest in lane 4, third fastest in lane 6, fourth fastest in lane 3, fifth fastest in lane 7, sixth fastest in lane 2, seventh fastest in lane 8, and the eighth fastest in lane 1. This sequence is used to minimize the impact on lane 1 and/or to position the faster snowshoers in the middle track lanes.

Snow and Course Preparation *(Written By Tom Sobal)*

The inner and outer edges of the course should be clearly defined, especially for the 400 meter track. This can be with flagging, fencing, lines, piles of snow, deeper or ungroomed snow, etc. If large numbers of athletes or spectators may be present fencing is suggested to be placed at least one meter away from the outer edge of the outside lane of the track. Leave space to prevent crowd interference and re- grooming during the competition.

The inner marked edge of the track is not 400m along its marked outer edge. To ensure that a snowshoer running an exact theoretical 400 meter loop on the inside lane has sufficient clearance for themselves and their snowshoes, the outside edge of an inner raised boundary (like a fence, flags, etc) of a marked track should ideally be 40 cm inside a theoretical running/measure line in lane one that measures 400 meters around. Note that this is different than normal running tracks where the inner raised curb should be 30cm inside of the theoretical 400m running/measure line. The extra 10 cm is added to accommodate the width of snowshoes.

Make sure there is a safe, delineated secured area for athlete warm up adjacent to the staging tent.

The 400-meter track course should be relatively flat, but it is not required to be so. All slopes should impact/be consistent across all lanes evenly. Turns should not be so tight as to slow an athlete down appreciably when sprinting at full speed. Particular attention should be paid to the turn used for the designated track portion of the 200 meters. This turn should be wide and not so sharp as to slow snowshoers.

An excellent track configuration is a 400m oval with 100-meter distances around each turn and 100 meters along each straight. For convenience, it is suggested keeping the finish line at the same point for all races. A good configuration for snowshoeing is to place the finish line in the middle of a straightaway 50 meters form each curve. This allows the 200m snowshoers (who do not run in lanes like normal athletic track runners), and all other snowshoers running 400m or more, to start with a 50-meter straightaway to 'sort themselves out' before entering the first turn. This configuration requires an extra addition of a straight course off the normal track that is used only for the 100-meter start.

Another alternative is to make the straightaways longer, up to 120 meters, and the turns tighter and shorter, down to 80 meters. This allows a longer finishing straight while still providing for an adequate run out before reaching the first turn of events 200m and longer.

The straight portion of the track for the 100-meter events should be relatively flat with consistent conditions for all lanes. Start and finish lines should be clearly delineated on the snow with marking, and vertical signage alongside the track edges if possible.

Relay exchange zones should also be defined with marks on the snow. If weather or use requires, officials should remark any course lines as needed during a competition.

In setting up a track try to run the finish straight so that the prevailing winds flow straight down it, in the same direction snowshoers will be moving as they finish.

Eight lanes should be marked and delineated on the track for the 100-meter events. These lanes should be at least one meter wide each with wider lanes up to 1.7 meters wide being preferable. These lanes should be delineated along their sides by short flexible marking flags (with brush

whiskers being preferable) set in the snow every approximately every 5 meters, continuous lines marked on the snow with colored fluid, chalk, or paint. These are listed in order from most preferable first to least preferable last, taking into consideration ease of removal, safety, visibility after and during new snowfall and impact on the athlete if accidentally stepped on.

In longer races over 1600 meters, stretches of narrow courses (single track) may be used and should be encouraged. These sections may consist of natural un-groomed snow, snow that is not machine groomed, and/or snow that has only been broken by the passage of other snowshoers. These sections should be duplicated in parallel tracks of at least 2 with 1-3 meters between these parallel tracks. This is to allow for unobstructed passing. It is acceptable to have up to 3 sections of narrow course of up to 3 meters in length without these passing zones, but these 3 narrow one lane courses must be separated by a minimum of 100 meters of course which allows for unobstructed passing. The use of any narrow sections of course should be minimized or used carefully in the first and last 20% of the route (i.e. the first 320 meters and last 320 meters of a 1600 meter route) to allow unobstructed passing.

The goal of the course/track setters should not be to make a hard, icy, firm and packed snow surface on which the use of snowshoes will be a handicap (when compared to running without snowshoes). Snowshoes provide traction, floatation and stability that a regular boot or shoe does not. The goal is to prepare a course on which these three advantages are used and where snowshoeing will be the fastest mode of human powered transport. It is sometimes difficult to present a consistent snow surface to all athletes in a race and to not significantly handicap the leader of a race not run in lanes by making them break trail in deep snow. An experienced Technical Delegate and Chief of Course should work together in determining and preparing conditions that come close to the ideal for snowshoeing.

Generally groomed hard packed machine set Nordic ski trails are not an ideal snowshoe route. These trails are prepared by skiers to be ideal for skiing! Unfortunately, this is what is commonly used for convenience, ease of marking and set-up. Machine set tracks can be used for part of the route or to lay a base in deep snow, but a consistently loosely tilled or semi-packed track or trail set by the passage of snowshoers is preferred. If machine set courses are used, new natural snow up to 10 cm deep can be allowed to remain on them to make them more suitable for snowshoeing. In the races over 1600 meter, adding a few diversions off machine set Nordic trails will enhance the snowshoe experience for higher ability athletes. This can be accomplished with tight turns, steep hills to climb, narrow trails and/or deeper less groomed snow found by venturing off the machine set track a few times.