AUSTRALIAN ATHLETICS

Officiating Pathways in Australia

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Introduction

Australian athletics officials play a critical role in delivering fair, safe, and world-class competitions. As our national officiating community prepares for Brisbane 2032 and beyond, there is a clear need for a structured pathway that supports officials to grow their technical capability, leadership skills, and experience across all levels of competition.

Whilst initial entry to officiating often begins in specific event areas, and may be nurtured with such specificity within club and state levels, this document particularly focusses on development of all round knowledge required for officials to be most effective across the regimen of track and field disciplines. As such, officiating referred to within this document is aimed at the **referee** level of skills and capability, noting that such knowledge can be applied to event specific areas and roles. It is noted that state member associations will have different models to encourage the development of officials pre their attainment of the National Athletics Referee (NAR), and this document seeks to only address the progression once the NAR level is being undertaken by an official.

The Officials' Pathways in Australia framework provides a transparent, progressive development model aligned with World Athletics' accreditation system. It outlines the experience, roles, and learning milestones required for progression from NAR -> Bronze → Silver → Gold referee status, ensuring that Australian officials are confident, consistent, and internationally competitive.

This document is designed to support officials, mentors, and administrators to:

- Understand the expectations at each referee level
- Plan development over a multi-year period
- Identify the roles needed to gain appropriate competition experience
- Align national officiating capability with global standards
- Build a strong officiating workforce for Brisbane 2032

Note: This document seeks to clarify the broad pathways for Referees covering major meets. It serves additionally as the introductory level for Photofinish, Starting and Walks – with each of these specialisations have their own parallel pathways as part of the World Athletics Referees Program as shown in image below.



Australian Athletics is committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive and respectful officiating community where individuals of all backgrounds, experiences and abilities feel valued and supported. While the Officiating Pathways provide a structured framework for development and progression, we recognise that no single model can fully reflect every individual's circumstances or needs. It is therefore our intention that these pathways are applied with flexibility, understanding and a spirit of inclusion, ensuring all officials are able to participate, develop and contribute meaningfully to the sport. We acknowledge and respect the varied ways in which people engage with officiating, including those with differing access needs, and are committed to removing barriers, making reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and creating an environment in which every official can thrive and progress with confidence.

Alignment With Brisbane 2032

The Officials' Pathways in Australia framework is aligned to the long-term development of the officiating workforce needed for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This pathway ensures that by 2032 Australia has:

- A strong base of Bronze officials ready to progress
- A deep cohort of Silver referees with broad national experience
- A mature group of Gold referees prepared for international leadership
- Consistent mentoring, development, and succession planning
- A unified national approach to officiating excellence

It should be considered for involvement in the capacity of an Athletics Official at the Olympic and/or Paralympic games, the World Athletics NAR would be essential, and a Bronze Referee accreditation preferred as a minimum.

This document supports that ambition by offering a clear, realistic, and aspirational roadmap for all officials. For those selected officials, attendance at specified number of test event meets required in lead up to 2032 will be notified in early 2028. Note that attendance is compulsory at the test event(s) in lead up to Olympics & Paralympics for those officials.

Overview of the Pathway

Australian referees progress through four levels of World Athletics accreditation:

National Athletics Referee (Years 1-3)

National Athletics Referee (NAR) is the first formal step in the World Athletics refereeing pathway. It prepares officials for national leadership roles and ensures readiness to in future undertake the Bronze World Athletics Referee role. The NAR role sits between domestic officiating accreditation and the World Athletics Bronze level. An official with NAR accreditation should be seeking to undertake roles over many disciplines at state level competitions to gain rounded experience.

Officials without NAR accreditation or higher are very welcome to be part of officiating in Australia. Australian Athletics aims to help them grow their officiating skills, confidence and friendships in the sport.

🥉 Bronze Referee (Years 4–7)

The foundational level, focusing on:

- Mastery of rules and consistency in interpretation
- Experience across multiple disciplines
- Leading small teams at state and national meets

🥈 Silver Referee (Years 8–11)

A leadership level, focusing on:

- Significant national-level responsibility
- Chief Referee roles
- Jury of Appeal/ Referees Decision Review Panel participation
- Mentoring developing officials

🥇 Gold Referee (Years 12+)

The highest accreditation, focusing on:

- National and international leadership
- Technical delegate responsibilities
- Key roles at Olympic, Paralympic and World-level competitions

Progression Guide

A minimum of four years must be completed at Bronze or Silver level before an official may sit the next World Athletics referee examination.

Years	Level	Primary Focus	Eligibility for Progression to next level
1-3	NAR (or previous TOECS 1)	Detailed comprehension of World Athletics rules	3 years experience officiating at state level in multi-discipline events. Experience at a national level event would be considered an *advantage*. Attendance at home state AA Meets is expected.
4-7	Bronze	Build broad technical experience; officiate at national meets	4 years as Bronze; minimum 5 national event days/sessions per year; leadership in event teams. Attend at least 2 national online seminars per year.
8-11	Silver	Lead teams; chief referee roles; involvement in Jury of Appeal/ Referees Decision Review Panels; broader exposure to athletics official leadership in general	4 years as Silver; multi-discipline depth at minimum 5 national event days/sessions per year; Attend at least 2 national online seminars per year.
12+	Gold	National & international leadership; mentoring	Demonstrated excellence at national level; readiness for WA Gold exam

WORLD ATHLETICS REFEREE PATHWAY



National Athletics Referee (NAR)

Purpose

The National Athletics Referee level establishes the foundation of refereeing capability within each nation. It ensures that officials have consistent education, experience, and performance standards before progressing to World Athletics Bronze level.

Practical Sign off for the NAR

Officials should work with Meeting Managers for upcoming events to determine when practical days can be arrange.

Note that signoff of event practical experience can only be achieved as follows:

- It must be at meet under the jurisdiction or permit of Australian Athletics (usually State or National Championships)
- Sign off must be made by Competition Director or Gold Referee
- Onfield observation and feedback is provided to the Competition Director or Gold Referee signatory by Bronze Referee or higher.

It should be noted that a single day may not allow for all competencies to be evaluated for a NAR sign-off. Officials should expect the sign off process to be guided by the achievement of competency, not based upon duration alone. However, in general, one session/day each of Track, Jumps and Throws should provide sufficient time in various roles and situations to demonstrate competence required.

Required Roles and Experience

- Referee or Chief Judge at state competitions
- Participate as an observer on Jury of Appeal/ Referees Decision Review Panel (state)
- Leading event groups under supervision of experienced higher-level referees
- Supporting technical reviews and competition reporting
- Maintaining strong rule knowledge across all disciplines

Eligibility for Advancement

Officials must have held National Athletics Referee status and demonstrated consistent performance in national-level officiating before being approved to sit the Bronze examination.

Advancement criteria:

- Completion of NAR exams and Practical Sign-off
- Demonstrated performance at multiple state and national championships
- Endorsement by relevant Member Association
- Invitation to sit the World Athletics Bronze exam

Nomination Process for Bronze Accreditation

Based upon completion of progression criteria outlined above, Member Associations may submit the names of officials to Australian Athletics they would propose to sit the Bronze Examination in the next period. Australian Athletics works with Oceania and World Athletics to seek registration for those candidates that have been nominated.

Bronze Referee

Purpose of the Bronze Phase

The Bronze phase establishes the technical foundation and breadth of experience required to advance toward Silver. Officials consolidate rules knowledge, develop leadership within event groups, and demonstrate consistency across multiple disciplines.

Required Roles and Experience

- Referee or Assistant Referee roles at state championships
- Chief Judge for track and/or field (or walks if following Walks Officiating pathway) at national-level meets
- Member (or supervised observer) of Jury of Appeal/ Referees Decision Review Panel
- Experience across all athletic disciplines. Note that detailed experience with Walks, Start and Photo-Finish is not necessary, although an understanding of these areas is beneficial.

Development Expectations

- 5 sessions/days of national-level officiating per year (this includes all AA run events)
- Minimum of two national seminars (online or in-person) per annum.
- Demonstrated teamwork and effective communication

Eligibility for Advancement

To be recommended for the Silver examination, a Bronze referee must:

- Complete 4 years as an active Bronze referee
- When available, complete Referee Annual Review documentation as published by Australian Athletics.
- Demonstrate consistent performance across multiple competition disciplines

Nomination Process for Silver Accreditation

Based upon completion of progression criteria outlined above, Member Associations may submit the names of officials to Australian Athletics they would propose to sit the Silver Examination in the next period. Australian Athletics works with Oceania and World Athletics to seek registration for those endorsed candidates.

Silver Referee

Purpose of the Silver Phase

The Silver phase focuses on national leadership, broader technical capability, and preparing officials for the higher-level responsibilities associated with Gold.

Required Roles and Experience

- Chief Referee at national championships
- Member of Jury of Appeal/ Referees Decision Review Panel
- Exposure to Competition Management / Technical Delegate roles
- Mentor to Bronze referees

Development Expectations

- 5 days/sessions of national officiating sessions per year inclusive of one national championships in entirety. Roles must include duties as Chief or Referee
- Attendance at National and Oceania officiating seminars
- When available, complete Referee Annual Review documentation as published by Australian Athletics.
- Exposure to complex protest or appeal situations

Eligibility for Advancement

To sit the Gold examination, a Silver referee must:

- Complete 4 years as an active Silver referee
- Demonstrate capability across all event disciplines. Noting that specialist knowledge of Walks, Starting or Photo-Finish is not essential, but considered advantageous.
- When available, complete Referee Annual Review documentation as published by Australian Athletics.
- Ideally have gained experience at one international meet or equivalent (eg Oceania meets, Gold Level events such as Maurie Plant Meet)

Nomination Process for Gold Accreditation

All nominations for Gold Referee candidature are made by Oceania Athletics at their discretion.

Gold Referee

Purpose of the Gold Phase

Gold referees represent the highest level of expertise in Australian athletics officiating. Their role is both operational and developmental, guiding the next generation of officials.

Required Roles and Experience

- Referee or Technical Delegate at national championships
- Jury of Appeal/ Referees Decision Review Panel leadership
- Mentor and assessor for developing referees

Performance Expectations

- Participation in World Athletics or Area Association seminars
- Leadership in educational programs and rule interpretation discussions
- Contribution to officiating resources, training material, and national policy (to be reviewed and published via the AA)
- Readiness for Olympic/Paralympic/World Championship officiating assignments