Race Walking, What You Need To Know!
By someone who should know!

Jane Saville
Disqualified [DQ] Sydney Olympics
Olympic Bronze Medallist 20km walk, Athens 2004

Actual Rule has 2 parts both equally important:
- Basically race walkers must maintain contact with the ground at all times (referred to as the “Contact” part of the rule) and the walkers knee must straighten (“Knee” part of the rule) when the foot hits the ground and stay straightened until the leg passes under the body.

- Red paddle is only shown to an athlete when they are DQed and is only used by the Chief Judge and Chief Judge Assistants (2) at Olympics. In the last 100m the Chief Judge has the power to show the red paddle to DQ an athlete, regardless of number of red cards, if he/she believes the athlete is obviously breaking the rules. This is to prevent athletes blatantly cheating in last part of race if they don’t have any red cards.

DO DOESN’T MEAN YOU WERE RUNNING!
- Just means you weren’t race walking according to the rules.
- 99.9% of athletes who are DQed do not intentionally break the rules but sometimes the pressure of the competition or fatigue brings on technical faults.

Yellow Paddles:
Shown to athletes when the judge is not completely satisfied the athlete is walking within the rules, they’re borderline. Basically, the judge is saying to the athlete “I’m looking at you carefully and you need to improve.” These do not contribute to an athlete’s disqualification. Can receive only one yellow paddle from each judge for each of the two infractions (contact & knees). The yellow paddles have the symbols on them for each of the different infractions:

- ‘<’ for knees
- ‘~’ for contact.

Red cards: given by a judge if he/she believes athlete is breaking the rules, only once during race by judge for either knees or contact. Never shown to athlete directly; so athletes do not know which judge has written the card.

3 Red Cards from different judges = Disqualification (DQ)

Courses: All major championships are on a course 1-2km long.
- There are 8 judges from 8 different countries spread along the course.
- The Chief Judge supervises all the judges and holds the Red Paddle; he/she does not allocate red cards but is merely the “Messenger of DQ’s”.

Only judged by naked eye.
Video replays or slow motion are not used to judge.

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How fast are they walking?

**WORLD RECORD FOR MEN’S 20KM IS 1.17.16 VLADIMIR KANAYKIN** (RUS)
- Equates to 3min 51secs per Km and 15.53 km per hour

**WORLD RECORD FOR WOMEN’S 20KM IS 1.25.02 ELENA LASHMANOVA** (RUS)
- Equates to 4min 15sec per Km and 14.1 km per hour

**WORLD RECORD FOR MEN’S 50KM (31.17MILES) IS 3.34.14 DENIS NIZHEGORODOV** (RUS)
- Equates to 4min17sec per Km and just over 14 km per hour
- Men will go through marathon distance in around 3 hours!

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