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.

- ONLY JUDGED BY NAKED EYE.
- VIDEO Replays or slow motion are not used to judge.

COURSE: All major championships are on a course 1 or 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”.

DQ 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.

3 RED CARDS
from different judges = Disqualification (DQ)

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 the last
part of the race.

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.

Yellow Paddles: Shown to athletes when the judge is not
completely satisfied the athlete is walking within the rules, they’re border line.
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. 

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How fast are they walking?

**WORLD RECORD FOR MEN'S 20K**<sup>3</sup> **IS 1:16.36**<sup>3</sup> **YUSUKE SUZUKI**<sup>(JPN)</sup>
- Equates to 3min 50secs per Km and 15.50 km per hour

**WORLD RECORD FOR WOMEN'S 20K**<sup>3</sup> **IS 1:24.38**<sup>3</sup> **HONG LIU**<sup>(CHN)</sup>
- Equates to 4min 14sec per Km and 14.12 km per hour

**WORLD RECORD FOR MEN'S 50K**<sup>3</sup> **IS 3:32.33**<sup>3</sup> **YOHANN DINIZ**<sup>(FRA)</sup>
- Equates to 4min15sec per Km and over 14 km per hour
- Men will go through marathon distance in around 3 hours!

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Three races at Olympic Games and World Championships

**MEN'S 20KM** | **WOMEN'S 20KM** | **MEN'S 50KM**
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Note: World Championships is now **OPEN 50KM**

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**POSTING BOARD** or commonly referred to as

**DISQUALIFICATION BOARD** (DQ Board): is an electronic scoreboard where red cards and the symbol relating to the offence are displayed for athletes to see. That is, if an athlete receives a red card then beside his/her bib number on the DQ Board will be shown either of the symbols referring to the offence incurred:
- “<” for Knees
- “~” for Contact

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Chief Judge with red paddle