



# Certified Road Running Courses

1982  
edition

Courses Certified as Accurately Measured  
by the National Standards Committee

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# National Running Data Center

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The National Running Data Center (NRDC) is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the collection, analysis, publication and dissemination of running statistics and running-related information. The NRDC cooperates with and has the support of the major governing bodies for long distance running in the United States (TAC and RRCA). The NRDC provides information to national and regional running publications as well as to smaller publications such as club newsletters. The NRDC is supported by donations from individuals, clubs, running-related firms and the national governing bodies.

The NRDC compiles and maintains the official U.S. records for road-running and long distance track events. These are recognized as the official records by the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) and by The Athletics Congress (TAC).

The NRDC publishes record and ranking books on an annual basis and special reports and technical pamphlets on road racing.

NRDC News, issued twelve times a year, contains statistical information and other news that may be reprinted in other publications. It lists all newly certified courses, updating "Certified Road Running Courses." It periodically updates the age records contained in "Running Records by Age." Individuals making annual tax-deductible donations of \$15 or more to the NRDC may be added to the mailing list for NRDC News. Back issues are available.

This book series is made possible through substantial grants from the following organizations (in chronological order):

Blue Ribbon Sports (Nike)

Road Runners Club of America

Men's Long Distance Running Committee of TAC

Women's Long Distance Running Committee of TAC

New York Road Runners Club

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## INTRODUCTION

Certification of a road-running course assures a runner that the course has been accurately measured. The body responsible for certifying courses in the United States is the National Standards Committee. If a race director has taken the time to measure a course properly and accurately, the certification process entails only a small amount of paperwork. If the course has not been measured accurately, the National Standards Committee can provide information on how to measure it properly.

The National Standards Committee is concerned only with the accuracy of course measurement. Certifying a course in no way obligates race directors or runners in regard to race sanctions or registration with any organization.

The number of certified courses is growing at a rapid rate, faster than the number of races or runners. This is a healthy trend and reflects a growing recognition by race directors and sponsors of the importance of accurate course measurement.

This fourth edition of "Certified Road Running Courses" lists those courses reported as certified by the National Standards Committee at the beginning of 1982.

Ken Young and Bob Martin

### THE COURSE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The certification of road and cross-country courses in the USA began in 1964 when the Road Runners Club of America started its standards program upon the recommendation of a special RRCA sub-committee headed by Ted Corbitt, with Nat Cirulnick and Sid Gendin completing the committee.

The AAU followed suit at its 1964 National Convention, and early in 1965, the National AAU Long-Distance Running (LDR) Committee set up a sub-Committee on Standards to work with a number of standards related to improving running and including the certification of National AAU Championship courses. In 1966, the AAU Standards Committee took over all course certification duties, with the RRCA continuing its Standards Certificates program. The RRCA Standards Committee had met considerable inertia and resistance in trying to persuade race promoters to submit voluntarily measurement information for evaluating towards certification. The AAU's program had some "muscle" behind it because it adopted the rule that all national championship courses should be measured properly and certified as accurate. A functional partnership between the RRCA and AAU Standards Committees has existed since 1965. Since the early years, the same people have served on both committees.

The AAU has been replaced by a new organization, The Athletics Congress (TAC), as a governing body for track and field, race walking and long-distance running. The committee, which is the recognized organization for certifying courses for all US road racing, is now referred to as the National Standards Committee.

The original purposes of the course certification program, from the RRCA's point of view, were to promote accurate course measurements and to facilitate the administration of the RRCA Standards Certificates program. The AAU was in it to eliminate inaccurate courses in national championship events.

Accurate course measurement is an exacting job. The course route should be safe and easy to follow by the runners. Acceptable methods of measuring for certification include the following: (1) the calibrated bicycle method- A special counter is purchased and put on a bicycle. The bicycle is ridden over a measured standard distance of a mile, half-mile or kilometer, and then ridden over the race course twice. The bicycle is then recalibrated over the standard distance. (2) the calibrated measuring wheel method- A measuring wheel is hand-pushed at less than three miles per hour over a road calibration course of a mile, half-mile or kilometer, and then over the race course twice. The wheel is then recalibrated. (3) chaining a course- A steel tape is used to measure the course. This is the method recommended for cross-country courses and for some road courses. Official large-scale maps may be used to lay out a race course.

Race courses should be measured as accurately as the measuring instrument will permit and they should be measured to match the advertised distance. Courses are certified at the measured distance. Courses are measured where the runners will run, including all short cuts. They are measured about one foot from curbs, vehicles and such. After a course is measured, a written report, or questionnaire (supplied by the National Standards Committee), describing what was done, is sent to the National Standards Committee, which evaluates the information and certifies the course as having been measured with "reasonable accuracy," or it rejects the measurement, indicating what is wrong with the measurement. Those courses which are accepted are put on the list of certified courses being kept by the NRDC. We would like to thank all of those enthusiasts around the country who have put in the long hours to measure their courses accurately.

All course certifications are handled through the National Standards Committee. Persons desiring to certify a course may request details by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

Ted Corbitt, chairman  
National Standards Committee  
Apt. 8H Sect. 4  
150 W. 225th St.  
New York NY 10463

# Course Measuring Requirements

David C. Katz

With the growing number of races, today's road runner has become more discriminating as to which event to attend and the competition among race directors has increased, each vying for the "Perfect Race." The absolute basis of a good event is an accurate course. Many runners believe that if a race organization can't provide an accurate course then they should not have the race at all.

The days of automobile measured courses are long gone, especially with the simplified methods of measurement used today. Any individual with a small amount of desire and care can accurately measure a road racing course.

Regardless of the course, the route should be accurately measured and its distance advertised. Without this information, runners cannot effectively determine their pace and monitor their rate of improvement.

Two methods of course measurement accepted by the RRCA and AAU Long-Distance-Standards Committees, are the calibrated bicycle and the calibrated measuring wheel methods. After measuring over 85 courses in the past year using both instruments, I have determined that each method provides an equal degree of accuracy. Ted Corbitt, Chairman of the Standards Committees, favors the calibrated bicycle method but admits that, with care, the calibrated wheel offers comparable accuracy.

Both the wheel and the bicycle methods are dependent on an accurately measured known constant. The committee suggests at least a half-mile stretch on a straight, flat road. This half-mile should be measured several times using a surveyor's steel tape measure of one hundred foot length and applying a tension of ten pounds for each tape measurement. Some race organizations have the distance double checked by professional surveyors using electronic measuring devices. The process of measuring this "calibration course" is tedious and time consuming. But once determined, the calibration course can be used until construction or natural disaster changes the road.

With both the bicycle and the wheel methods, course measurement starts with the calibration of the measuring device on the calibration course. The bicycle method utilizes a small counter that is mounted on the front wheel. There are basically two counters that are used: The Clain Jones Assembly and the five star counter. Each device counts revolutions or parts of revolutions of the front wheel. It is important that the tire pressure be maintained, otherwise the wheel's circumference will be altered, producing inaccurate readings. The bicycle rider (the same individual who will measure the course) first rides around for a few miles to warm the tire, allowing the tire to reach a stable pressure. The bicycle is then ridden over the calibration course, noting the starting and finish counts of the device. (Note: Many counters can be reset to 0000.) This procedure is repeated at least twice. The average "constant" is thereby determined which enables the measurer to calculate the measurements. For example:

First calibration	15220 counts/mile
Second calibration	15222 counts/mile
Average	15221 counts/mile

The measurer then proceeds to the start or finish of the course, notes the number on the counter and adds the constant over and over to determine each mile or fraction of mile to be measured. After the course is measured, the bicycle is "recalibrated" on the calibration course. This process must be repeated each time you measure a course. Because the measurer is working with relative numbers, it is important that there be a minimum of two measurements for each course. It is preferred that two bicyclists measure a course together. This allows each independent measurer to check his or her figures against the other's, thereby decreasing the chance of error.

The calibrated measuring wheel is used in the same manner as the bicycle method. The wheel must be calibrated before and after each measurement on the calibration course. The major drawback of this method is time. The wheel must be walked at slower than three miles per hour to achieve best accuracy. Even a slow jog will produce gross errors. I personally prefer the wheel because of the consistency of the solid rubber tire. The degree of circumference change is negligible as compared with that of a bicycle tire over a day's worth of measuring.

With both methods, the course should be measured following the path the runners will follow as closely as possible. According to Corbitt: "give the runners a chance to cut a corner and they'll take it." Therefore, the measurer should cut every corner possible, without going off the course. In addition, all courses should be checked with an alternate method. I make my initial measurements with the bicycle and my final measurements with the wheel. The actual mile markers, start, and finish are determined by taking the average of the two (or more) measurements made.

I have found it easier to measure all my courses from the finish to the start. Most of today's finish line areas require much planning and space for chute systems. By measuring the course in reverse, the finish area is maintained and the start which only needs to be a scratch line on the road, can easily be determined.

Accurate measurement of the mile (kilometer) markers is also important. It can be very frustrating to hear a time for an advertised split, when you know it is far from being correct. Mile markers are an integral aspect of the race. They allow every runner to accurately monitor his or her own pace.

All the care in the world will not guarantee that the runners will follow the course that was measured. We all have our stories about the pace car taking a wrong turn. This means immediate failure for the race. One of the best ways to help avoid this problem is by having one of the course measurers or a head official ride in the pace car. (If it is a police car, insist upon the official going along.)

This is just the beginning to having a course certified with the RRCA/AAU. The final step incorporates the completion of a detailed report explaining all measuring methods, including a comprehensive review of all calculations and a detailed map of the route. The report is submitted to Ted Corbitt and is reviewed by a minimum of two members of the seven person national committee.

Course measuring can be rewarding and fun. It not only gives the measurer a feeling of pride and success, but most important it provides the running community with a valuable service. And to those hard working individuals with their bicycles and wheels, we are all grateful.

This article, which appeared in the Fall, 1980-issue of the Minnesota Distance Runner, is reprinted by permission of that publication and David C. Katz. A small part specific to Minnesota courses is omitted. The committee referred to is the National Standards Committee, of which David C. Katz is a member. It is recognized as the sole authority on approval of certified road running courses by the RRCA, TAC, and the NRDC.

## HOW TO CERTIFY A ROAD COURSE

The National Standards Committee serves as the body to review course measurements and officially approve certification of courses for all of road-running in the United States. It is the only body whose certification is accepted by the RRCA and TAC for the recognition of official records. Marks made on foreign courses may be accepted for records provided the National Standards Committee is satisfied that the course in question was measured with standards comparable to those used in this country.

Certain members of the National Standards Committee handle course certifications for specific regions; all other regions are handled through the chairman. Requests for information, as well as applications for certification, should be submitted to the following persons:

CT,ME,MA,NH,NY,RI,VT

Allan Steinfeld, PO Box 881 FDR Stn, New York NY 10022

IL,IN,MI,NJ,OH,PA,WI

David Katz, PO Box 822, Port Washington NY 11050

DE,DC,MD,VA,WV

A. J. VanderWaal, 75 E. Wayne Ave- #310, Silver Spring MD 20901

AZ,CA

Bob Letson, 4369 Hamilton St- #4, San Diego CA 92104

Foreign and all other domestic regions

Ted Corbitt, Apt 8H Sect 4, 150 W 225th St, New York NY 10463

## QUALIFYING FOR RECORDS AND RANKINGS

Certification of a road-running course assures a runner that the distance has been measured with reasonable accuracy. Records and rankings are meaningful only if they are based on accurately measured courses. Even a slightly short course gives runners a distinct and unfair edge in their times. Thus, the national road-running records and rankings compiled by the NRDC are limited to marks made on certified courses.

For a mark to be considered for a record or for national ranking, final approval of certification for the course must be received by the NRDC (PO Box 42888, Tucson AZ 85733). Complete race results, and the runner's date of birth in the case of age records, must be received before a record can be approved. In addition, the following information must be provided:

1. a copy of the letter from the National Standards Committee certifying that the course has been measured with reasonable accuracy. This serves to identify the course used for the race.

2. a signed statement attesting that the race was run on the course as it was certified: "I, the undersigned, hereby attest that the (name of race), held on (date of race), was run on the course as certified by the National Standards Committee."

3. a description of the finish procedures used to match runners and times and to verify that the assigned times are properly matched to each runner. If times are reported to full seconds, a description of rounding procedures must be provided.

4. a description of the procedures used to verify performances, i.e., to insure against cheating. This would include such items as course monitors, starting line check-in, recording of split times and video-taping.

Age group and single-age records must be validated by a date of birth for the runner. Until the date of birth is received, the mark is considered as pending.

How can one be sure of running on a certified course? If the entry blank says its certified, if the race director says its certified, if its a national championship, doesn't it have to be certified? Unfortunately, the answer is no!

The national bodies award championships on the basis that the course will be certified. In many cases, the promised certification is never obtained and the national body doesn't do anything about it. A similar situation is a race advertised with "certification pending." This may mean a variety of things, from only a vague intention of measuring the course, to a course that is already measured with the paperwork submitted and only the final approval lacking. Another problem is a misunderstanding on the part of the race director as to who is authorized to award course certifications. A course might be "certified" by some local body, and be advertised as certified, but may never have been approved by the National Standards Committee. Finally, the race may not be run over the course exactly as certified, thus causing the marks to be disallowed for record and ranking purposes.

To help runners find races in which their marks will count for record and ranking consideration, the NRDC has adopted a program of registering selected races. The intent is to assure the runner that (1) the course has already been certified, (2) the race will be run properly on the certified course, (3) the finish and timing procedures will insure accurate times for all runners and (4) the complete results will be reported to the NRDC. Races registered with the NRDC will be listed in NRDC News (see frontispiece) and such races will be permitted to advertise as "NRDC registered."

In lieu of NRDC registration, the reputation of the race director is a good guide. If the course is listed in the latest edition of "Certified Road Running Courses" or in updates reported in NRDC News, this verifies that the race has been certified. If



marks and records have been reported in the past from this race, it is a good bet they will be in the future.

The National Standards Committee and the NRDC recognize the importance of maintaining standards of course accuracy and timing/finish procedures in road-racing. Both groups are active in helping individual race directors improve the quality of their races.

### NUMBER OF CERTIFIED COURSES BY DISTANCE AND STATE

There are a total of 1516 certified courses listed in this book which are considered to be "active." These represent courses certified through 1 January 1982. This is an increase of 37% in the past year. The current number of "active" courses and the change from last year for each standard distance are listed.

10km	421	+171	+68%	20mi	8	0	0%
15km	102	+22	+28%	50mi	33	+12	+57%
20km	78	+9	+13%	100mi	6	+3	+100%
25km	48	+6	+14%	Hf Mar	85	+34	+67%
30km	36	+8	+29%	Marath	343	+41	+14%
50km	25	+5	+25%	odd Mt	70	+25	+56%
100km	15	+5	+50%	odd En	111	+26	+31%
8k/5mi	54	+26	+93%	loop	26	+2	+8%
10mi	55	+14	+34%	TOTAL	1516	+409	+37%

The states which have the most "active" certified courses are:

CA	248	MA	51	NJ	38	WA	32	IA	18
NY	135	IN	46	OH	36	VA	28	OK	18
IL	60	MO	46	MI	35	KY	27	TN	17
GA	59	AZ	42	NC	35	MN	24	HI	16
FL	56	CO	40	NE	32	WI	24	KS	15
TX	54	PA	39	OR	32	MS	20	MD	15

All states have a certified course marathon; all but three have a certified course 10km. Here are the number of standard distance courses certified within each state:

- 14 CA,IL
- 13 NY
- 12 TX
- 11 NE,OH
- 10 AZ,FL,MI,MN
- 9 DC,GA,MD,MO,PA,WA
- 8 CO,HI,IN,KY,MA,NJ,OK,OR,SD,VT,VA
- 7 LA,NC,WI
- 6 KS,MS
- 5 CT,NV,NH,NM,ND,TN
- 4 AL,AR,IA
- 3 DE,ME,MT,SC
- 2 AK,RI,UT,WV
- 1 ID,WY

## LISTING OF CERTIFIED COURSES

The following listing includes all certified road-running courses reported by the National Standards Committee through 1 January 1982. The fourteen standard distances are followed by the non-standard metric and English distances and by the closed loop courses.

Under each distance, courses are listed alphabetically by state and then by city. For many courses, the name of a race is listed. For others, the location is given. Sometimes, the name of a club or other organization that holds races on the course is shown.

In the next column, the type of course is indicated. Loop courses follow a closed circuit which may be run more than once to achieve the desired distance. The start and finish may be at different places on the circuit provided the straight-line distance between them does not exceed 10% of the total race distance. The number of loops is shown (when reported), and different loops may be used. Out-and-back courses follow a route to a turnaround point and then return along the same route. Out-and-back courses may repeat the same route one or more times and may have more than a single out-and-back stretch. Point-to-point courses start and finish in different locations and generally do not retrace any portion of the route. The start and finish of a point-to-point course lie further apart than 10% of the race distance (by definition). If a course is a combination of types, the predominant type is reported.

The next three columns show the course elevations. If one figure is reported, it is the average elevation for the course. If two figures are reported and the course is not point-to-point, they represent the highest and lowest elevations on the course. If the course is point-to-point, the first column represents the elevation at the start, the second represents the elevation at the finish and the third represents the range between the highest and lowest elevations.

The first column of dates gives the date by which all measurements for certification were completed. Races run after that date qualify as certified-course races. The final column shows the date after which the course is inactive. Usually this is due to a change in the course and is followed by a re-certification, usually shown on the following line. Some courses have not been used for races for several years but they are carried as active courses if they could still be used.

Following the listing of courses for standard and non-standard distances is a section of "closed loop" courses. These are courses for which the loop is certified and integer multiples of the loop may be run and considered as certified. Many of these are the basic loop for standard certified courses which are listed elsewhere.

FOR LISTINGS  
SEE FILE

*DSR*