

# Rules of the Race

## *Race Etiquette for Athletes*

By Freddie Carlip, Road Runners Club of America

### At The Starting Line

- Line up according to how fast you plan to run or walk. Slower runners and walkers should move to the back of the group.
- Pay attention to the pre-race instructions. What you hear will not only help guide you through the course, but will also keep you safe. Examples are: stay inside the traffic cones, or watch the course marshals (they control traffic to make your race a safe experience) for which way to go at major intersections.
- Pin your race number on the front of your shirt. This is where it is most visible for race officials. It will also make it easier to pull the tag off at the end of the race.
- If you drop something just as the race starts, don't stop and pick it up. You'll endanger yourself and others. Trust that a race official will get it, or move to the side and wait until everyone has crossed the starting line and then retrieve it.

### You're Off!

- Run or walk no more than two abreast. Other runners will want to get by you. If you are walking in a group, stay in the back of the pack.
- If you are stopping at an aid station, move all the way over to the table, grab water and move away from the table so others may get water too. If you want to stop and drink, move to the side of the road, out of the way of other runners. If there's a trash receptacle, by all means use it. If not, don't go too far with your cup. The race volunteers will be collecting the cups and will appreciate not having to go on an extended "litter patrol".
- Even those of us who perspire, instead of sweat, may have to deal with bodily functions during the race. If you need to spit, move to the side of the road and do it there - same goes for throwing up. If nature calls, pull off the course and check for a port-a-potty or kind homeowner, or, as a last resort, a discreet clump of bushes.
- Move to the side if someone behind you says, "Excuse me" or "Coming through". You are about to be passed and the person behind you is giving you a heads up. It's proper race etiquette to let that person through.
- If you need to tie your shoe, or stop for any reason, please move to the side of the road. People coming up behind you are still moving and if you stop in front of them, the scene is set for a collision.
- Feel free to shout words of encouragement to other runners. The other runners will appreciate your cheers. You will likely hear encouraging words in return.
- Pay attention to what is going on around you during the race. Just as in real life, expect the unexpected. Think loose dogs, low branches, looming potholes and most importantly, inconsiderate automobiles.

### Approaching the Finish

- Follow the instructions of the race officials at the finish. You may be told to stay to the right or left.
- Most races don't allow your non-registered friends or relatives to run with you in a race. If someone is running the last few miles with you, and hasn't officially entered the race, tell them NOT to cross the finish line. He/she should move off the racecourse before the finish.
- Once you have crossed the finish line, don't stop. Keep moving to the end of the chute; stay in the exact order in which you finished. Please don't move ahead of anyone in the finish chutes. This is very important for accurate scoring.
- Enjoy the post-race refreshments, but remember others want to enjoy them too. Moderation is the key so there will be food for the last people finishing the race. Be fair to the runners who have been patiently waiting in line.