



ALPINE OFFICIALS' MANUAL  
CHAPTER VIII  
GATE JUDGES -  
THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE  
2019-2020

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## **OVERVIEW**

From the moment a competitor leaves the start gate until they cross the finish line, the most important officials on the hill are the Gate Judges!

Gate Judges are similar to officials in other sports in that each must make instantaneous decisions on a particular situation. However, while baseball officials call “ball,” “strike,” or “foul,” and football officials call “offside,” “pass interference,” or “delay of game,” Gate Judges decide on whether or not a competitor has passed through assigned gates correctly or has committed a “fault.” In each case, these decisions must be prompt, must be consistent, and must be properly documented.

When a Gate Judge arrives at the site on the day of the event (race) the Organizing Committee (OC) should provide some form of training. The updated Gate Judge presentation, "Gate Judges - The Most Important People on the Hill," is a good way of initiating or reinforcing this training.

Supplies should be distributed at this time and the Gate Judges should be made aware of the day's schedule and local requirements. Gate Judges should be in position well before the start of the event.

After the run/event, Gate Judges must remain in their position until their cards are collected by the Chief Gate Judge or representative. Each Gate Judge who has reported a fault, or who has been witness to an incident leading to a fault or a request for a provisional rerun, must remain available to the Jury until after a final decision has been reached - settlement of any filed Protest or validation of the provisional rerun.

If a Protest against disqualification is filed, the Gate Judge's testimony is required to provide the Jury with pertinent details concerning the fault(s). Their testimony may also be required regarding the circumstances leading to a request for a provisional rerun based on interference. The Jury will work as efficiently as possible in settling Protests, but a Gate Judge may be delayed in leaving the event site while further inquiries are being made. The Technical Delegate will advise the Chief Gate Judge when the Gate Judge may be released.

Regardless of the level of competition, every event is important. The competitor may have trained for weeks, months, or even years for this day. A Gate Judge's time, interest, and dedication in giving the competitor the best and fairest opportunity are appreciated.

## **RULES FOR GATE JUDGES**

The Chief Gate Judge is responsible for communicating the current rules to the Gate Judges. There is no set way in which this must be done. This requirement is left to the Chief Gate Judge's assessment of the depth of knowledge and experience of the available Gate Judging staff.

Please refer to the current editions of the U.S. Ski & Snowboard ACR as well as the FIS ICR, and its current Precisions for sections that refer to the following:

- The Chief Gate Judge
- The Gate Judges
- Control of passage (Explanation)
- Marking the card
- Diagram requirement
- Outside assistance
- Correct passage

- Importance of the task of the Gate Judge
- Make your own decisions
- Communication with the competitors
- Immediate announcement of disqualifying faults
- Duties at the end of each run
- Duties at the end of the event
- Supplemental duties of the Gate Judge
- Location of the Gate Judge
- Quantity of Gate Judges
- Support of the Gate Judges

### COMMON PROBLEMS

1. **Gate Judges not in position** or in position too late to properly observe and control the passage of the competitors through the gates. The Gate Judges, or at least a sufficient number for adequate control, must be at their stations well before the start of the event.
2. **Indecision!** Usually the result of failing to anticipate the possible decisions a Gate Judge may need to make. At difficult “combinations” of gates, the Chief Gate Judge should take the time to point out the types of situations which might be encountered at this position.
3. **Inadequate preparation.** Before the event starts:
  - Gate Judge must enter their name, the date, event, run number, gender, and identify their assigned gates on the front of the card.
  - Gate Judge should enter current contact information (cell phone #) on the card.
  - Gate Judge must draw a diagram of their assigned gates in each box provided on the card. A diagram of the fault committed is critical because missing or unclear diagrams make a Gate Judge card useless to the Jury.

*Two sizes of Gate Judge Cards are available: “Fault/No Fault” and “Fault Only.” The full-size “Fault/No Fault” card requires that Gate Judges note the bib number for every competitor who pass their position and mark “F” for competitors who have committed a fault. This type of card is recommended for Giant Slalom and Slalom (technical events). In order to avoid possible confusion, it is strongly recommended that this type card NOT BE PRE-NUMBERED, as some competitors listed on the start order may not actually start, or may start out of their assigned order.*

*The smaller size “Fault Only” Gate Judge card requires that the Gate Judge only note the bib number and an “F” for competitors who have committed a fault. This type of card is recommended for Downhill and Super G (speed events).*

*Whichever card is used, a diagram of the fault must be included on the card. The same diagram, IF properly noted, may be used to indicate multiple competitors committing the same fault.*

4. **Delay in the collection of the Gate Judge Cards.** This delay is usually passed on to the Jury proceedings, the preparation of the Second Run Start List, or the release of the Official Results. The Chief Gate Judge is responsible for the rapid and efficient retrieval of the Gate Judge cards. It is very important that the Gate Judge remain in place until their card has been collected by the Chief Gate Judge. In cases where this may not be practical, an adjacent Gate Judge may cooperate in holding that card in order to ensure that all cards are collected.

5. **Missing Gate Judge Cards.** In the event the person collecting the cards after a run overlooked a Gate Judge, the Gate Judge should make every attempt to deliver the card to the Jury, preferably the Referee, as soon as possible following each run. The Referee will usually be located in the area of the timing building preparing the “Report by the Referee” for posting on the Official Notice Board. Gate Judges who have recorded faults are responsible for reporting to the Finish to provide needed information in regards to the fault.
6. **Inadequately trained Gate Judges.** As mentioned, "Gate Judges - The Most Important People on the Hill," serves as a refresher for experienced Gate Judges and a training session for inexperienced ones. *It is important that the Gate Judges understand the different clear passage requirements for dual pole/dual gate and single pole/single gate situations.*
7. **Inadequate clothing for extreme weather conditions.** Gate Judges must be prepared for all weather conditions.

When a Gate Judge records a fault, or is a witness to interference with a competitor's run with subsequent request for a provisional rerun, the Gate Judge's job is not finished when the last competitor crosses the finish line. If the competitor who committed a fault is disqualified and files a protest against disqualification, the Gate Judge must be willing to serve as a witness when the protest is under consideration by the Jury.

If, at the end of the Protest period (15 minutes after posting the Report by the Referee), no Protest to a disqualification has been filed, or if testimony is not required regarding interference that resulted in the request/allowance of a provisional rerun, the Technical Delegate will dismiss the Gate Judge from duty.

Any Gate Judge who is a witness to interference or a competitor exiting the course and requesting a provisional rerun must be available to serve as a witness while the Jury considers whether or not to confirm the provisional rerun. The Chief Gate Judge should be present to introduce the Gate Judge and present the Gate Judge's qualifications to the Jury.

Each event site has a preferred method and variations in procedures for training Gate Judges. The following guidelines, however, should still be followed in order to achieve a fair event for all.

#### **GATE JUDGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Be at your assigned location on time - ready to officiate.
2. Wear your bib or other provided identification to enable competitors and Jury members to easily identify you.
3. Always be alert to what is going on around you.
4. Be prepared to stand on the course; ski or snowboard equipment is not allowed.
5. Take a position above your gates so you may move down to assist with gate repairs or to check a competitor's tracks.

6. Be alert to faults above and below your assigned gates; check to see that the proper Gate Judge has seen and recorded them. *Faults, when clearly committed, may be recorded and confirmed from more than one Gate Judge position.*
7. Observe and correctly record AND DIAGRAM faults you observe through your assigned gates.
8. Observe and correctly record BIB NUMBER not START NUMBER when recording a fault.
9. Observe and correctly record any interference in your gate area (if this occurs, the competitor must immediately leave the course in order to request a provisional rerun). *Do not include cryptic notes on your card...keep comments clear and concise!*
10. Prepare your card in advance with required header information: name, date, event, assigned gates, sample diagram of your assigned gates, etc. *DO NOT PRE-NUMBER YOUR CARD!*
11. Reply promptly, properly, and clearly to a hiking (Slalom only) competitor's request for assistance with either: "GO" or "BACK." (This is the communication system most commonly used. Rule containing this exact wording has been removed from the FIS ICR, but it is the accepted response at U.S. Ski & Snowboard-sanctioned Slalom events and remains in the U.S. Ski & Snowboard ACR.) \*
12. Do not interfere with other officials or ski through gates (including the Finish Line) when going to and from your assigned position.
13. Avoid social contact or "chit-chat" while the event is in progress; distractions may interfere with your observations.

**\*NOTE:** *Hiking (stepping back) to complete passage of a missed gate is only allowed in Slalom and then only if the competitor who is hiking does not interfere with the next competitor or has not been passed by the next competitor. A competitor who misses a gate in Giant Slalom, Super G, or Downhill must stop and must immediately exit the course. Depending on event format, a competitor who misses a gate in a Parallel event is allowed to continue but will receive a penalty; they are not allowed to hike (step back).*

#### **GATE JUDGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE RULE BOOKS**

1. Record a fault on the card WITH a clear diagram of the competitor's path.
2. Review each fault with the Chief Gate Judge.
3. Remain available for Jury meetings if you have marked any faults on your card.
4. Remain available for Jury meetings if you have any information concerning the validity of a request for a provisional rerun.
5. If course maintenance crew is not available, reset gate poles in their original vertical position whenever they are dislodged. (Gate positions are "colored" at the discretion of the Jury.) Course crew will assist with the tools required to properly reset the gate poles.

6. If course maintenance crew is not available, replace broken gate poles and torn flags.
7. DO NOT discuss faults with coaches, competitors, parents, or spectators.

### **LEGAL PASSAGE**

1. Competitors must pass through every gate. Both feet and both ski tips must cross the gate line - an imaginary line connecting the bases of the innermost poles of each gate. If a competitor has to climb back up to a dual pole gate (Slalom only), the competitor must cross this imaginary line with both feet and both ski tips.
2. For *single pole Slalom and single gate Giant Slalom*, both feet and ski tips must pass the turning pole on the same side following the natural line of the course. If a competitor has to climb back up to a missed Slalom gate, the competitor must climb above and pass around the top side of the turning pole. *The competitor may do so in either direction.*
3. Double pole gates may be entered from either direction and in any order as long as both feet and both ski tips cross the gate line. This concept is especially important to understand in cases of combinations of gates commonly referred to as “hairpins” and “flushes.” In these “vertical combinations,” a competitor may properly pass through such gates in a different direction than other competitors, e.g., may pass through “backwards.”
4. Feet and ski tips may be off the snow, but in this case both feet and ski tips must pass through the plane defined by the gate line and the gate poles in their vertical position.
5. If gate poles have been deflected from the vertical before the competitor’s feet have passed, then the feet and ski tips must pass where the gate pole(s) had been when they were vertical.
6. Competitors may legally enter and exit a gate from the same side, as long as both feet and ski tips cross the gate line.
7. The decision handed down by the Gate Judge must be clear and unbiased. The Gate Judge must declare a fault only when the Gate Judge is convinced that a fault has been committed.

### **OTHER FAULTS**

Gate Judges must watch for and report faults for reasons other than gate passage:

1. The competitor must not receive outside assistance. Verbal information and direction may only be provided by the Gate Judge.
2. A competitor may not use the gate poles for aid or move them in any manner except when passing through the gate in ski racing action.
3. Slow or fallen competitors must yield to overtaking competitors and may no longer continue on course.
4. Competitors may not obstruct or interfere with other competitors or with officials performing their duties.
5. Competitors must respect the directions of officials (e.g., “move back from the course”).

6. Competitors must respect the rules for course inspection.

### **GATE JUDGE'S CONTROL CARD**

1. Each Gate Judge must have a suitable control card.
2. Gate Judges must\* prepare their card(s) in advance:
  - a. Date, type of event, run number, men or women, etc.
  - b. Numbers of the assigned gates.
  - c. Name of Gate Judge, relief and/or assistant's name.  
(Replacement Gate Judges should indicate the change on the Gate Judge card.)
  - d. Contact information for Gate Judge and/or relief Gate Judge (cell phone #)
  - e. Sample diagrams of assigned gates drawn in advance; used to document faults.

**NOTE:** The ability to identify a Gate Judge who has witnessed a fault, to verify where a fault occurred, or to identify what fault was committed is critical. If this data is not recorded, a fault may go undocumented.

### **GATE JUDGE'S ROLE AS A CRITICAL OBSERVER**

Although a Gate Judge has no immediate responsibility for any gates other than those assigned, they should observe activity above and below their gates in the normal passage of the competitor. They should note any corroborating evidence which may be required in later discussions with the Jury.

In Slalom, Giant Slalom, and Parallel, a Gate Judge's responsibility begins with the approach of the competitor to the first gate they control and ends when the competitor has passed through the last of their assigned gates.

In Downhill and Super G, the Gate Judge watches the entire stretch visible both above and below their assigned gates.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Gate Judges play an integral part in an efficiently run event by being on time, by working quickly, and by being fair to all competitors.

Bib numbers for competitors abandoning the course - DNF's, should be noted. Unusual circumstances should also be documented on the card, e.g., fell, hiked, re-entered course after missing gate, injured/needed assistance, etc.

### **GIVING INFORMATION TO A COMPETITOR**

1. In the case of an error, the competitor is permitted to ask the Gate Judge if a fault was committed.
2. The Gate Judge, if asked, must inform a competitor if he has committed a fault that may lead to disqualification.
3. In cases where the competitor has been obstructed from continuing their run due to circumstances beyond their control, it is the responsibility of the competitor to request that the Gate Judge note on their card the particulars of the obstruction in question; rules require that the Gate Judge perform this duty. This information may be critically important to the

Jury in their decision as to the validity of a competitor's "provisional rerun" request based on such an obstruction.

4. Acceptable replies, and what is commonly used, are:
  - "Back" if the gate in question (Slalom only) has been missed, OR
  - "Go" if the gate in question (Slalom only) has been correctly passedThe color of the gate in question is often added, e.g. "Back Blue" or "Back Red."
5. The Gate Judge should respond quickly, accurately, and loudly.
6. A competitor is fully responsible for their actions, and in this respect, the competitor cannot hold the Gate Judge responsible.

### **SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

The Chief Gate Judge should refer to the following list of suggested supplies and equipment:

- Gate Judge Cards (Chapter VI – Working Papers)
- Gate Judge Instruction sheets (1 per Gate Judge)
- Waterproof protection for the cards
- Clipboards for holding Gate Judge cards with waterproof protection
- Pencils - 2 for each Gate Judge and a small pencil sharpener
- Gate Judge bibs, arm bands, or another type of identifier