

AAA/RRC COURSE MEASUREMENT SCHEME

ADVICE TO RACE ORGANISERS WISHING TO HAVE THEIR COURSES MEASURED

This brochure contains an up to date list of graded measurers, approved by the AAA for measuring road race courses in England and Wales. Their measurements are also valid for Road Runners Club standards.

All events which advertise a specific distance, now need to have their courses measured by an accredited measurer and a Certificate of Course Accuracy obtained, before an AAA road race Permit can be issued. Road races which are not organised under AAA Permit arrangements, do not qualify for the AAA Course Measurement Service.

The list is divided into the four Areas administered by the AAA - the Midland, Northern and Southern Counties AA's and the AA of Wales, with measurers approved by the Scottish and Northern Ireland AA's detailed at the back.

Beside each measurer's entry, is shown the locality in which they are prepared to operate - eg perhaps their local county, or maybe within, say, 30 miles of their home town. With 150 AAA approved measurers countrywide, race organisers should have little difficulty finding one or more living close by.

Within each Area, the measurers are shown as either Grade 1 or Grade 2, depending upon their experience. All measurers have been trained and tested, and considered entirely competent to measure courses at Area, County and local levels, the only difference being that Grade 1 measurers are also qualified to measure National Championship events. It is normally better that you approach your local Grade 2 measurer, as they will probably have less of a workload and therefore be more readily available to measure your course.

You should normally try and give the measurer at least three month's notice, (viz. three months prior to race date), as it is not always possible to obtain a measurer's services at short notice.

Prior to approaching a measurer, however, organisers should have undertaken certain preliminary work themselves. You should have worked out the course you wish to use for the race, and have satisfied yourself that the proposed distance is approximately correct. The best way to do this is to obtain an Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map of the area, and carefully trace round the course using a map measurer. This will produce a far more accurate result than, for instance, driving round the route in your car and gauging the distance by reference to the vehicle mileometer.

Initial planning will also need to include obtaining Police and Local Authority permission to use the proposed route on race day, and this must also be done before approaching a measurer.

Once you have made contact with a local measurer who is willing to measure your course, you should agree a time and date which is mutually acceptable. It is important that the race organiser (or someone with an intimate knowledge of the course, such as the course director) is available to accompany the measurer. It is also important to allow sufficient time for the exercise - something like 2 hours for a 10K event, and maybe as much as 5/6 hours for a full marathon. Where heavy traffic could be a factor, it will probably be necessary to arrange an early morning appointment. In really heavy traffic conditions, such as town centre events, it may even be necessary to consider the use of a police motor-cycle escort, which is the responsibility of the race organiser.

The measurer will be on a bicycle (the calibrated cycle, or Jones counter method of measurement being the only one recognised by the IAAF/AAA), and it is preferable that the accompanying race official(s) are also on bicycles. One of the requirements is that the measurer should measure the course along the shortest possible route legitimately available to the runners on the day of the race, and in

view of this, the organisers should be prepared to answer questions on such points as how much of the road will be available to the runners on race day (viz. traffic flow considerations), where marshals will direct runners at junctions, whether corners will be taped or coned to stop cutting the course etc.

The measurer will require from the organiser four copies of the course map, one for the measurers' own records, one to accompany the measurement report to the relative Area Measurement Secretary, one to form part of the final measurement package sent to the race organiser, and one for the Road Runners Club. As mentioned, an OS 1:25,000 map or large-scale street plan are generally best.

Bear in mind, that the measurer may need to adjust the length of the course to achieve the required distance (where the event advertises a specific distance), so if possible there should be some capacity at either the start or finish areas. If this is not practical, you should decide in advance where any changes in the course could be made, if required. Decide also what intermediate distance points you require to be located, and inform the measurer at the outset. In this connection, officials accompanying the measurer will find it helpful to arm themselves with a notebook and pen/paint spray in order to note/mark the intermediate distance locations established by the measurer.

After the measurement, the measurer will forward one copy of his/her report to the Area Measurement Secretary (with another to the race organiser and a third to the Road Runners Club). The Area Measurement Secretary, having checked the details, will then despatch to the organiser an AAA Certificate of Course Accuracy. Each certificate bears an individual number which should be quoted when applying for an AAA Race Permit. The certificate of Course Accuracy remains valid until such time as the course needs to be changed, subject to annual confirmation from the organiser to the Area Measurement Secretary that the course remains precisely the same as that covered by the certificate number. (See back of brochure for specimen letter re renewal).

The AAA/RRC Course Measurement service is provided free as part of the AAA Road Race Permit Scheme, but we do ask that the measurers' out of pocket expenses are covered by the organiser. Normally, travelling costs are based on 20p per mile car travel, and the cost of meals may also be appropriate, if the length of the measurement exercise involves the measurer spending several hours away from home. Such things should be agreed with the individual measurer at the outset.

Your local Area Measurement Secretary (see front of brochure) will normally be pleased to assist with any queries you may have. For those race organisers with little or no previous experience of organising a road race, the AAA's Road Race Handbook publication is a "must". This covers all you need to know about organising a road race, including the rules of road racing, and may be obtained from the Amateur Athletic Association's office.

Mike Tomlins,
AAA Course Measurement Secretary.