**Rules for Race Directors**

(Listed in order of importance)

1. **The course must be made as safe as possible. This is especially true if children will be participating.** If the course is on roads open to traffic, make sure you warn participants of that. Also let motorists know—using signs, volunteers, safety cones, etc.—that there’s a race going on and that they need to be cautious. If there are any inconspicuous dangers, such as potholes, bumps in the road, etc., mark them with spray paint, or post a warning sign, or volunteer nearby.
2. **The course must be well marked**. Don’t assume that the participants of your race already know the course or will understand or remember a short explanation of it given at the starting line. Chances are, the course will be completely new to some of the participants. That’s not normally a problem for newcomers in the back-of-the-pack (who can just follow those ahead of them), but newcomers at the very front of the race are the most likely to take a wrong turn—and lead others behind them to do the same. Every turn must be clearly marked with a sign, paint on the pavement, or a volunteer to direct the participants. Make sure the volunteers get clear instructions, too. Volunteers have been known to mistakenly turn participants in the wrong direction.
3. **If the race is a long one, you must provide enough food and/or liquids on the course for the racers to complete the race**. You don’t have to provide a smorgasbord of everything a participant could want on the course, but you need to offer the basics, which will vary according to distance.
4. **The course distance must be close to what’s been advertised.** Sometimes, because of road layouts or safety issues, you can’t offer the precise distance of a 5K, 10K, etc., but try to get as close as possible. At a minimum, measure your course beforehand using a GPS unit. You can bet that the leaders of the race are wearing GPS watches, and if the course is short or long, they’ll know it. Many participants have goal times or personal records in mind for a race, and a course that’s overly long or short makes their finish times meaningless. That’s especially true with long races.
5. **Recording results manually is OK for small races, but large races need to be electronically timed.** If you have lots of participants, you’re going to have a nightmare on your hands at the finish line trying to manually record bib numbers and finish times as multiple finishers cross together. Timing services aren’t dirt cheap, but they’re very reliable and reasonable in cost for the services--particularly online registration and quick race results—that they provide.