

**UKA's Head of Competitions, Cherry Alexander, highlights the main implications of the new no false start rule.**

The no false start rule was voted in by the IAAF at their Congress last August and was introduced in November. With the arrival of the new ruling to the UK in our first Major Events of 2010, it has brought it furthermore to our attention.

The Aviva International Match at Kelvin Hall at the end of January was held under IAAF rules so the change was already in place. Every other year the athletes rule book comes under scrutiny and amendments are made to reflect the ever changing landscape of our sport. The rules range from the intricate detail that perhaps only officials will notice, to those that determine just how an event is played out before us with a real impact on the potential results.

The most significant change feature within the sport for the immediate future will be the implementation of the new false start rule and concerns the penalty that is imposed on athletes in senior competition.

On a domestic level, the rule will come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and whilst this will only affect senior competition excluding only open graded meetings, officials will need to be on top of the new ruling and the implications for their work.

UKA Technical Committee has put together the following easy to follow guidelines and to my mind it is useful to share this with AW readers so all can be aware of this development for our sport and what they are seeing at events.

Put simply, the new imposes immediate disqualification for a false start in track events – the exception is in Senior combined events competition where there will only be one false start allowed per race only.

- The new penalties apply at all levels of SENIOR competition. The penalties for all other age groups and masters events will remain unchanged.
- Many officials will need to consider the rules' impact on our sport - particularly on the lowest levels of domestic competition.
- The new rule does not change what constitutes a false start, or the fact that the starter is in absolute control of the start and should apply same high standard of judgment– all that has changed is the imposition of new penalties.
- It is vital that starters reinforce the new rules on the race start line so that athletes are completely aware of the conditions under which they compete.
- Starters should look for delaying tactics and, initially, issue general warnings to the whole field, as further warnings would constitute a false start and thus a disqualification.
- Starters need to be strong and not tempted to fire the gun immediately after the 'set' command. Athletes always need time to settle and the new rules do not change that in any way.
- The full range of cards will still be used by the starter's assistants – red for DQ, yellow for a warning (now only in non senior events or combined events under UK rules) and green to indicate no action is to be taken and all is well.
- In domestic competitions, at certain venues, false start detection equipment may be available. Whilst a very useful aid to the starter, it should never replace their judgment and should be used to confirm and endorse judgments under UKA rules.

Information on rules for competition can be found on the UKA website at [www.uka.org.uk/competitions/rules](http://www.uka.org.uk/competitions/rules)