

Behaviour



Misbehaviour is more than a matter of discipline. It is a **distraction that disadvantages** other athletes, and must be dealt with in a manner that is in itself, not a distraction.

An official who over-reacts or chastises a pupil loudly in front of others can also be a distraction that disadvantages athletes.

Rather than disturb the entire field of competitors, try and **take the offender aside** and explain the requirements and warn him/her of the consequences. Or if it is past the warning stage, have the offender leave the competition area and take no further part in the event.

A public telling off or banishment may be effective in establishing good behaviour, but may not be best for the other athletes.

Of course, it will pay to **explain** the requirements of the event and **expected standards** of behaviour to all before the competition begins. For example, kids will talk and talking in itself is not bad behaviour, but competitors must understand that they should not talk while someone else is making a high jump attempt. Or cross the runway when a long jumper is preparing to jump. Or be inattentive when their name is called for a field event attempt.

An official must know how to handle competitors and make himself acquainted with their needs. He must realise that many competitors are nervous during a competition and a dictatorial manner may quickly lead to an unpleasant situation, which could have been avoided by a more understanding approach. A few competitors may be uncooperative, and these must be dealt with firmly but diplomatically.

- IAAF Athletics Officiating.

