

## **Duties & Responsibilities of a USSA Gate Judge The Most Important Person on the Hill**

Ski racing is unique among junior sports in the number of officials it takes to run an event. During your athlete's career as a ski racer, you WILL be asked to function as a gate judge. Gate judges are similar to officials in other sports in that each must make instantaneous decisions on a particular situation. Among other things, Gate Judges decide whether a competitor has passed through a series of gates correctly or has committed a "fault". Decisions must be prompt, consistent, and properly documented. Unfortunately, most gate judge education is limited to a 15 minute meeting prior to the race. This creates the situation where gate judges are unsure of their responsibilities and the rules, sometimes resulting in decisions that are not fair and equitable to all competitors. The documents associated with this educational program are designed to make you a confident, knowledgeable gate judge who will help to decide a fair competition, help your athlete understand the rules, and ensure that you and your club will meet your responsibilities to provide a sufficient quantity of qualified volunteers.

Important: Before beginning this course, please watch the 17 minute USSA Alpine Gate Judge video available by [clicking here](#).

### **Preparing for the day:**

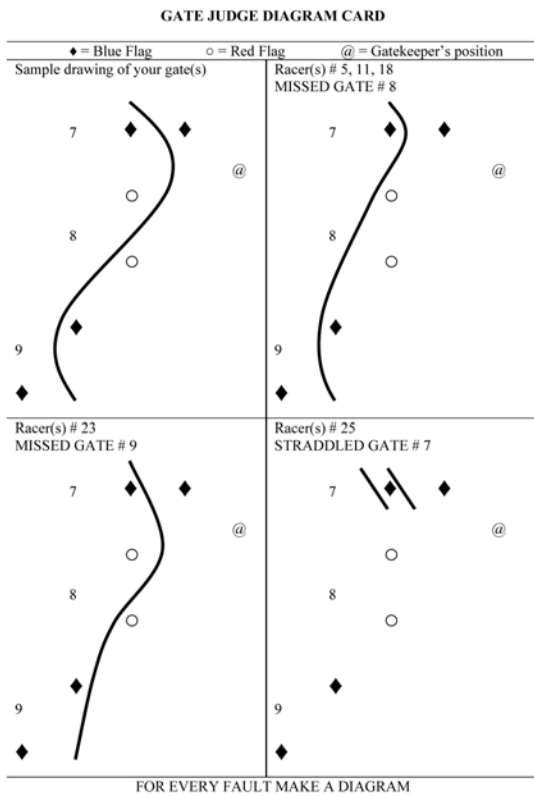
Wear clothing for varying and unknown weather conditions. Bring hand warmers, extra gloves, food, and fluids if desired. Portable seating is acceptable only if placed far from fall zones, and not used while racers are on course.

### **Gate Judge Meeting:**

The gate judge meeting prior to the race lasts about 15 minutes and includes important information such as schedules, a review of the rules, and special circumstances for that specific race. Gate Judge supplies and your lift ticket are usually distributed at the gate judge meeting. Please be on time.

### **Placement on the Hill:**

1. At the gate judge meeting, the chief gate judge (CGJ) will announce the time to meet at the top of the race slope. Please be prompt or you will make the CGJ's job of placing Gate Judges more difficult and you might delay the start. When all the gate judges who are skiing have arrived at the top, the CGJ will position them on the course and assign gates. Hikers should walk high enough above the finish so that the CGJ does not have to wait while they hike to their assigned position. Wear your bib so that competitors and jury members can easily identify you.
2. Place your equipment out of fall zones.
3. Be prepared to stand in your position while the race is under way. You may not abandon your duties without notifying the CGJ or a member of the Jury.
4. Position yourself so competitors can pick you out from spectators, and where you have the best view of your assigned gates. You may need to move into and out of the racing line quickly to make repairs, remove equipment, or inspect tracks. Straddles at combination gates are often the most difficult faults to judge. Typically, the best viewpoint for combination gates is to place yourself so that the middle gate poles of the combination are between you and the racers.
5. Prepare your gate cards in advance. Fill out all information requested in the header area, and draw 4 diagrams of your assigned gates. The first of these diagrams should include an "@" where you are located in relation to your gates, numbers corresponding to the gates you are watching, and a line showing the fastest legal passage through these gates. Use separate gate cards for men & women and for scored & non-scored competitors. A properly completed gate card:



**UNITED STATES SKI AND SNOWBOARD ASSOCIATION  
GATE JUDGES CARD**

NO FAULTS       FAULTS X

Men       Women X      Run # 1      Gate(s) # 7, 8, 9

DH       SL X      GS       SG       Date 7 January 2001

Gatekeeper (print full name) G. Gatejudge

Alternate (mark at 1st racer) \_\_\_\_\_

For every racer who reaches your gates note the Bib # and mark the proper column ✓ or F. FOR EVERY FAULT ALSO MAKE A DIAGRAM.

✓ = Legally passed      F = Fault

BIB NO.	OK	F	BIB NO.	OK	F	BIB NO.	OK	F	BIB NO.	OK	F	BIB NO.	OK	F
1	✓		20	✓										
2	✓		21	✓										
3	✓		22	✓										
4	✓		23		F									
5		F	24	✓										
6		DNF	25		F									
7	✓		26	✓										
8	✓		27	✓										
9	✓		28	✓										
10	✓		29	✓										
11		F	30	✓										
12	✓													
13	✓													
14	✓													
15	✓													
16	✓													
17	✓													
18		F												
19	✓													

**Note:**

- Sample drawing with “@” to indicate your location and drawing of fastest legal passage
- All gates are numbered
- All diagrams include an explanation of the fault and bib numbers of competitors who have faulted as drawn.
- You may use the same diagram for multiple racers who make the same fault at the same gate
- Diagram for straddle by bib #7.
- Bib #6 was a DNF – no diagram necessary
- Header information is complete

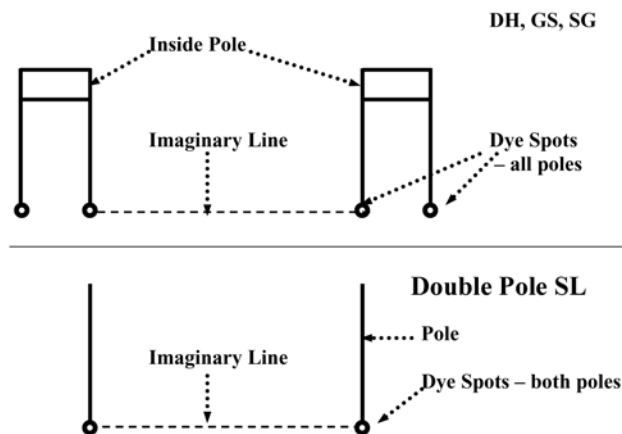
**Race Responsibilities**

1. Do not allow spectators or coaches to influence your opinion. Ask spectators to move out of your line of vision if necessary. If a spectator or coach gives commands to a competitor, ask them to stop and note the situation on your card.
2. Do not discuss your decisions with anyone except the CGJ, or members of the Jury.
3. Work as a team – ask adjacent Gate Judges for missed bib numbers, and help with course maintenance or equipment removal from adjacent gates if necessary.
4. Reply promptly, properly, and clearly to a competitor's request for assistance with either “Go” or “Back”. You may also point to or say the color of the gate that needs to be passed. Be loud and clear. You may add the command to “loop around” gates in single pole SL. The competitor himself is fully responsible for his action, and in this respect, he cannot hold the Gate Judge responsible, but do your best to help racers understand what they must do to avoid a fault.
5. Maintain your gates between racers. Quickly replace gates that have been knocked out in their original vertical position, and refasten gate panels that have been knocked loose.
6. Hiking or slow competitors must yield to oncoming racers. If it appears that a competitor might interfere with an oncoming racer, instruct the competitor to quickly get out of the racing line, but remind them they may continue on course after being passed.

7. Be alert to faults and interference above and below your assigned gates. If the assigned Gate Judge has not seen and/or recorded them, you should draw a diagram of faults and note incidents of interference that may be reviewed later by the Jury.
8. Proper, legible diagrams of faults and notes regarding interference are critical to the fairness of the race. See examples later in this document.
9. Interference is any outside object (not personal equipment) that causes the skier to change their racing line or affects their speed i.e. broken or missing gates, hiking skier, course maintenance worker, equipment in the race line, etc. Competitors who believe they have been interfered with must immediately pull off course and request a provisional rerun from the nearest gate judge.
10. Competitors who have pulled out and requested a provisional rerun due to interference should be instructed to report to the Finish Referee at the finish line. Document what you saw – you will be asked whether you thought there was interference.
11. If you witness interference but the competitor does not immediately pull out, document what you saw. You might be asked to explain what happened.
12. Competitors who lose a ski may not continue on course and are DNF (for exceptions, see special “Fall in Finish” rules later in this document). DNFs do not require a drawing, but they should be noted as “DNF” in the fault column, not as a fault. You should note every DNF you witness.
13. Every skier that enters your gates but ONLY skiers that enter your gates should be noted in the OK/Fault columns on your card. Do not pre-number your cards.
14. The decision handed down by the Gate Judge must be clear and unbiased. The Gate Judge must declare a fault only when convinced that a fault has been committed. Benefit of the doubt goes to the competitor.
15. After EACH run, ALL gate judges must meet with the Chief Gate Judge (CGJ), usually in the finish area. It is not acceptable to have someone else turn in your gate card for you even if you have no faults. 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 rerun must be available to the jury until after a final decision has been reached. If a protest against disqualification is filed, the Gate Judge must be available to provide additional testimony. Gate Judges who report faults or were witnesses to faults should stay readily available until 15 minutes after posting of the Referee Report. This report is usually posted about 10 minutes after all gate judges have been dismissed.

### **Legal Passage: Double pole SL, GS, SG, DH**

1. Competitors must pass through every gate. Both feet and both tips must cross the imaginary line between the bases of the innermost poles of both pairs of poles (the gate line).



2. Gates may be passed in any direction and any order as long as both tips and both feet pass through the gate line (for example, gate 12 can be made before gate 11 and it is not necessary to pass through gate 12 again). All the following are legal passages:



3. Feet and tips may be off the snow, but in this case, both feet and both tips must pass through the plane defined by the gate line with the gate poles in their vertical position.
4. A competitor who slides across the gate pole so that only the feet or only the tips have legally passed through the gate line may hike so that only the feet or tips that have not made legal passage have passed through the gate line.



In the photo above, the competitor's ski tips have made legal passage but the feet did not. To complete legal passage, the skier must hike so that both feet cross the gate line. The tips do not have to cross the gate line again.

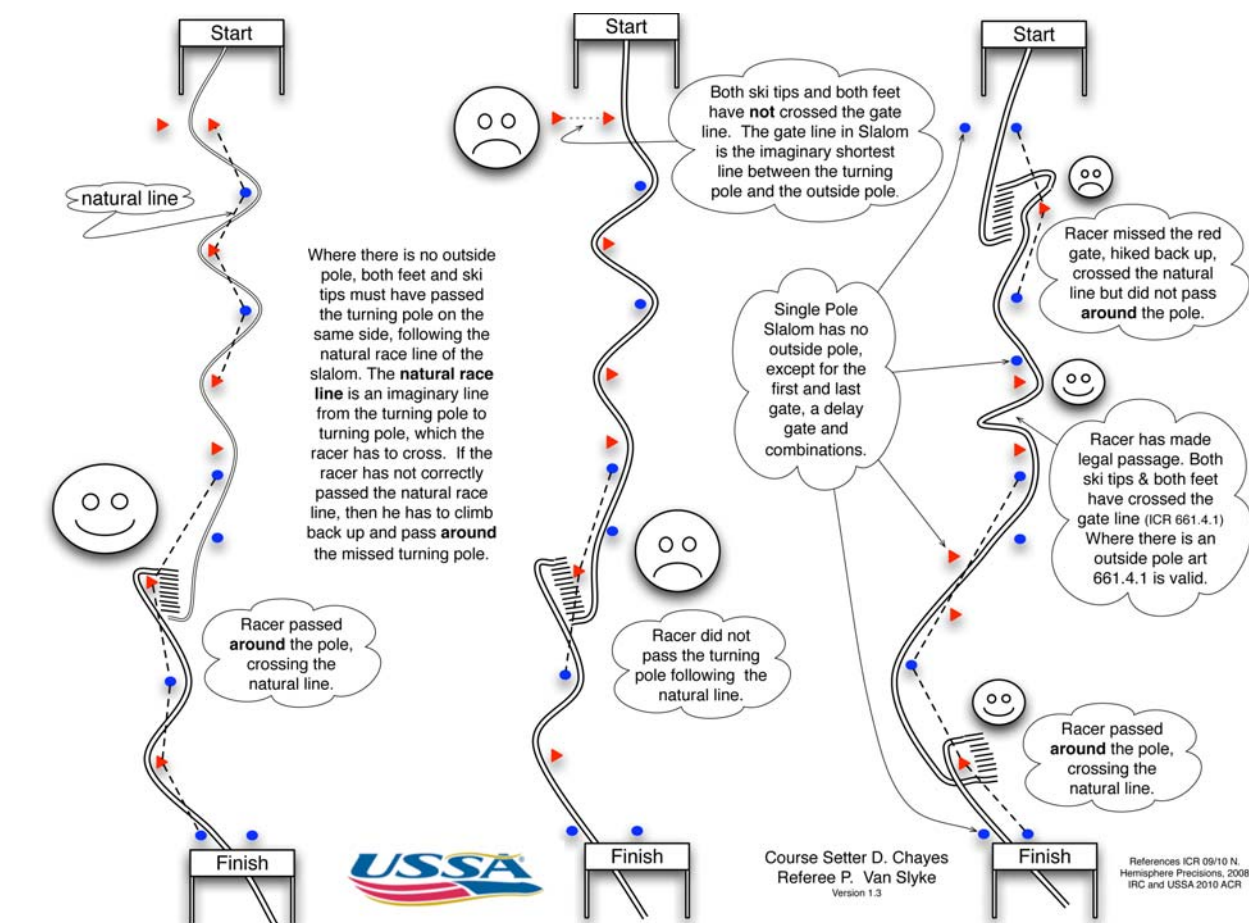
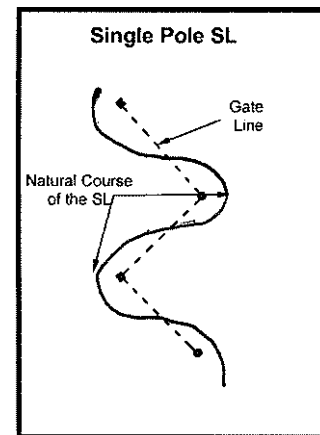
5. If a gate has been knocked out, the hole in the snow where the gate was originally placed will substitute for the gate pole to determine legal passage. Missing gate poles that have altered a competitor's speed or racing line may be legitimate grounds for interference.
6. Competitors may legally enter and exit a gate from the same side as long as both feet and tips cross the gate line – see diagram above.
7. A straddle occurs when one of the skis passes inside the turning pole. This is a fault.
8. Two of the more difficult situations to judge are a “tip straddle” and a hooked tip. It is possible for a ski tip to knock down and pass over the base of the turning pole (usually seen in SL). This is a fault unless the tip is deflected and passes inside the base of the gate. Sometimes when the inside ski tip hooks a pole, the racer will be spun around backwards so that both tips and both feet pass legally through the gate (usually seen in GS).
9. In some cases, Gate Judges can confirm legal passage by inspecting a racer's tracks in the snow.



10. The best method to determine legal passage is to watch the feet & tips (not the body) and freeze your vision momentarily on the base of the gate as the competitor passes to get a mental “snapshot” of the passage, then immediately move your vision back to the feet & tips and freeze again on the base of the next gate. This is especially effective in combination gates.

## Legal Passage: Single Pole SL

1. All rules for legal passage of double pole gates apply for single pole slalom except that both tips and both feet must pass the imaginary gate line between the gate being passed and the one immediately previous to it, AND both tips and both feet must pass around the turning pole on the same side following the natural course of the slalom. If a racer must hike to a missed gate in single pole SL, the fastest way to get legal passage is to loop around the gate in either direction.
2. In single pole SL sets, the first & last gates, and all combinations and delays will be set as double pole gates. Double pole gate passage as explained above applies with these gates.
3. Note smiley faces in the following diagram indicate legal passage. Frowning faces indicate faults.



## Fall in the Finish Rule:

In SL, GS & SG, a competitor who has legally passed the second gate above the finish (the second to last gate on the course) may legally pass through the last gate and finish the run on one ski. A competitor who has legally passed the gate immediately above the finish (the last gate on the course) may finish the run without any skis. If the ski(s) are missing due to a fall, the competitor must cross the finish immediately after the fall.

Competitors who have missed a gate and crossed the finish line may not hike back to a missed gate. They are DSQ unless they have legitimate grounds for interference at the finish that caused them to miss a gate, AND they could not stop before crossing the finish.

## **Other faults and actions that may result in disqualification or other sanction**

Gate Judges must watch for and report actions that could lead to sanctions up to and including disqualification. It is the jury's responsibility to determine if a sanction should be applied and what the sanction will be, but the jury may not see all actions. As eyes of the jury, the gate judge should report these actions.

1. Competitor accepts outside assistance in any form.
2. Competitor may not alter the course or use the gate poles for aid.
3. Slow or fallen competitors must yield to overtaking competitors at the first call.
4. Competitors may not obstruct or interfere with other competitors or with officials performing their duties.
5. Racer trains on a course closed to competitors or does not follow the rules for inspection.
6. Competitors must respect all instructions of officials including those for inspection.
7. Racer does not comply with safety regulations.
8. Competitors must observe good sportsmanship rules including the use of foul language and visible displays of anger.
9. Only a coach may submit a protest to the jury. Competitors and their parents may not protest decisions of a race official.
10. Competitors who know they have committed a fault must immediately ski off the course.
11. Requesting a rerun without legitimate cause.

### **SEE GATE CARD DIAGRAMS ON NEXT PAGE**

If this racer spins so that the tip of his right ski passes the correct (legal) side of the turning pole, and he does not lose a ski, he will have legal passage on this gate.

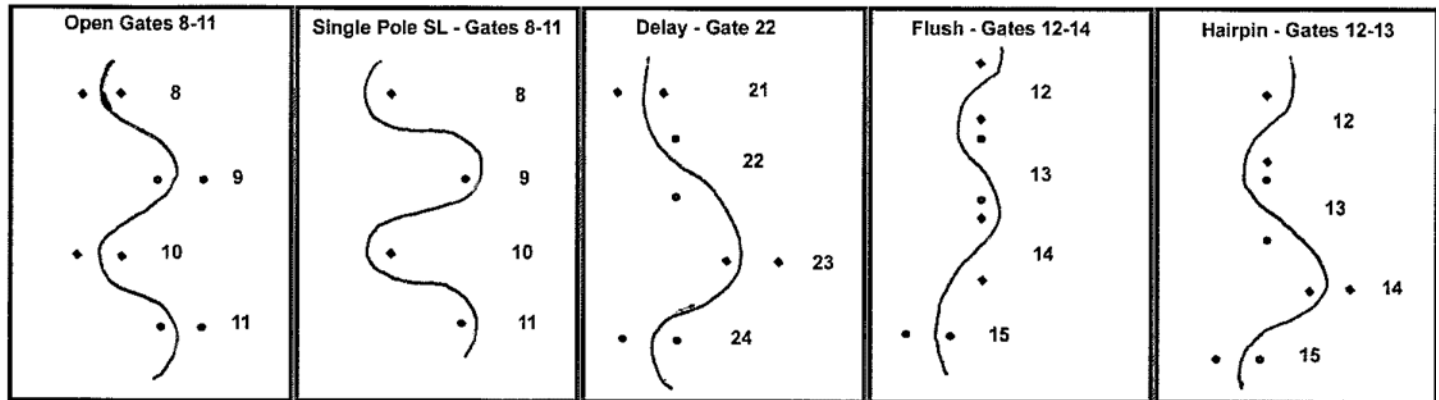


Examples of straddles that would lead to DSQ or hikes back to the straddled gate.

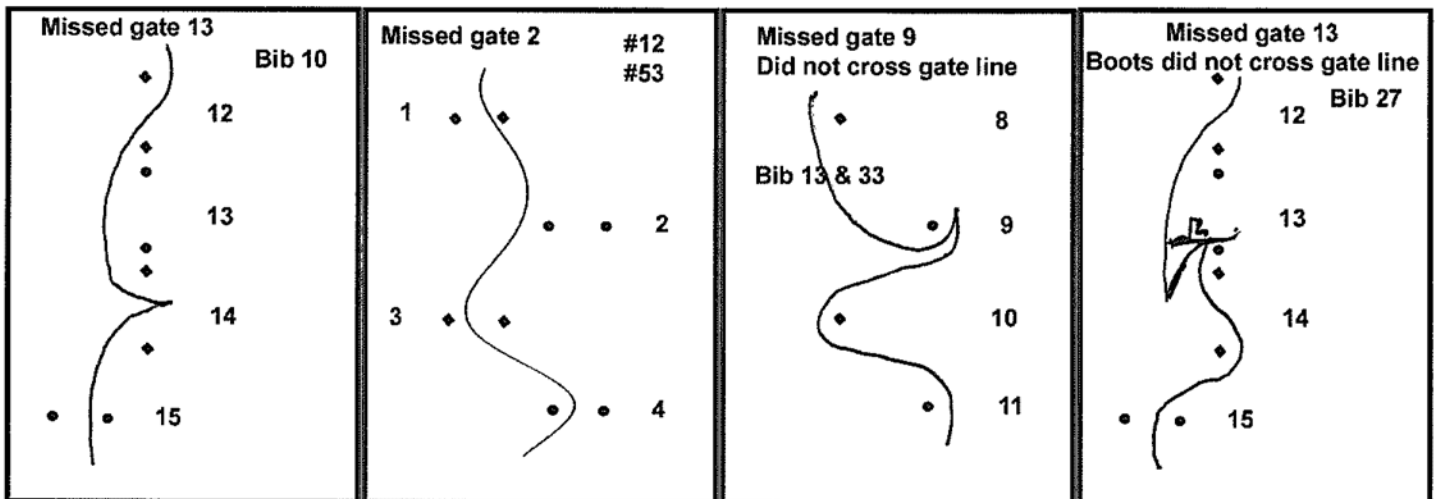
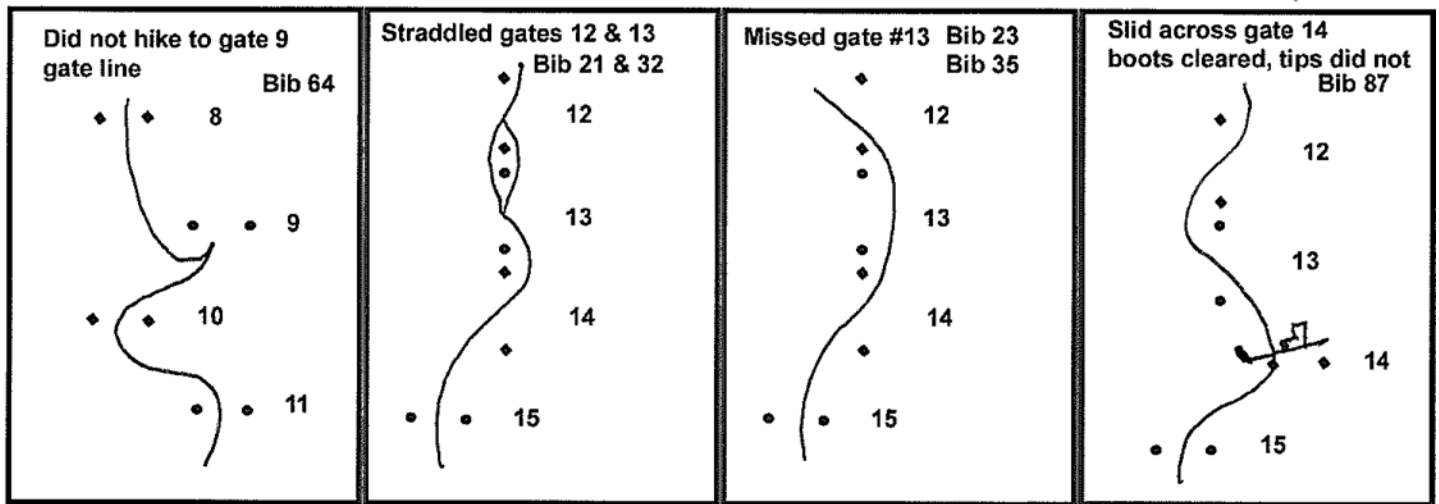


Gate Descriptions & Gate Card Diagrams

Types of Gates & Combinations



Unequivocal Diagrams of Faults With Notes (should also include @ indicating your position)

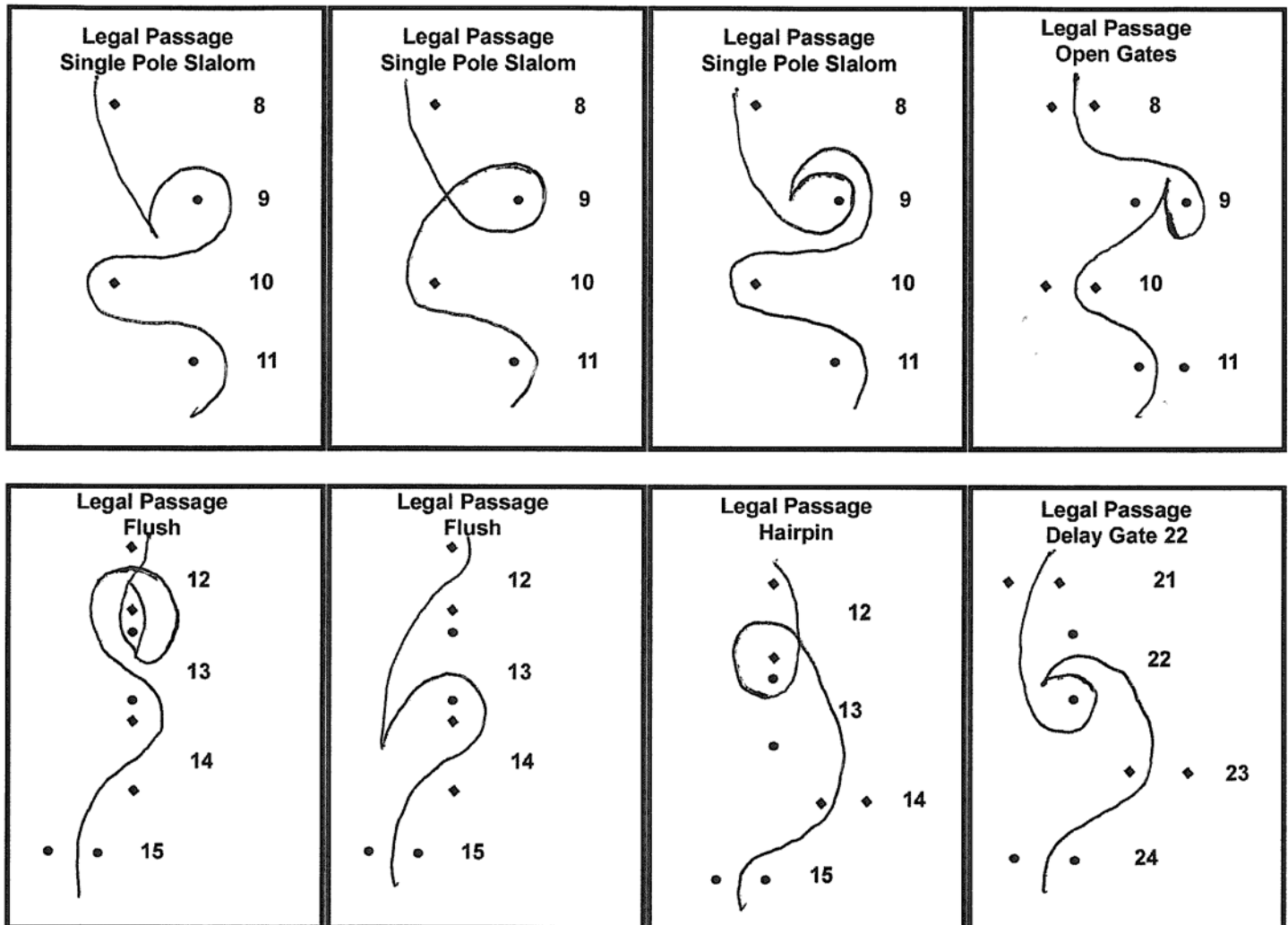


**Legal Passage:**

Gates may be passed in any direction and any order.

Diagrams are not required for legal passage unless you have reason to believe another official might disagree with your judgement.

All diagrams assume both tips and both feet have passed through the gate line.



If a hiking racer faults due to an incorrect hike, the hiking path should be diagrammed.

Thank you for taking the time to become an educated official. Gate Judges interested in becoming certified and eligible for the additional incentives available to Certified Gate Judges must pass the Gate Judge exam. Please return to the PARA Gate Judge page for access to download the exam.

Now that you understand the rules for interference, requests for reruns, and legal gate passage, we recommend that you explain these rules to your athlete. It might save him/her a slow time, disqualification, or other sanction in an important race.