



## COURSE CERTIFICATION

### Sanctioning vs. Certification:

- A USATF sanction is an official designation issued by USATF. It provides guidelines, rules and regulations to follow to provide a safe and competitive event. There is a fee and benefits to the event for this sanction. For more information on sanctioning, go to [www.usatf.org](http://www.usatf.org)
- A USATF certified course is one that is measured in accordance with USATF methods and procedures and required for a sanctioned event

### Course Design Objectives: The best race courses are:

#### Safe

- Avoid poorly maintained and uneven surfaces as much as possible.
- Avoid sharp turns- and ANY turns in the first and last 200 meters of the course
- Minimize vehicle traffic on the course
- Keep runners from crossing paths or traffic
- Running with traffic is preferred

#### Simple

- Avoid excessive turns
- Minimize lane restrictions that require traffic cones and marshals
- Avoid turnarounds and loops that require additional marshals
- Adequate width for Start and Finish area with spectators
- Consider course capacity

#### Aesthetically Pleasing

- Appropriate Elevation Changes
- Attractive Environment
- Logistics that work
- Spectator friendly if possible

#### Accurate

- Is USATF Certified
- Has splits marked at every mile, and metric splits at least every 5 kilometers.
- Is measured, setup and marshalled the way it will be run.

From Design to Measurement: Do your homework so your measurement will go smoothly:

- Start with the basics- desired start and finish locations, course length, etc.
- Plot the course out on a map. Computer applications are perfect for this- Google, Map My Run, USATF America's Running Routes, etc.
- Leave some slack in case things don't turn out quite like the computer says they will.
- Make a preliminary measurement with a GPS device preferably on foot or by bike (Automobile odometer measurements are inaccurate)
- Consult with the local officials for approval
- Repeat as necessary.
- Once you have a course you like, that you think is the right length, and you have the approvals you need, schedule your measurement.

GPS vs. USATF COURSE MEASUREMENT:

- Consumer grade GPS only pinpoints location within 5 to 10 meters
- Wrist-mounted GPS isn't as accurate as larger models
- GPS is unreliable when it can't pick up satellites- like in wooded areas, or around tall buildings
- Surveyor-grade GPS is more accurate than consumer grade- but it's expensive, and requires a surveyor to operate it
- THE CALIBRATED BICYCLE METHOD IS MORE ACCURATE THAN THE GPS UNITS YOUR RUNNERS USE!

Shortest Possible Route (SPR)

- A certified course is measured along the shortest possible route that a runner can run without leaving the course This means turning all corners within 12 inches of the curb and measuring the tangent (straight line) from corner to corner or left turn to right turn.

Winston Rasmussen

USATF/RRTC Course Certifier

Phone: (630) 393-4952

E-mail: [W.Rasmussen@comcast.net](mailto:W.Rasmussen@comcast.net)

USATF website: <http://www.usatf.org/events/courses/certification/>