



Guidelines on numbering handholds on LEAD competitions

Author: Wim Verhoeven 2010 (based on a concept by Herman Engbers)

Defining and numbering the handholds is a two step process, which is dynamic and may lead to changes in the topo during the competition.

1. Defining the handholds

The Route Judge marks (with the help of the International Routesetter and the IFSC Judge) the handholds which the International Routesetter expects the competitors will use on a particular route.

Remark: Any object (climbing hold, feature, edge ...) can be defined as a handhold. Only the useable parts of objects are the actual handholds. A single object can have more than one handhold. This could be a large feature but could also be a single climbing hold with two distinct places for holding on.

Definitions:

A climbing hold: artificial resin structure, fixed on a climbing wall with a bolt or screwed on (either for hands or feet). A climbing hold can also be a part of the climbing wall. A handhold can be: a climbing hold, part of a climbing hold or part of a volume or feature and so on... that can be held (used for climbing) with a hand.

Every handhold that is clearly distinguishable from other handholds is to be considered as a unique handhold.

Remark: This would be the case where you have a larger feature that is similar along it's entire length (e.g. a colonnette). However, external references could also be used to separate the handholds (e.g. above or below a particular bolt).

2. Numbering of the handholds

Rule 1: The further the handhold is along the line of the route, the higher the number.

Every handhold is numbered based upon its distance along the line of the route. The sequence of the handholds presumed to be the best by the routesetter is not taken into account except when a duohold is declared.

Remark: the line of a route is fluent without sharp bends. It can be drawn on the route topo by following the general path of the handholds. The line of a route can not contain any loops or small detours.

When a competitor **holds** an object (a foothold or a part of an object) with his/her hands which was not yet defined **and makes a useful climbing movement** from this object, then this object will be considered a handhold as of that moment. The handhold will be included in the





numbering. See handhold number 14.5 in the illustration.

When two handholds are at the same distance along the line of the route and only one of them must be used, then both handholds should be given the same number.

Remark: For example, if a competitor **holds** a “foothold” (not previously declared a handhold) at the same height as handhold 20 in the illustration and **makes a useful climbing movement** on this foothold, then this foothold will become a handhold and will also be given number 20.

Rule 2: Duoholds (= exceptions to Rule 1) A duohold can be declared in 3 cases:

1. Changing hands (see example on picture: 8/9 and 22/23)

This type of duohold **can only** be declared when a larger climbing hold must be used for climbing with both hands.

Remark: When a larger climbing hold can be held with 2 hands but when this is not necessary to proceed, then a duohold can't be declared.

2. Two holds at even height (see number 16/17 in the illustration) This type of duohold **can only** be declared when 2 different handholds are at the same distance from the ground along the axis of the route and they both must be used.

3. Two handholds (example: a positive handhold and an undercling, seen number 11/12 in the illustration). This type **can only** be declared when both these conditions are met:

- a. Two closely placed handholds (either beside or above each other) where the competitors, in order to proceed, must use both handholds.
- b. When it is likely (or proven) that some of the competitors will use a sequence that conflicts with the numbering of holds based upon the distance along the axis of the route. Example: they will first take the highest or furthest handhold first and then the lowest or closest handhold).

*Remark: A duohold is a way to reflect the sequence in the handhold numbering. Care must be taken when to implement that rule. Therefore it is essential that the criteria mentioned above are met, as indicated by the word **must**.*

Way to score a duohold:

The first number is given for the first hand on any of the 2 handholds of the duohold, the second number for the second hand on the other handhold.

Way to indicate a duohold

The Route Judges will usually draw a circle around the two handholds and give two numbers separated by a / (e.g 11/12 in the illustration).



Rule 3: The topo is dynamic

If during the competition it becomes apparent that (some of) the competitors use a different sequence than expected before the competition, then the line of the route and the declaration of duoholds might need to be reviewed. Consequently the numbering of the handholds might need to be changed.

