

Referee decisions

WOC 2024, Edinburgh, Scotland

Referees: Helge Lang Pedersen, David Rosen (Assistant Referee)

Sprint Qualification, Leith, Friday 12th July, Morning

No complaints.

Sprint Final, Central Edinburgh, Friday 12th July, Afternoon

Complaint One (Sprint) - from Denmark

The Danish athlete, Malin Agervig Kristiansson lost time in an area with taping.

Referee decision

The referees found that this was an unfortunate situation caused by confusing taping. However, the referees saw no way from the Competition Rules of compensating the athlete for the time lost. Also, it was not found that the incident had a severity that could lead to voiding the race. The referees rejected the complaint.

Sprint Relay, Riccarton Campus, Sunday 14th July

No complaints.

Knock Out Sprint Qualification, Wester Hailes, Tuesday 16th July, Morning

No complaints.

Knock Out Sprint Final, Central Edinburgh, Tuesday 16th July, Afternoon

Complaint One (KOS) - from Finland

In the sprint towards the Finish in Men's QF5, Miika Kirmula of Finland and Riccardo Rancan of Switzerland were sprinting head to head. Just before the Finish, Kirmula fell and lost the 3rd position by a very small margin. Finland complained arguing that Rancan had pushed Kirmula during the sprint and causing the loss of balance of Kirmula. Finland asked that Rancan should be disqualified and Kirmula promoted to the Semi Final in his place.

Referee decision

The referees studied the TV pictures and found that it was correct there had been a contact and that this with some likelihood could have caused the loss of 3rd position. The referees found that the contact was not made on purpose and found that Rancan should not be disqualified. However, due to the evaluation that there was a direct link between the contact and Kirmula's loss of 3rd position, the Referees decided, that both athletes should be progressed to the Semi Final.

Complaint Two (KOS) - from Belgium

Belgium said that Yannick Michiels had been pushed in an unfair way by Jannis Bonek in the sharp corner from the alley passing the last control and entering the sprint for the finish and due to that, Michiels lost the possibility to sprint for the 3rd position in the heat. Belgium asked that Bonek be disqualified and Michiels promoted to the Semi Final in his place.

Referee decision

The referees studied the TV pictures and found that it was correct there had been a contact and that this with some likelihood could have caused the loss of 3rd position for Michiels. The referees found that the contact was not made on purpose and found that Bonek should not be disqualified. It was found that Bonek may have slipped on the wet surface and thus accidentally pushed Michiels. However, due to the evaluation that there was a direct link between the contact and Michiels loss of 3rd position, the referees decided, that both athletes should be progressed to the Semi Final.

Complaint Three (KOS) - from Norway

At the start of the first Semi Final, the athletes standing at the start podium faced one of the big screens in the arena and the course was shown on the screen before the start of the heat. 4 athletes looked away, but two athletes appeared to be studying the map on the screen. Norway asked that these two athletes should be disqualified for aiming to acquire information of the course before their start.

Referee decision

It was an unfortunate mistake by the organisers that this situation occurred, and the referees recognise the ability of the majority of the athletes to quickly understand the situation and behave in a really great way. However, since this was clearly an organiser's mistake, the referees found that it could not be expected from all athletes to quickly understand the situation. The referees found that it would in this situation be unfair to disqualify athletes based on the direction in which they were looking.

Complaint Four (KOS) - from Sweden

With two athletes promoted from the Quarter Final heats 5 and 6, according to the promotion scheme, there would then be 8 athletes in Semi Final heat 3. Sweden and Norway said that it would be an unfair disadvantage to the originally qualified runners to have 8 runners in one Semi Final heat.

Referee decision

The referees agreed with the concerns and decided that Miika Kirmula would be promoted to Semi Final heat 2 and Yannick Michiels to Semi Final heat 3.

Complaint 5 (KOS) - from Norway

Norway said that the passage through the shop in the Women's Semi Final had an unfair impact on the result in Women's heat 1. From the TV pictures it was seen that when approaching the entrance to the passage, Victoria Haestad Bjørnstad was in a clear second position behind Tove Alexandersson. After the confusion of finding the entrance, Haestad Bjørnstad was last. Haestad Bjørnstad fought her way up through the field and was second at the last control. In the sprint towards the finish, she was overtaken by Karolin Ohlsson and ended 3rd one tenth of a second behind Ohlsson. Norway said that the loss of time at the entrance to the shop had the direct consequence that Haestad Bjørnstad was not qualified and requested that she would be promoted to the final.

Referee decision

The referees studied the TV pictures from the incident at the print shop. It was found to be an organiser's mistake to have such a passage without informing the teams about this in the Team Officials Meeting and/or without making sure the entrance to the passage was clearly visible when the athletes approached the passage. It was also clear that Haestad Bjørnstad lost the second position and was 6th after the incident. However, the referees did not find a clear link between the incident at the print shop and the fact that Haestad Bjørnstad finally lost the qualification by 1/10 of a second. Thus with regret about the unfortunate situation, the complaint was rejected.

Complaint 6 (KOS) - from France

Maelle Beauvir was 4th in the results in Women's Semi Final 1. The complaint by France was that she was first pushed by Norwegian athlete, Victoria Haestad Bjørnstad in the alley towards the last control and shortly after that pushed by Swedish athlete Karolin Ohlsson in the corner at the last control. France said that either one or two of the athletes pushing should be disqualified or that Maelle Beauvir should also be promoted to the final.

Referee decision

The referees studied the TV pictures and found that it was correct there had been a contact between Beauvir and Haestad Bjørnstad in the alley. From the TV pictures, the referees found that there was first a contact where Haestad Bjørnstad was pushed towards the wall and when she bounced back from the wall, Beauvir was hit and lost steps. The referees found that it could not be clearly established, that this incident was caused by one athlete rather than the other and found this was a race incident, that should not have consequences.

The referees studied the TV pictures and found that it was also correct there had been a contact between Beauvir and Ohlsson in the turn at the last control. However, the referees found that in the difficult circumstances in the sharp turn at the last control, it could not be

established with any certainty that Ohlsson pushed on purpose. Further, the referees did not feel that the impact from this race incident eliminated the possibility for Beauvir to sprint for a second position to a degree where any action should be taken. The complaint was rejected.

Complaint 7 (KOS) - from Norway

Norway wanted the Knock Out Sprint Final to be voided due to unfair circumstances in the Women's Semi Final 1, where athletes lost different amounts of time in the attempt to find the not very visible entrance to the print shop mentioned in a previous complaint.

Referee decision

The incident with the not very visible access through the print shop was unfortunate and organisers should have taken actions to avoid this situation (as was done after this heat). However, the referees did not find that this situation was serious enough to consider voiding the race. Thus, the complaint was rejected.

Complaint 8 (KOS) - from Hungary

Hungary said that Hungarian athlete Ferenc Jonas was pushed by Spanish athlete Alvaro Casado in an unfair way before the last control and that Jonas therefore lost the possibility to sprint for the 2nd position in the heat. Hungary said that Casado should be disqualified and Jonas promoted to the Final in his place.

Referee decision

The referee talked to the athletes who both confirmed that interaction had taken place but it was not clear from the talk what the exact circumstances were in terms of one athlete being pushed in an unfair way. The referee informed the athletes and the Hungarian coach that the referee decision would be based on an evaluation of the TV pictures. The TV pictures showed the running before the incident, but due to the angle of the TV camera, it was only possible to see that the Hungarian runner fell – it was according to the referee evaluation not possible to establish with any reasonable certainty that there was a clear link between the interaction and the fact that the Hungarian athlete fell. The complaint was rejected.

18 July 2024

David Rosen, Helge Lang Pedersen