

SCENARIOS FOR OFFICIALS: UMPIRING TRACK



Answers

Scenario 1

Ingebritsen is not at fault here as he has been pushed from the track. By regaining his original position within the pack he has not gained any material advantage despite part of his short excursion being inside the curved part of the track.

With regard to jostling, the Referee determined that the cause of him leaving the track was a racing incident and that no individual athlete was to blame.

Scenario 2

In any straight part of the track (including the diversion for the water jump in the steeplechase), running out of lane or even off the track is not in itself an infringement as the athlete is actually running further. So long as no other athlete was impeded and no material advantage was gained there is no infringement.

Scenario 3

In the steeplechase an athlete may clear the barrier in any manner as long as they go fully over it and no part of their body goes around it below the horizontal plane of the top of the barrier. As this is the water jump they must also go over or through the water, not to one side or around it.

In the case of Sable he was severely impeded, albeit unintentionally. As this was a championship heat the Referee had the power to advance the athlete to the subsequent round. Had this been a final or a club event with no option for advancement there would have unfortunately been little the Referee could have done.

Scenario 4

There are at least three athletes in this race who are drifting and their arms are in the adjacent lane. However, there is only one athlete (Robles) who is having an effect on the athlete in that adjacent lane. Whilst Robles did not touch Liu's hurdle, his forearm can clearly be seen making contact with that of Liu, knocking him off balance and impeding his progress, and he was disqualified for impeding, rather

than clearing a hurdle not in his own lane. As far as the other athletes are concerned whilst they are hurdling within their own lane there is no imperative for every part of their body to stay within the bounds of the lane so long as they do not impede any other athlete.

Had any of the athletes involved knocked over a hurdle in the adjacent lane, the matter becomes subjective; If the athlete in that lane is impeded by the displaced hurdle, then the offending athlete would be liable to disqualification. However, if the athlete in the adjacent lane is ahead and already clear of the displaced hurdle (therefore unaffected) it is no longer in itself justification for disqualification.

Scenario 5

This incident took place at the World Championships and was the subject of disqualification, protest, appeal and ultimate reinstatement.

The initial disqualification was not for failing to clear the hurdle legitimately as many believed, but was for running out of lane. The Referee found that although his lead leg was well below the plane of the top of the hurdle, this was deemed to be as a result of messing up his stride pattern rather than a deliberate act to avoid clearing the full hurdle height. Indeed it almost caused him to fall over, severely hampering his progress over that and the next two flights of hurdles.

On appeal, the jury overturned the disqualification for running out of lane on similar grounds. The lane departure was unintentional and severely hampered his progress. Also, given the stagger on the first flight of hurdles, the athlete in lane 4 was not impeded in any way.

Scenario 6

In a similar way to the steeplechase, the hurdle can be cleared in any manner as long as it is not displaced in any way that would lower the overall height and all parts of the body go above the height of the top bar at the point of clearance. This permits the use of hands in order to steady the hurdle during the act of clearance. Therefore any athlete who stumbles or falls may, if they wish, replace the hurdle in this manner and make another attempt. So long as no other athlete is impeded in the process, no offence has been committed.

Scenario 7

The handover commences when the outgoing athlete first touches the baton and is complete when it is in the hand of only the outgoing runner. The handover must not commence before the baton enters the takeover box and must be complete before it leaves the box.

In this specific incident, although there are several camera angles available, all are blurred or have some shielding of the baton by other athletes, and none of them are able to prove conclusively that the incoming athlete was still in contact with the baton as it left the box. Therefore the USA team were given the benefit of the doubt and the result was confirmed.

Scenario 8

The athletes must line up in the order that the incoming runners enter the final bend, and must not change that order once established. The incoming Jamaican athlete is clearly in fourth place as the race enters the final bend, yet the outgoing athlete lines up in the second slot on track.

The rules state that *“Under the direction of a designated official, the athlete shall place themselves in their waiting position in the same order as their respective team member enters the last bend”*. In practical terms, although officials will make every effort to verbally instruct the athletes where to stand, the onus is on the athlete to follow those instructions and adopt the correct position.

Scenario 9

The rules have been clarified in the light of a number of high profile, well-intentioned incidents.

An athlete may be permitted stop and assist a fellow competitor in getting to their feet. However there must be no assistance offered in propelling the athlete in the direction of running