



MINUTES

of the meeting of the
EUROPE CONFEDERATION WATERSKI COUNCIL
in conjunction with Admincom
held
ONLINE (Zoom)
on Saturday 7th November 2020

1. Attendance and apologies for absence

Candido **Moz** *Chairman*
Ricardo **Botas**
Christophe **Duverger**
Hannu **Rintanen**
James **Timothy** *Secretary*
Stian **Lilleberg** *Treasurer*
Donal **Connolly**
Morten **Froulund**
Manon **Costard** *Athlete Representative*
Louis **Polome** *Africa Confederation President*

For Admincom
Patrice **Martin** *President*
Sid **Adriaensen** *Secretary General*
Dominique **Lakens Douwes** *Treasurer*
Andy **Harris**

and
Gillian **Hill** *Secretary General IWWF*

Apologies for absence:
Dimos **Alexopoulos**

The meeting commenced at 09:00 CET.

2. Welcome

PM opened the meeting, welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending the meeting. Although attempts had been made to organise a physical meeting in Geneva, it had been impossible because of the COVID crisis.

3. Emails to WSC

WSC had asked that there be clarification on an email sent to WSC regarding their minutes of 16th September 2020. The email had expressed concern that WSC appeared to be sanctioning European drivers when the rest of the world appeared to be interpreting the rules differently (based on an online survey of eight top international drivers, some of whom appeared to be condoning the use of tolerances in the skiers favour).

PM argued that there was legitimate concern that the rules were not being applied equally around the world.

WSC members made the following points:

- Before requesting the sanction, there had been an incredible amount of work, first to gather evidence and then to put it before an international panel who all agreed that the driver concerned had been deliberately making use of tolerances to aid the skier. The evidence had then been presented to Admincom who also agreed and applied the requested sanction. To then have concern expressed about the sanction because this level of rigorousness was perhaps not evident in other Confederations was, to say the least, surprising and disappointing.
- Both JT and DC were in very regular contact with the people in charge of driving in North America and had observed that there was definitely a determination to apply the same standards there. If we were patient, we should see similar sanctions applied when cheating was found.
- Lowering the standard in Europe did not seem a good way forward. WSC had discussed the fact that the rest of the world were not appearing to apply the rules strictly and that there were two options we could follow. One was to continue to set the standard and maybe see our athletes/drivers suffer whilst the rest of the world caught up. The other was to allow cheating ourselves. WSC had chosen the former and wished to continue doing so.
- MC, as Athlete Rep, wished to confirm that in her experience, there was a desire around the world to improve standards when it came to enforcing the rules. For example, one of the drivers featured in the online survey concerned, was the driver pulling three pending world records in the last month, but all them would not be approved because of the driving. She also made the point that in her view, an online survey should not be given the same weight as the rule book.

PM replied that maybe the wrong language had been used and that it had been misinterpreted but there was still concern that the rest of the world were not applying sanctions in the way that Europe was.

DC asked whether the WSC continued to have the support of Admincom in monitoring, finding, investigating and pursuing European drivers when they were caught using unfair practices.

AH said that Admincom members were absolutely happy with the way the earlier sanction had been investigated and applied and that WSC unequivocally had the support of Admincom in their work.

MF also agreed that WSC were correct in setting a standard and felt that we should also be working at world level to influence the World Council to improve standards everywhere.

DC asked that, given the potential to take a bad impression from the email's wording, Admincom write to WSC re-stating their support for the work that WSC was doing with regard to upholding the rules. PM replied that he would be happy to do so.

4. Bye-Laws

PM advised the meeting that work was taking place to amend the bye-laws in order to improve and streamline the sanction and appeals process so that it would be more organised and timely should it be required in the future. The recent case was the first ever appeal against a sanction and it had shown up several deficiencies in the appeal process.

JT said that from his knowledge of appeals procedures in other sports, an appeal panel would normally only look at whether the correct procedure had been followed and not make any ruling on whether the original decision to sanction was correct or not. He asked if this was the same for the E&A process. SA replied that the Bye-Laws were 50 years old and that it was not clear. This emphasised the need to bring the regulations up to date.

5. Communication between committees

There followed a discussion on the need to improve communications between Admincom and WSC.

CM pointed out that when Admincom, quite legitimately, made their decision to put the sanction on hold whilst an appeals process took place, the driver in question then proceeded to drive at a high profile tournament. This gave the impression to outside observers that WSC were powerless and could be ignored.

GH said that this highlighted the need for a comprehensive rewrite of the bye-laws. She also wished to put on record that Admincom were 100% behind WSC and the work they were doing.

It was observed that when WSC received emails that seemed to criticise the minutes (even with the best of intentions), it was easy for WSC members to see it as unwarranted interference in their technical work. Better communication in general would go a long way towards alleviating this perception. It might be better to have proper meetings between Admincom and WSC whenever either side felt the need for clarification or information on what the other committee was doing and would be preferable to a series of emails.

6. 2021 Priorities

DC suggested that in the interests of better communication, both Admincom and WSC express their vision and priorities for 2021 given that it could be a very busy and difficult year.

PM said that they would be as they have always been; the scheduling and running of titled events and training of officials. For him personally, he also felt we needed to work on a better system of ranking list with more emphasis on competition as opposed to absolute performance.

CM said that WSC had been thinking about the ranking list and there were difficulties that any future list had to address. Not least of these was the fact that athletes in some countries would find it very difficult to obtain a ranking if it was based purely on competition because of the difficulties and cost of travel. One possible solution was to have a separate list for professional athletes.

MC felt that, from the athletes' point of view, separating out the professional skiers with their own ranking list based on competition had a lot of merit. This then left the existing performance based list for the amateurs and this addressed the problems that athletes from more remote parts faced.

MC also raised the issue of support for pro tour events. Whilst acknowledging the importance of European titled events, she asked if it would be possible for everyone to work together to make space in the calendar for all events so that the sport could grow and flourish.

PM said that 2021 was going to be a very challenging year because of the number of events we wanted to fit in and that maybe it was time to consider holding some events mid week to leave more weekends free for other events.

MC felt that a mid week event would be difficult to mount from a financial point of view.

CD suggested that holding European titled events (excepting U14 and U17) in alternate years, interleaved with world events, might not only alleviate some of the pressure but also help elevate the importance of the European events.

7. Finances

CM asked for clarification on allowances for 2020.

DLD said that she expected the usual allowances to be paid only in respect of the physical meeting in Athens, but this was yet to be discussed and confirmed by Admincom.

8. 2021 Youth Championships

Following a request for clarification, CM outlined the plans for the 2020/2021 Youth Championships.

- They would be carried out over nine days. Three days for each category.
- First the U14/U15, followed by U17/U18 and finally U21/U22. Each category finishes completely before the next starts.
- To avoid the problems with the banquet experienced last year at a local casino, it was proposed to add a small amount to the entry fees and provide a small party/buffet at the lake itself.

9. Voting Powers

Because of the lack of tournaments in 2020, WSC is proposing that the 2020 voting powers be derived from the 2019 figures. This view would be taken into account when Admincom discuss it.

12. Any Other Business

PM asked the WSC to provide action photos of one male and one female athlete which would be used for the European Confederation New Year greetings that were sent out every year.

SA requested that Council reports be ready in advance of congress so that they could be circulated before the Zoom meetings.

GH asked whether CM had received all nominations for Hall of Fame “selectors”. CM replied that he had received nominations from Europe and Africa but was still waiting for the three nominees from other areas.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.22 CET.

Secretary

James Timothy

Chairman

Candido Moz

Original text: English

The Minutes are subject to approval at the next Meeting.

Federations please note: The Minutes are sent to all International Officials. Please pass on any relevant information to your National Officials.

Meeting session: 09:00 – 10.22 CET