

Communication No. 2510

Testing of new rules for the Starting procedure for Short Track Speed Skating (Rule 298)

The ISU Congress 2022 in Phuket approved a Technical Rule change to move to a starting procedure with zero (0) False Starts upon positive evaluation after a testing period to be performed at ISU Events during season 2022-2023.

The decision of the ISU Congress is reflected in Rule 298 of the recently released ISU Special Regulations & Technical Rules for Short Track Speed Skating 2022, in particular Rule 298, paragraphs 4 and 16. The starting procedure with zero (0) False Starts includes the same basic steps as the starting procedure used during the last season, which is described in Rule 298, paragraphs 5 through 14. In the new “zero False Starts procedure”, however, once a Skater has made an offence assessed as a False Start, this Skater will get a Penalty and be excluded from the race.

A full description of the starting procedure to be applied during the testing, with paragraph numbering corresponding to Rule 298, is included as an annex to this Communication.

1. Testing plan

1.1 Objectives

The goal of the new Starting procedure is to reduce disturbance and unnecessary delays in the process leading up to the start of a race. Moreover, the rule allowing one False Start for a race is sensitive to tactical behaviour that can cause disadvantages for other Skaters who are focused on performing a valid start. Considering the great importance of the start phase for the outcome of races over short distances, it is important that the Rules for the starting procedure create the best circumstances for fair competition.

The aim of the testing is to evaluate if the new procedure has the potential to reach these goals. Indicators of success will be comparison with historical data and experiences from the same type of Competitions regarding:

- Number of Calls for False Start
- Number of Penalties for False Start
- Duration of period from the first Call of Skaters to the Start until the race is on after a valid start
- Complaints / Satisfaction with the Starting procedure from Officials, Skaters and Coaches, and from the public (media, spectators)

1.2 Competitions selected for testing the “Zero False Starts” starting procedure

For the purpose of the testing, the new Starting procedure will be applied at the following ISU Events during the first part of the season 2022/23:

- World Cup #1, Montreal (CAN) 28-30 October 2022
- World Cup #2, Salt Lake City (USA) 4-6 November 2022
- ISU Four Continents Championships, Salt Lake City (USA) 11-13 November 2022

- World Cup #3, Almaty (KAZ), 9-11 December 2022
- World Cup #4, Almaty (KAZ), 16-18 December 2022

At World Cup #1 and #2, on the Thursday, there will be Starters attending all Official Training Sessions to give the opportunity to Skaters to practice Starts.

1.3 Evaluation basis

a) Collecting data

- Absolute and relative numbers of Penalties for False Start
- Number of requests for video review by the Starters
- Time spent to review the video in such cases before Starter concludes
- Time between the first Call for Start for a race and a valid start of the race

b) Submission of reports (standardized form) from the following competition officials:

- ISU Event Director
- ISU Technical Committee Representative
- Appointed Referees
- Appointed Starters

c) Gathering feedback, through interviews or surveys, from:

- ISU Representative
- Coaches
- Athletes
- TV crew
- Timekeeping & Results service crew

d) Feedback received from other International Competitions where the new Starting procedure would be applied before the end of the testing period (see Chapter 2 below).

1.4 Success criteria and conclusion of the evaluation (see Rule 298, paragraph 4)

- The ISU Short Track Speed Skating Technical Committee is responsible for setting up the testing, and for collecting data and feedback. The Committee will prepare an evaluation report which will be submitted to the ISU Council for decision before end of 2022. The decision of the ISU Council will then be announced in an ISU Communication.
- The test will be evaluated as successful if the new starting procedure has been implemented without major problems at the ISU Events concerned, and that there is a positive trend towards achieving the goals described under 1.1. above (see also Rule 298, paragraph 4).
- If the test will be concluded as successful by the ISU Council, the new Starting procedure will be implemented at all remaining ISU Short Track Events 2022/23. It will then be mandatory to use this procedure for all ISU Events and International Competitions as from the season 2023/24.
- If the test will be concluded as unsuccessful by the ISU Council, the rules for the Starting procedure as described in Rule 298, paragraphs 5 through 15 in the 2022 edition of the ISU Special Regulations & Technical Rules for Short Track Speed Skating, remain in force until the end of the season 2023/24.

2. Use of the “Zero False Start” starting procedure at International Competitions

- ISU Members may use this starting procedure (as specified in the Annex, except for paragraph 15) on use of Video replay to assist Starter’s decisions) at International Competitions until the end of the ISU testing period (18 December 2022), on the condition that this has been stated in the Announcement of the Competition. Referees and Starters at such Competitions are

encouraged to send a report to the ISU Short Track Speed Skating Technical Committee on their experiences, with reference to indicators and criteria mentioned in 1.1. and 1.3 above.

- b) If the test will be concluded as successful by the ISU Council, ISU Members may use the new starting procedure at International Competitions during the rest of the season 2022/23, on the condition that this has been stated in the Announcement of the Competition.

3. Testing of False Start detecting system.

The ISU is preparing for testing of a new electronic False Start detecting system. This is independent of the testing of a new starting procedure as described above. The system will be tested under the starting rules and procedures in force at the time of the Competition concerned and would purely be a technical and operational test. To get the best possible testing environment it is considered to run the test at some ISU Event(s) in the second part of the season 2022/23. The ISU World Junior Short Track Speed Skating Championships and ISU World Cup Short Track #5 have been identified as potential Events for the testing of the system. Detailed information will be provided in due course.

Seoul,
September 13, 2022
Lausanne,

JaeYoul Kim, President
Fredi Schmid, Director General

ANNEX

Rules for the Starting Procedure with “Zero False Starts” to be used in the testing period.

Adaptation of Rule 298, paragraphs 5-15, in the 2022 ISU Special Regulations and Technical Rules Short Track Speed Skating

5. Once the Referee is satisfied that all necessary arrangements for the race to come have been taken, he will inform the Starter who will then initiate the Starting procedure.
 - a) The Starter will blow the whistle.
 - b) From this moment the Skaters have a limited time to come to the start line. This time may be displayed using technical equipment. Also starting from this moment, the Announcer will ask for silence, if necessary.
 - c) The set time to go to the start line will be decided annually by the Technical Committee and announced at the Opening Meeting the day prior the start of each Event.
 - d) Any Skater who arrives at the start line after the limited time will be warned by the Starter of a False Start. The announcement should be:
 - The lane position of the Skater who made the offence;
 - “False Start”;
 - “Delaying the start”.
 - “Penalty”

6.
 - a) The Skaters will line up a short distance away from the start line.
 - b) In the case of a Semi-Final or Final Race where the Skaters are being introduced individually by the Announcer, they will position themselves a little further away from the start line and when introduced by the Announcer they will move forward closer to the start line.
 - c) Prior to the start of a Final over an individual distance and Relay Races, the participants are introduced by the Announcer stating their full name, country, and other information for the interest of the public.

The same procedure may be applied also for the Semi-Finals. The introduction of the Skaters/ Relay Teams can also be done before the Skaters/ Relay Teams get on the ice.

7.
 - a) The Starter will command:
 - “Go to the Start”.
 - b) On this command the Skaters move forward to the start line and place themselves at their respective dot at the start line. The Skaters stand up straight and stand still.
 - c) Until the Skater has finalized his still position, touching the Start line is not an offence.
 - d) Putting the tip of the blade in the ice is an offence and a false start will be given to the Skater concerned.
 - e) The announcement of the Starter should then be:
 - The lane position of the Skater who made the offence;
 - “False Start”;
 - “Wrong Blade Position”.
 - “Penalty”

8.
 - a) The Starter will command:
 - “Ready”.
 - b) The Skaters will go down and take their final starting positions immediately with the center of the body over the respective dot and keep this position.
 - c) It is a False Start when the Skater:
 - Places one or both skates on or over the start line;
 - Places one or both hands on the ice;
 - Does not have both skates on the ice, i.e. full contact over the length of the blades;
 - Takes his starting position before the command “Ready”;
 - Takes his starting position too slow after the command “Ready”.

9. a) When all Skaters are positioned in their final starting position and stand still, i.e. there is no more movement, the Starter will wait a defined period of time and then fire the gun.
- b) It is a False Start when the Skater:
- Moves before the gun is fired;
 - Slides on or over the line before the gun is fired;
 - Moves forward on the tip of his blades.
- c) In the case of a False Start the Starter will fire the gun again and/or uses the whistle to call the Skaters back.
- d) The Skaters must return to the start line without delay. Any Skater who does not return directly to the start line will receive a warning of a False Start for delaying the start.
- e) If more than one Skater is responsible for a False Start, the concerned Skaters shall all be assessed a False Start.
- f) If one of the Skaters breaks from his marks, thereby causing another Skater to follow him, only the Skater at fault shall be assessed a False Start.
- g) If a Skater makes noise, e.g. with his skates on the ice, thereby causing another Skater to move, the Skater shall be assessed a False Start.
- h) Commands given by the Starter will include:
- The lane position of the Skater who made the offence;
 - "False Start";
- And if necessary any statement reasoning the false start, e.g.:
- Moving;
 - Wrong blade position;
 - Crossing the line.
- And then:
- "Penalty"
- i) If more than one Skater made an offence, the statements above will be given for each Skater concerned.
- j) If there are multiple offences of the Starting Rule then these will be announced in the order they occurred.
10. (n.a.)
11. a) After a False Start of a race and before resuming the starting procedure described in paragraphs 7-9 above, the Starter will announce the False Start(s) and exclusion(s) from the race (Penalty) in accordance with paragraph 9 h) and paragraph 13.
12. a) Before a start, the equipment of the Skater may be fixed, without going beyond the Padding. At "Go to the Start" the Skaters must be fully prepared with all equipment in order. Any omission will result in a warning of a False Start for "delaying the start" to the Skater concerned. (see subparagraph 5 above).
13. a) The announcement of an exclusion from the race will include:
- The lane position of the Skater who made the offence leading to a Penalty;
 - "Penalty".
- b) On direction of the Referee the Skater may be sent off the ice.
14. If a Skater is interfered with before the last block of the first curve after the starting line, the Skaters shall be called back to start again. The decision whether the interference is an offence according to the Racing Rules is a decision of the Referee.
15. At ISU Events, Olympic Winter Games and Winter Youth Olympic Games, the Starter after recalling a start can consult with an Assistant Referee Video before making his decision. For this purpose, a monitor to show a video recording of the start may be installed on the Starters' platform.