

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

## Communication No. 1548

### Single & Pair Skating

#### Council Interpretation of Rule 353 Concerning Application of the -2.0 Deduction on the Occasion of an Interrupted Program and a Fresh Start

The Council has been requested by the Chair of the Sports Directorate to provide guidance to the Referees and other interested parties respecting the application of the following underlined provision of Rule 353 of the *Special Regulations*, newly enacted by the 2008 Congress:

#### Rule 353 Determination and Publication of Results

1) . . . m) In Single and Pair Skating: . . .

i) . . .

ii) Deductions are applied for each violation as follows:

- *[six unchanged sub-paragraphs are omitted]*

- deduction of -2.0 will be applied when appropriate in case of a fresh start (see Rule 551).

The question presented is: how does a Referee determine when it is “appropriate” to apply the deduction of -2.0 to the skaters score?

In an attempt to provide uniform guidance for all Referees as to “when” the new deduction should be applied, a new paragraph 6 was added to Rule 551 by the Technical Committee and is printed on p. 118 in the 2008 ISU book of *Special Regulations and Technical Rules* as follows:

*"In case of a fresh start the deduction of two (2) points will be applied by the Referee, however in exceptional circumstances when this fresh start is in no way the fault of the competitor, the Referee shall not apply this deduction."*

The Council noted that while the above paragraph 6 was submitted to and accepted by the Figure Skating Section of the Congress as an addition to Rule 551, there was no Proposal on the Congress Agenda that supported this addition.

Proposals 303 and 304 on the Congress Agenda refer to Rule 551, paragraphs 1, 2 & 3 only and do not mention a new paragraph 6. Accordingly, although generated by a good faith effort for clarity, **paragraph 6 of Rule 551 of the *Special Regulations & Technical Rules* must be considered invalid and without relevance to the question presented above.**

However, since the amendment to Rule 353 quoted first above was validly enacted by the Congress, and refers to Rule 551 in the *Technical Rules*, which deals with the subject of *Allowance of a Fresh Start*, reference to Rule 551 helps with the analysis of the question presented.

**The Referee may apply the deduction of -2.0 only "when appropriate".** This means that the Referee must exercise his/her judgment as to when the deduction is *appropriate*.

Rule 353 states its purpose in the first line: "*Deductions are applied for each violation as follows:*" Use of the word "*violation*" indicates that some act, omission or failure of the skater or of the skater's presentation is at the heart of this Rule. This view would rule out application of the deduction to any interruption of the skaters program that is not caused by a *violation* committed by or on behalf of the skater.

With this in mind:

a) The Referee should **not find it "appropriate"** to apply the -2.0 deduction if the fresh start is the consequence of

*. . . an interruption or stop in the music or any other problem such as lighting, ice conditions etc. not caused by the skater and needs time to be repaired . . .* (Rule 551, paragraph 3.)

b) The Referee should find the deduction **to be appropriate** if the fresh start is the consequence of:

- (i) clothing and equipment problems that cause an interruption of a skaters program (Rule 551) such as a broken skate lace, or separation, due to insecure attachment, of a skate blade from the boot, or a part of a skater's clothing from the remainder of the skater's costume since such occurrences may be attributable to negligence on part of the skater,
- (ii) injury caused by a skater attempting an element and falling or crashing into the boards since the skater (due to bad technique or insufficient skill) may be determined to be the cause of the fall. (Exceptionally, the fall and the following injury might be caused by a defect in the ice such as deep scratch or hole in the ice and if the Referee believes that this defect was the cause of the fall and following injury, the Referee should not apply the deduction).

The Council cautions that Referees **have a duty to evaluate carefully** all instances of interruption of a skater's program that appear to be caused by the fault or neglect of the skater, or by a violation of the Rules, if committed by or on behalf of the skater, and determine whether such interruption is appropriate for application of the deduction.

The Council has recommended to the Technical Committee for Single & Pair Skating that Proposals for the 2010 Congress prepare Rule changes necessary to cover the subjects of this Communication.

Milano,  
January 5, 2009  
Lausanne,

**Ottavio Cinquanta**, President

**Fredi Schmid**, Director General