

Communication No. 2586

Protection equipment in Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating

Update September 4, 2023 – Paragraph 2.1.1

This Communication is based on Rules 224 and 291 and replaces ISU Communication No. 2400 dated June 16, 2021.

1. Introduction

Speed Skating Team Events & Mass Start races and Short Track Speed Skating involve risks of injuries, such as cuts, concussions, and puncture wounds, particularly those resulting from the skates in case of a collision or fall. ISU Members must instruct all participants to observe the safety measures defined by the ISU to minimize such risks and dangers.

The purpose of this Communication No. 2586 is to lay out the minimal safety requirements (hereafter the “Safety Standards”) and minimal standards to ensure the fairness of competition (hereafter the “Level Playing Field Standards”) applicable to the Equipment (racing suits and underwear suits, helmets, gloves, eyewear, blades) in relation to Short Track, Team Events and Mass Start Speed Skating that are defined in the ISU Regulations.

2. Safety Standards

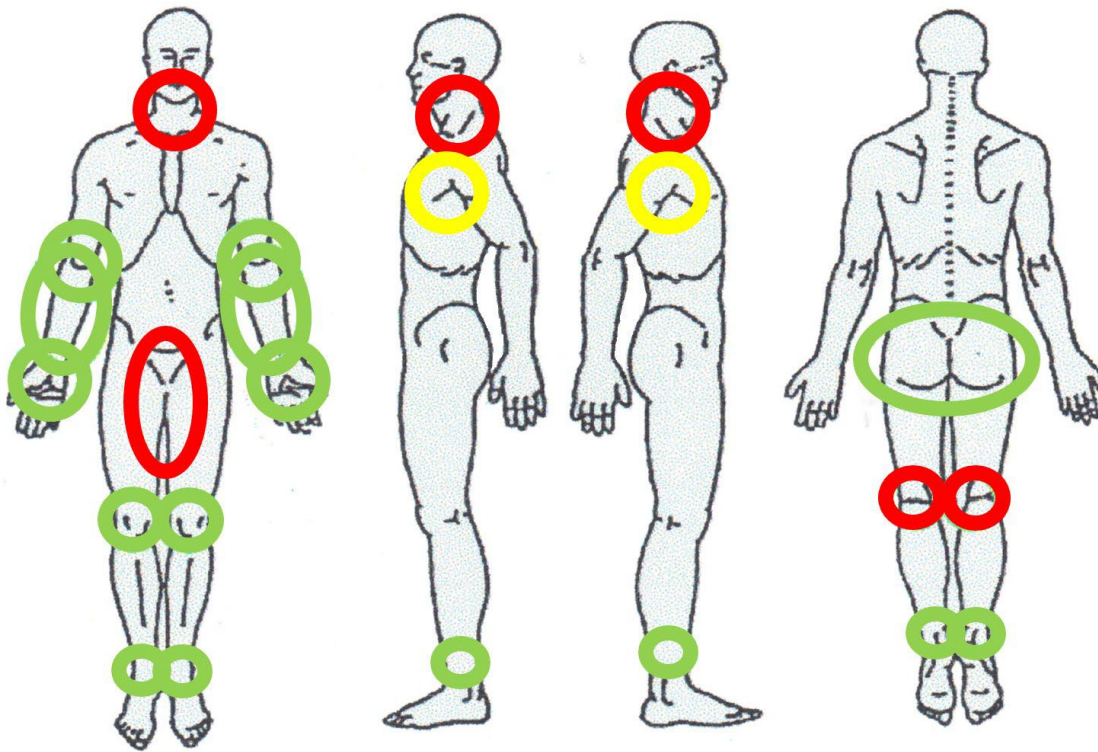
2.1 Racing Suits and Underwear

Special areas of risks identified during an initial study made in 2004 are the neck, groin, axillar region, gluteal region, lower arms, hands, back, front of the knees and ankles.

These risk areas are

- Red or yellow zones indicating danger of life-threatening injuries including laceration of a major artery / vein;
- Green zones where there is a higher risk of getting a serious laceration as identified below.

Depending on the level of performance in competition and training, these areas and other areas must be protected against injury.



The ISU Safety Standards for fabrics of racing suits and gloves are based on the standards for abrasion and cutting defined in the European standard EN 388 for gloves. For Short Track Speed Skating and for Speed Skating Mass Start races and Team Events, the materials are subjected to the pressure test simulating the effect of extreme falls and cut resistance quality as determined in EN 388. Reference to racing suits in this Communication No. 2586 shall include the possibility to wear instead protective underwear meeting the same safety standards. The applicable levels are 2-5 depending on the level of Skaters and category of competition.

2.1.1 Racing Suit Requirements for different Levels of Skaters.

Based on the above, the following safety standards are applicable:

- a) For Olympic Winter Games, Winter Youth Olympic Games and for all ISU Events:
 - Mandatory Full-body racing/underwear suit, Cut resistant level 3
- b) For International Competitions Seniors, Juniors and Masters:
 - Mandatory Full-body racing/underwear suit, Cut resistant level 2
 - Highly recommended Full-body racing/underwear suit, Cut resistant level 3
- c) For Development Competitions with Juniors over 10 years old:
 - Highly recommended high-risk areas of uniform/underwear suit, Cut resistant level 2

For Speed Skating Mass Start and Team Events, the above requirements are strongly recommended as of August 1, 2023, and will become mandatory as of August 1, 2024.

2.1.2 Further Requirements and Recommendations

- Cut resistant protection may be either integrated in the actual competition uniform (racing suit) or be worn as special underwear (racing underwear).
- Racing suits must always cover entirely the neck to below the chin regardless of the Skater's position. It is the Skater's responsibility to make sure the suit is zipped completely.



- If a neck guard is used, it must be placed under the suit in such a way that a blade cannot slide under the guard. The neck guard shall cover entirely the neck to below the chin regardless of the Skater's position.
- No part of the body, except for the face, should be uncovered.
- Cut resistant ankle protection/socks shall be used.

Cut resistant racing suits and cut resistant underwear have great longevity if taken care of properly and can therefore be passed on to other skaters in clubs and associations.

2.2 Helmets

Skaters of all levels must wear helmets that comply with the latest ASTM standard (American Society for Testing and Materials) in force or other standard that would be approved by the ISU.

Large aeration holes and openings, through which a skate blade would fit (no longer or larger than the thickness of the helmet), are forbidden.

Skaters must make sure the helmet strap is tied properly so that the helmet stays in a firm and correct position during the entire race.



Free size can be adjusted with the adjustment buckle.



1. Adjusting the length



2. Leaving a gap



3. Righting



4. Checking

2.3 Gloves

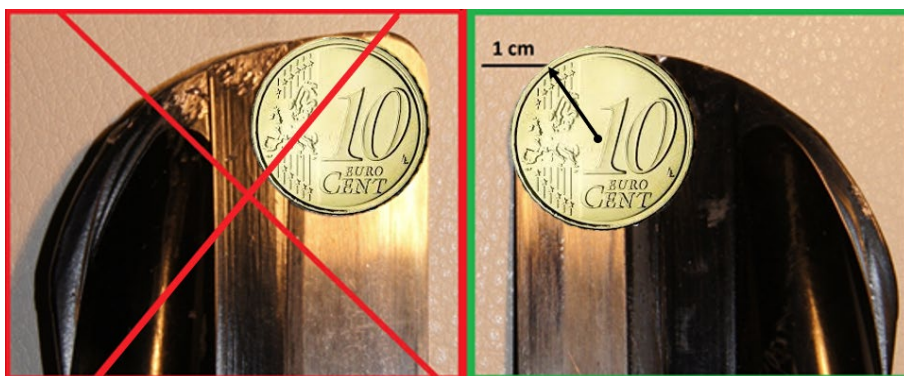
Cut resistant gloves or mitts must be used. The material must be at least of EN 388 Cut resistant Level 3 but level 4 and 5 are recommended. For ISU Events, Olympic Winter Games and Winter Youth Olympic Games, the gloves or mitts used for Short Track must be predominantly white.

2.4 Eyewear Protection

The ISU highly recommends eye wear protection meeting ANSI Z87.1 or ASTM F803 standards made with polycarbonate lenses designed to withstand impact for all Skaters above development level. Only regular prescription glasses meeting the ANSI Z87.1 or ASTM F803 standards are accepted.

2.5 Blades

As per Rule 291, paragraph 1.f), the blades of all Skaters must have the tubes closed and the blade ends must be rounded off with a minimum radius of 10 mm.



3. Level Playing Field Standards

3.1 Helmets

For Short Track Speed Skating, helmets must have a regular shape and must be free from any specific shape or device that may provide an aerodynamic advantage. Typically, helmets must be free from aerodynamic protrusions, often called tails.

For Speed Skating, helmets must have a regular shape and as of August 1, 2024 must be free from any specific shape or device that may provide an aerodynamic advantage. Typically, helmets must be free from aerodynamic protrusions, often called tails.

For practical reasons, an aerodynamic advantage does not need to be proven or demonstrated. Only the possibility of such an advantage resulting from a specific shape or device departing from a regular shape is sufficient to lead to a rejection or sanctions.



4. Implementation, Responsibility and Sanctions

Skaters are responsible for ensuring that the equipment they use meet the highest safety standards. The ISU is only defining minimum standards and requirements that must be met in competitions and cannot be held responsible for injuries and their consequences resulting from the practice of Speed Skating or Short Track Speed Skating.

Skaters participating to Olympic Winter Games, Winter Youth Olympic Games, ISU Events and International competitions must wear equipment that are certified as compliant with the above defined mandatory Safety Standards and Level Playing Field Standards.

ISU Members must ensure that all equipment used by Skaters are certified as compliant with the above mandatory Safety Standards and fulfil the applicable Level Playing Field Standards

4.1 Certification

Certification is valid only if issued by an independent laboratory¹.

It is highly recommended, given the controls at the outset of competitions that tested equipment contain labels confirming compliance with the Safety Standards.

¹ according to ISO 17000. There are many of these independent laboratories in Europe, North America and Asia.

4.2 Approval Commission

The Approval Commission of the ISU is composed of:

- The Vice-President for Speed Skating
- The Chair of the Speed Skating Technical Committee
- The Chair of the Short Track Speed Skating Technical Committee
- The Sports Technical Director Short Track and Speed Skating
- The ISU Sports Director Speed Skating

The Approval Commission is in charge of the decision making on all applications from ISU Members for equipment approval.

4.3 Conditions for Approval

Can be approved, equipment that:

- is certified by an independent laboratory as compliant with the Safety Standards.
- complies with the Level Playing Field Standards set forth by the ISU.

All documents must be in English and dated. Certificates must be signed by the independent laboratory².

4.4 Approval Process

ISU Members must submit all equipment of Skaters, to be used at Olympic Winter Games, Winter Youth Olympic Games and ISU Events, to the Approval Commission of the ISU ahead of the incoming skating season, that is before September 1. Applications must contain all elements allowing approval by the Approval Commission.

Applications must include:

- Picture/design of racing suit, front and back
- Cut resistance certificate for racing suit/underwear suit
- Pictures of the helmet, front, back, side and inside.
- In case of aeration holes, exact dimension of the biggest aeration hole.

Manufacturers may submit equipment in anticipation of possible use by ISU Members.

Approval shall be confirmed by a letter delivered by the ISU Secretariat.

4.5 Controls

The ISU may carry out compliance controls with the Standards at ISU Events. Skaters must be able to present product quality labels/seals or other proper documentation confirming compliance of the uniforms and other materials used. Skaters may be requested to show the inside of their racing suit for control. Such request will never be made right before a race but might be made right after or at a preselected time announced clearly.

² according to ISO 17000.

5. Sanctions for Non-compliance

Non-compliance with the requirements listed in this ISU Communication will result in an immediate exclusion of the Skater(s) concerned from the respective ISU Event, Olympic Winter Games or Winter Youth Olympic Games.

Skaters not wearing their equipment properly will get a Penalty/Warning/Disqualification for breach of Equipment Rules. Skaters going into the starting lane without the proper equipment or with the equipment worn improperly will be excluded from the race.

6. Raising Awareness and Knowledge of Safety Measures and Protection

Obviously, the safety program respecting cut-resistant uniform material, together with all the other safety measures specified in the ISU Rules, cannot absolutely assure full protection for all competitors under all conditions. Experience demonstrates that stumbles and falls occur in high-speed ice sports. All ISU Members and their clubs, coaches and officials who conduct training programs are strongly encouraged to teach safe skating techniques during training and to insist upon compliance by their competitors with ISU Rules during competitions. As per Rule 141, paragraph 1, it is the responsibility of the ISU Members to ensure that their competitors are physically and mentally prepared to compete safely.

Seoul,
August 3, 2023
Lausanne,

Jae Youl Kim, President

Fredi Schmid, Director General