

INTERPRETATIONS

WORLD ARCHERY CONSTITUTION AND RULES

Book 3, Chapter 12, Article 12.1 and Chapter 15, Articles 15.1.7 and 15.1.7.1

The Serbian Archery Federation has requested an interpretation whether it is a violation of the rules if during match play two athletes agree to shoot only one arrow in each round of their elimination match. The athletes' stated that one athlete felt tired and that the other understood and so they agreed to only shoot with one arrow.

The Constitution and Rules Committee ("C&R") finds the question presented to be within the terms of reference of C&R.

C&R has determined that the following interpretation is not contrary to the existing rules or Congress decisions.

Relevant Rules:

Article 12.1 provides that "Each athlete shall shoot his arrows in ends of three or six arrows unless specified differently."

Article 15.1.7 provides "An athlete proved to have knowingly broken any rules and regulations may be declared to be ineligible to participate in the competition. The athlete shall be disqualified and shall lose any position he may have gained."

Article 15.1.7.1 provides "Un-sportsmanlike conduct shall not be tolerated. Such conduct by an athlete or anyone deemed to be assisting an athlete shall result in disqualification of the athlete in question and may further result in suspension from future events."

Analysis:

In C&R's opinion, the rules do not require one or more athletes to shoot the full number of arrows permitted in an end or during a match. Athletes may choose not shoot all of their arrows for many different reasons such as illness, injury, equipment failure, exhaustion, expiration of time, or a decision to simply not shoot all of the arrows. The failure to shoot all permitted arrows penalizes the athlete and there is no advantage in not shooting all arrows.

A more complex issue is whether an agreement between athletes that each will not shoot all of his or arrows is a violation of the rules. In the facts presented, each athlete agreed to shoot only one arrow and the given reason is that one of the athletes was tired. There is no suggestion that the athletes agreed as to who will win the match or that there are other circumstances or consequences of such agreement which could justify the athletes' agreement being a violation of Article 15.1.7.1. In C&R's opinion, the rules do not specifically prohibit an agreement to shoot less than all of the permitted arrows under the limited facts presented.

Athletes who agree to each shoot less than all permitted arrows do so at their peril. Each athlete risks the other athlete not following their agreement and shooting more than the agreed number of arrows. If one athlete in fact shoots more than the agreed number of arrows, C&R is of the opinion that the other athlete has no recourse under the rules.

C&R does not condone athletes agreeing to shoot less than the full number of permitted arrows. While C&R has concluded that such agreement is not a violation of Article 15.1.7.1 under the limited facts presented, C&R believes that there could be facts and circumstances where athletes agreeing not to shoot arrows could be determined by a judge, a jury of appeals or other reviewing body to be un-sportsmanlike conduct. For example, C&R believes that any agreement not to shoot all permitted arrows could be a violation of Article 15.1.7.1 if doing so is an attempt to fix who is the winner of the match. Athletes should be aware that any such conduct is likely to result in an investigation to determine if match fixing is involved. Also, C&R could imagine that such action could be determined to be unsportsmanlike conduct if it adversely affects the quality of presentation of the event. For example, certain events are broadcast and an agreement to shorten the competition could affect the anticipated scheduling of the event. There may be other situations where the facts and circumstances are such that a judge, jury of appeals or other reviewing body could determine that such an agreement is an flagrant decision of the athletes to disregard the rules without any apparent reasonable justification. In the case presented, the athletes' said that their agreement was based on one of the athlete's being tired. Whether or not such reason is justifiable is subject to review of the facts and circumstances by the judge, jury of appeals or other reviewing body.

Any such agreement breaks the equality of athletes in the course of the competition. If everyone does what they want, it is no longer an organised and fair competition but a practice. Accordingly, while the facts presented do not, in C&R's opinion, provide a sufficient basis to conclude that the athletes are in violation of Article 15.1.7.1, athletes who agree not to shoot all permitted arrows should keep in mind that a judge, jury of appeals or other reviewing body could determine that the facts and circumstances are sufficient to conclude that the athletes acted in an un-sportsmanlike conduct in violation of Article 15.1.7.1.

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