



MEDIA RELEASE

ALPINE SKIING

VANESSA VANAKORN (MAE) APPEAL:

FOUR-YEAR BAN CANCELLED, BUT INELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE IN THE SOCHI 2014 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES CONFIRMED

Lausanne, 19 June 2015 - The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has today issued its decision in the arbitration procedures between Vanessa Vanakorn and the Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS). In the first procedure (sanctions against the athlete), the CAS Panel found that there was insufficient evidence to hold that Vanessa Vanakorn had breached the FIS Betting and other Anti-Corruption Violations Rules (FIS BAC Rules) and as a consequence, annulled her four-year ban. However, the CAS Panel dismissed her second appeal against the FIS Council (cancellation of competitions) which confirms that she was ineligible to compete in the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

In January 2014, shortly before the cut-off date for qualification to the Sochi Olympic Winter Games, four ladies giant slalom competitions were held in Krvavec, Slovenia, one of them being listed as the “Thai Junior National Championships”. Such races were organised by the Alpine Ski Club Triglav Kranj, with the support of the Thai Olympic Committee, and registered as FIS races, to give her a final opportunity to reach the level of FIS Points required for participation in the 2014 Sochi Games. On the basis of her results in such races, Ms Vanakorn qualified and participated in the 2014 Olympic Winter Games as a Thai athlete. In March 2014, the Ski Association of Slovenia reviewed the four competitions and passed a report to the FIS. The FIS Hearing Panel found a number of breaches of the FIS BAC Rules and sanctioned five officials with one-year bans from participating in FIS sanctioned events worldwide, and Ms Vanakorn with a four-year ban from participating in FIS sanctioned events worldwide.

In November 2014, acting on the FIS Hearing Panel’s decision, the FIS Council annulled the four competitions and ordered that any and all points earned by the participating competitors be deleted. Accordingly, without the points earned in the Slovenian competitions, Ms Vanakorn did not have the



necessary FIS point performance level to be eligible to participate in the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games.

On 1 December 2014, Vanessa Vanakorn filed appeals at the CAS against the decisions taken by the FIS Hearing Panel on 6 November 2014 and by the FIS Council on 18 November 2014, seeking the annulment of both decisions.

The procedures were referred to a CAS Panel composed of: Prof. Dr. Martin Schimke, Germany (President), Mr Patrice Brunet, Canada, and Mr Mark Hovell, UK. The parties, their representatives, experts and witnesses were heard by the Panel at a hearing held at the CAS headquarters in Lausanne on 3 and 4 March 2015.

In its decision, the CAS Panel accepted the position of the FIS that a number of irregularities had occurred in the organisation and management of the four races in question, but could not find, to its comfortable satisfaction, evidence of any manipulation by Vanessa Vanakorn herself that justified the guilty finding and the imposition of a four-year ban. Accordingly, the decision of the FIS Hearing Panel in relation to Ms Vanakorn is annulled and her four-year ban is lifted.

Turning to the second appeal, the CAS Panel held that the competitions in Krvavec, notwithstanding the fact that Ms Vanakorn herself was not guilty of any manipulation, were so defective that their results and qualification points gained therefrom could not stand. The CAS Panel found that in annulling the competitions and the points earned therein, the FIS Council had acted within the discretion afforded to it in the FIS BAC rules. Consequently, the second appeal is dismissed and the decision of the FIS Council is confirmed which means that Vanessa Vanakorn remains ineligible to compete in the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games.