



TAS / CAS

TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL DU SPORT
COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT
TRIBUNAL ARBITRAL DEL DEPORTE

CAS 2025/A/11664 Kyriakos Stratouras v. World Taekwondo

ARBITRAL AWARD

delivered by the

COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

sitting in the following composition:

Sole Arbitrator: Dr. Vladimir Novak, Attorney-at-law in Brussels, Belgium

in the arbitration between

Kyriakos Stratouras, Nicosia, Cyprus

Appellant

and

World Taekwondo, Republic of Korea

Represented by Mr. Olivier Ducrey, Attorney-at-law, Times Attorneys, Lausanne, Switzerland

Respondent

I. PARTIES

1. Mr. Kyriakos Stratouras (the “Appellant”) is a taekwondo coach at the Morphou District Taekwondo Club in Cyprus.
2. World Taekwondo (“WT” or the “Respondent”) is the international sports federation for the sport of taekwondo recognised by the International Olympic Committee. WT has its registered seat in Seoul, Republic of Korea.
3. The Appellant and the Respondent are collectively referred to as the “Parties”.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

4. Below is a summary of the relevant facts and allegations based on the Parties’ written submissions and evidence adduced. Additional facts and allegations found in the Parties’ submissions and evidence may be set out, where relevant, in connection with the legal discussion that follows. While the Sole Arbitrator has considered all facts, allegations, legal arguments, and evidence submitted by the Parties in the present proceedings, the Award refers only to the submissions and evidence which the Sole Arbitrator considers necessary to explain his reasoning.
5. On 9 April 2025, the Appellant filed an official disciplinary complaint (the “Complaint”) with the Respondent under Article 3.3 of the Respondent’s Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code (“DAAC”). He alleged that the Cyprus Taekwondo Federation (“EOTK”) had infringed WT rules due to: failing to follow the correct procedure to obtain legal and sports recognition; misrepresenting its legal relation to its predecessor entity (“PEOTT”) in prior communications with WT; irregularities in its 2024 elections and governance framework; arbitrarily excluding a minor athlete from a competition by refusing to grant the Appellant access to the online registration system (“TaekoPlan Tournament Subscription Site” or “TPSS”); use of the TPSS system without a licence until 2023; and conflicts of interest of two tournament referees. He requested that the Respondent open a disciplinary investigation into EOTK and ensure athletes’ equal opportunities to compete.
6. On 15 April 2025, the Respondent confirmed that the Complaint “*satisfies the formal requirements under Article 3.3(C) of the WT Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code*” and “*At this stage, no determination is being made regarding WT’s jurisdiction under Article 3.3(A) or whether WT will proceed with the matter under Article 3.3(E).*” In addition, the Respondent requested clarifications on whether the Appellant had submitted his complaint or a similar version to the Cyprus Sports Organization (“KOA”) or any other national authority, and if so to provide further details and copies of the relevant communications.

7. On 28 April 2025, the Appellant provided details of prior complaints to Cypriot national authorities and submitted certain court decisions and correspondence.
8. On 29 April 2025, the Respondent informed the Appellant that “*case procedure has now been transferred to the Investigations email account for further handling*”. At the Respondent’s request, the Appellant confirmed that the documents he had submitted were complete and accurate.
9. On 6 May 2025, the Respondent asked the Appellant to confirm whether he had submitted all relevant communications, including any responses from KOA and EOTK. The Appellant confirmed that he had submitted all relevant communications and responses, but that there were other related communications.
10. On 28 May 2025, the Appellant inquired whether there had been any developments or updates. On 29 May 2025, the Respondent informed the Appellant that they were currently assessing the matter and had reached out to relevant authorities, including EOTK and KOA. They indicated that they were reviewing information received from these authorities and the Appellant.
11. On 12 June 2025, the Respondent requested access to all related communications, beyond those which he had previously provided. On 17 June 2025, the Respondent asked the Appellant to submit any documents or communications he may have had with relevant local authorities in Cyprus. On 20 June 2025, the Appellant indicated that he was compiling additional documents.
12. On 23 June 2025, the Appellant sent the Respondent further information and documents concerning his allegations that EOTK had not been legally established or registered.
13. On 12 July 2025, the Appellant informed the Respondent that he had submitted a complaint to certain national authorities in Cyprus alleging that the participation of deregistered entities in EOTK’s elections violated legislation governing associations and federations and rendered the electoral procedure invalid.
14. On 16 July 2025, the Appellant followed up with the Respondent on the Complaint. On 21 July 2025, the Appellant submitted documents concerning his allegations that the EOTK had conducted unlawful elections, and asked the Respondent whether there had been any update or progress on his Complaint.
15. On 22 July 2025, the Respondent issued its decision dismissing the Complaint (the “Appealed Decision”) under Articles 3.3(E) and 5.4(B)(i) DAAC “*on jurisdictional grounds and on the basis that the issues raised are more appropriately addressed by domestic authorities*”. In particular, the Respondent found that:

- “[T]he core allegations—including those regarding EOTK’s legal recognition, statutory structure, and governance—are matters governed by national law and fall under the authority of competent Cypriot institutions, such as the Cyprus Sports Organisation (KOA), Ministry of Interior, and national courts. As such, these claims are outside the original jurisdiction of WT”.
- The allegations concerning exclusion of athletes from competitions in Cyprus “may be within WT’s jurisdiction”, but that the Appellant had not discharged his burden under Article 3.3(B) DAAC to present “a *prima facie* case to WT’s comfortable satisfaction”.
- The allegations around TPSS access and athlete exclusion “similarly reflect disputes within domestic frameworks” and it had not found “sufficient grounds to conclude that EOTK applied licensing criteria in a manner that contravenes WT rules”.
- Articles 3.3(E) and 5.4(B)(i) DAAC gave WT discretionary authority to decline complaints where: “[t]he matter is better addressed by another competent authority” or “there is insufficient basis for WT to assert jurisdiction over domestic legal or administrative actions”.
- WT exercised this discretionary authority to dismiss the Complaint, and stated that the Complaint “is final and not subject to appeal”.

III. PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

16. On 6 August 2025, the Appellant filed, pursuant to Article R47 of the Code of Sports-related Arbitration (the “CAS Code”), a Statement of Appeal (the “Statement of Appeal”) with the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland (the “CAS”), against the Appealed Decision (the “Appeal”). The Appellant requested that the Appeal be submitted to a Sole Arbitrator.
17. On 7 August 2025, the CAS Court Office invited the Appellant to complete his Statement of Appeal within three days by submitting certain additional information required by Article R48(1) of the CAS Code. In addition, the CAS Court Office asked the Appellant to provide proof of filing of the Statement of Appeal pursuant to Article R31(3) of the CAS Code and to demonstrate that he had sufficient interest in the matter being appealed.
18. On 10 August 2025, the Appellant submitted an email to the CAS setting out the reasons for his sufficient interest in the matter being appealed.
19. On 16 August 2025, the Appellant filed his Appeal Brief (the “Appeal Brief”).

20. On 18 November 2025, the CAS Court Office requested the Appellant to proceed with the payment of the CAS Court Office fee within three days. The Appellant subsequently paid the CAS Court Office fee.
21. On 24 November 2025, the CAS Court Office invited the Respondent to submit their Answer within 20 days. The Respondent was also asked to inform the CAS Court Office within five days whether it agreed that the case be submitted to a Sole Arbitrator. The Respondent consented.
22. On 7 December 2025, the Respondent informed the CAS Court Office that it would not pay the requested share of the advance of costs as it considered that the CAS lacks jurisdiction. The Respondent requested that the deadline for filing the Answer be fixed after the full payment by the Appellant of the advance of costs in accordance with Articles R55(3) and R64(2) of the CAS Code, and be extended by 30 days.
23. On 8 December 2025, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that the deadline for the Respondent to file its Answer had been set aside and a new deadline would be established upon the Appellant's payment of the total of the advance of costs.
24. On 6 January 2026, the CAS Court Office acknowledged receipt of payment of the entire advance of costs by the Appellant and requested that Respondent submit its Answer within 20 days.
25. On 26 January 2026, the Respondent filed its Answer.
26. On 4 February 2026, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that the Division President decided to submit the case to a Sole Arbitrator:

Dr Vladimir Novak, attorney-at-law in Brussels, Belgium.
27. On 8 February 2026, the Appellant submitted a request for provisional measures pursuant to Article R37 of the CAS Code (the "First Request for Provisional Measures"). He explained that the Cyprus Junior Championships 2026 were scheduled to take place on 28 February 2026 and that registration was effected exclusively by the electronic TPSS system. He alleged that, because he did not have access to this system, he was unable to register the athletes that he coached. He argued that the resulting inability of these athletes to compete at the Cyprus Junior Championships 2026 would lead to manifest and irreparable harm within the meaning of Article R37 of the CAS Code. Accordingly, he requested that the Sole Arbitrator order either: (i) the immediate restoration of his access to the electronic TPSS system in order to complete the registrations; or (ii) the authorisation of the athletes' participation in the Cyprus Junior Championships. He further requested that such order be issued "on an urgent basis" and to reserve all issues of costs.

28. On 9 February 2026, the CAS Court Office invited the Respondent to file its position on the First Request for Provisional Measures within 10 days.
29. On 10 February 2026, the Sole Arbitrator put the following questions to the Parties with a deadline of 17 February 2026:
- “1. Please explain whether (i) the Appellant falls within the definition of “Member” (i.e., as “Applicable Person”) under the World Taekwondo (WT) Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code (DAAC), (ii) Article 3.3 DAAC is limited to Complaints by Members, and (iii) said Article is applicable to WT Decision DM25-027 (CYP) (the Appealed Decision).*
- 2. Given that the Respondent initiated the ‘Investigation’, please confirm whether Article 3.2 DAAC is applicable to the Appealed Decision.*
- 3. Please explain whether Article 3.2 DAAC (which, unlike subsequent Article 3.3(E) DAAC, does not explicitly state that decisions are “unappealable”) read in conjunction with Article 4.2(A) DAAC, enables internal WT appeal of the Appealed Decision under Article 4 DAAC.*
- 4. Given that the Appealed Decision refers to Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC, please explain whether Article 5.4(E)(i) DAAC enables internal WT appeal of the Appealed Decision under Article 4 DAAC.*
- 5. If the Appealed Decision were susceptible to internal appeal to a WT Appeal Panel under Article 4 DAAC, please explain whether appeal should first be made to a WT Appeal Panel prior to any potential subsequent appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.*
- 6. If the Appealed Decision were susceptible to internal appeal to a WT Appeal Panel under Article 4 DAAC, please explain what avenues the Appellant would have at this stage to avail himself of this option (e.g., including under Article 4.4(B) DAAC).”*
30. On 11 February 2026, the Appellant requested a deadline extension until 20 February 2026 to respond to the Sole Arbitrator’s questions, and the Respondent requested a deadline extension until 24 February 2026 to comment on the First Request for Provisional Measures. The CAS Court Office granted the Appellant’s extension request.
31. On 16 February 2026, the CAS Court Office granted a deadline extension of 10 days for the Respondent to provide its comments on the First Request for Provisional Measures.
32. On 16 February 2026, the Appellant alleged that the Respondent’s deadline extension would adversely affect the effectiveness of the provisional measures that he had

requested. In particular, he noted that the new deadline for the Respondent to comment on his request was later than the deadline of 25 February 2026 for registering athletes for the Cyprus Junior Championships 2026. Accordingly, he requested that the Sole Arbitrator rule on the First Request for Provisional Measures as soon as possible and, in any event, before 25 February 2026.

33. On 16 February 2026, the CAS Court Office, without prejudice to the granted deadline, invited the Respondent to submit its comments concerning the urgency of a decision concerning provisional measures by no later than 19 February 2026.
34. On 19 February 2026, the Respondent provided its comments on the First Request for Provisional Measures.
35. On 20 February 2026, the Appellant submitted a reply to the Respondent's comments on the First Request for Provisional Measures.
36. On 20 February 2026, the CAS Court Office requested that, to ensure the orderly conduct of proceedings, the Appellant refrain from submitting further unsolicited correspondence and documentation, unless specifically requested by the CAS Court Office and/or the Sole Arbitrator.
37. On 21 February 2026, the Appellant submitted responses to the Sole Arbitrator's questions.
38. On 24 February 2026, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that the Sole Arbitrator, after considering the circumstances of the case, had decided to reject the First Request for Provisional Measures and that the grounds for this decision would be set out in the Final Award.
39. On 24 February 2026, the Respondent submitted responses to the Sole Arbitrator's questions.
40. On 27 February 2026, the Sole Arbitrator granted the Parties a final opportunity to react until 4 March 2026 to each other's responses to the Sole Arbitrator's questions.
41. On 4 March 2026, the CAS Court Office shared the Parties' follow-up submissions on the Sole Arbitrator's questions.
42. On 6 March 2026, the Appellant submitted a second request for provisional measures pursuant to Article R37 of the CAS Code (the "Second Request for Provisional Measures"). He explained that the Cyprus National Cadet Championships 2026 and the Cyprus National Senior Championships 2026 were scheduled to take place on 21 March 2026, and that he was unable to register athletes at his club because he did not have access to the TPSS system. Accordingly, he requested that the Sole Arbitrator order

either: (i) the temporary restoration of his access to the TPSS system; or (ii) the authorisation of the athletes' participation in the competitions scheduled for 21 March 2026. Given that the registration deadline was 18 March 2026, the Appellant requested that the Sole Arbitrator examine the issue on an urgent basis.

43. On 6 March 2026, the CAS Court Office invited the Respondent to file its position on the Second Request for Provisional Measures by 11 March 2026.
44. On 11 March 2026, the Respondent provided its comments on the Second Request for Provisional Measures.
45. On 17 March 2026, the CAS Court Office informed the Parties that the Sole Arbitrator, after considering the circumstances of the case, had decided to reject the Second Request for Provisional Measures and that the grounds for this decision would be set out in the Final Award.
46. On 9 April 2026, the Appellant submitted a third request for provisional measures pursuant to Article R37 of the CAS Code (the "Third Request for Provisional Measures"). He explained that the Cyprus National Cadets Championship 2026 was scheduled to take place on 25 April 2026, that the registration deadline was 22 April 2026, and that he remained unable to register athletes or perform his coaching duties due to the continued non-activation of his WT Global Licence (CYP-1643) and his lack of access to the TPSS system. Accordingly, he requested that the Sole Arbitrator order the immediate activation of his WT Global Licence, grant him full access to the TPSS system, and allow the registration and participation of the affected athletes. The grounds for the dismissal of the Third Request for Provisional Measures are set out below.
47. On 10 April 2026, the CAS Court Office issued the Order of Procedure and informed the parties that according to Article R59 of the 2025 version of the CAS Code, no further submissions shall be accepted. The Order of Procedure was signed by the Respondent on 12 April 2026 and by the Appellant on 14 April 2026.
48. Pursuant to Article R57 of the CAS Code, the Sole Arbitrator decided to rule on the present matter on the basis of the Parties' written submissions, without holding a hearing, considering himself sufficiently well informed to do so and in the absence of any request from the parties to hold a hearing.

IV. SUBMISSIONS OF THE PARTIES ON THE ISSUE OF JURISDICTION

A. The Appellant's Submission

49. The Appellant's Appeal Brief claimed the CAS had jurisdiction to decide the present dispute.

B. The Respondent's Submission

50. The Respondent's Answer submitted that the CAS lacked jurisdiction to decide the present dispute.

51. The Respondent explained that WT conducted a procedural and jurisdictional review of the Complaint, and decided not to act upon it under Article 3.3(E) and Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC, on the basis that the matter fell outside its jurisdiction.

52. Article 3.3(E) DAAC provides as follows:

"3.3 Complaints

[...]

(E) After processing the complaint WT at its sole discretion will make a decision on whether or not to act upon a complaint. WT will inform the complainant of this decision. This decision is unappealable. Possible decisions include:

- i. Decline to proceed, close the case, and issue a letter to the complainant describing why the Complaint is not being acted upon (for instance, because of inadequate evidence to support the claim or a failure to invoke an appropriate rule or regulation); or,*
- ii. Decline to proceed, close the case, and suggest that the complainant seek an alternative, more appropriate venue in which to air the dispute; or,*
- iii. Decide to proceed and give notice to the complainant and the accused regarding the initiation of an investigation and the details of the subsequent process in compliance with Article 3.4 (Procedure) below."*

53. Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC provides as follows:

"5.4 Administrative Closures

[...]

(B) Grounds for Administrative Closure:

A case or complaint may be administratively closed for the following reasons:

- i. Lack of Jurisdiction: The case falls outside the jurisdiction or authority of the WT Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code."*

54. The Respondent referred to Article R47 of the CAS Code, which provides as follows:

“An appeal against the decision of a federation, association or sports-related body may be filed with CAS if the statutes or regulations of the said body so provide or if the parties have concluded a specific arbitration agreement and if the Appellant has exhausted the legal remedies available to it prior to the appeal, in accordance with the statutes or regulations of that body”.

55. First, the Respondent contended that the Appealed Decision was not final, and so the Appellant had not exhausted the internal legal remedies that were available before lodging the Appeal. In the first place, the Respondent noted that the Appealed Decision expressly allowed WT to reconsider the matter *“should material new facts, evidence, or formal rulings from competent national authorities become available that may affect EOTK’s compliance with WT Statutes”*. In the second place, the Respondent argued that the Appealed Decision was an exercise of WT’s discretion to close the matter on jurisdictional and case management grounds, which did not involve any decision on the merits. Consequently, the Respondent asserted that the Appealed Decision did not prejudice any future decision on the merits by a competent national authority or WT.
56. Second, the Respondent highlighted policy considerations which permitted WT to limit appeals of procedural jurisdictional screenings carried out under Article 3.3(E) DAAC. The Respondent claimed that if WT’s decision not to act upon a complaint on the basis that it should not be required to decide contested questions of domestic law were subject to appeal to the CAS, WT would be forced to restrict access to its disciplinary system simply to manage institutional risk and bandwidth.
57. Third, the Respondent asserted that the Appealed Decision was unappealable, as: (i) under Article R47 of the CAS Code, the admissibility of a specific appeal depends on whether the applicable regulations confer a right of appeal against the relevant decision; and (ii) under Article 4.12(B) DAAC, the appeal of WT decisions to the CAS is only permitted when expressly provided for by the DAAC.
58. Article 4.12 DAAC provides as follows:

“4.12 Appeal of Appeal Panel Decisions

(A) Final Decisions made by a WT Appeal Panel may be submitted exclusively by way of appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, which will resolve the dispute definitively in accordance with the Code of sports-related arbitration. The number of arbitrators shall be one unless otherwise agreed by the Parties. The language of the arbitration shall be English. The time limit for appeal is twenty-one days after the reception of the decision concerning the appeal.

(B) The submission of decisions to the Court of Arbitration for Sport shall occur only where explicitly permitted by the applicable regulations. This does not convert the internal character of WT proceedings into arbitration.”

59. The Respondent argued that the Appealed Decision was issued pursuant to Article 3.3(E) DAAC, which expressly holds that a decision by WT on whether to act upon a complaint is unappealable. The Appealed Decision was therefore not a category of decision that could be submitted to the CAS, and so the CAS was not competent to adjudicate the Appeal.

C. The Appellant’s Response to the Sole Arbitrator’s Questions

60. The Appellant provided answers to the following questions:

61. *“1. Please explain whether (i) the Appellant falls within the definition of “Member” (i.e., as “Applicable Person”) under the World Taekwondo (WT) Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code (DAAC), (ii) Article 3.3 DAAC is limited to Complaints by Members, and (iii) said Article is applicable to WT Decision DM25-027 (CYP) (the Appealed Decision).”*

- Article 3.3 DAAC provides as follows with respect to standing to pursue a complaint:

“(A) Members can allege the existence of an Infringement of WT rules by other Members in accordance with this Code.”

- Article 1.1(D) DAAC provides as follows:

“For the purposes of this Code, “Members” shall be deemed to include “Applicable Persons” as that term is defined in Section 1.1 of the World Taekwondo Integrity Code.”

- Article 1.1 of the WT Integrity Code defines “Applicable Persons” as follows:

“1.1.1 WT Officials or persons seeking to become WT Officials;

1.1.2 Competition Management Officials;

1.1.3 Member National Federation and Continental Union Officials (“Member Officials”) and those seeking to become Member Officials;

1.1.4 Persons and entities bidding to host, or hosting, International Competitions;

1.1.5 Persons who are engaged by or acting on behalf of World Taekwondo (WT) including Staff and Independent Contractors;

1.1.6 Persons and entities who are participating in WT Sanctioned or Promoted, including but not limited to volunteers, athletes and athlete support personnel;

1.1.7 Such other persons who agree in writing to be bound by this Integrity Code or who are bound to this Integrity Code by virtue of the Rules applying to them, which Rules are incorporated into this Integrity Code.”

- The Appellant argued that he fell within the definition of “Applicable Person”, although he did not refer to a specific provision of Article 1.1 of the WT Integrity Code. The Appellant instead justified this position on the basis that he held an active WT Global Membership System licence, operated within the WT regulatory framework, and participated in WT-governed competitions and procedures.
- The Appellant therefore maintained that, as WT implicitly acknowledged when accepting the Complaint, he fell within the definition of “Member” under Article 1.1(D) DAAC and so was permitted under Article 3.3(E) DAAC to allege an infringement of WT rules by the EOTK.

62. “(2) *Given that the Respondent initiated the ‘Investigation’, please confirm whether Article 3.2 DAAC is applicable to the Appealed Decision.”*

- The provisions of Article 3.2 DAAC of potential relevance to the question of whether the CAS has jurisdiction provide as follows:

“(A) WT may at its sole discretion initiate an investigation into the actions of any Participant that WT believes may have infringed the WT Statutes or other rules (Infringement(s)).

[...]

“(G) WT may, in the sole exercise of its discretion, decline to pursue a formal complaint under this Code, even when it believes a violation has been committed, where WT determines that pursuit of a formal complaint is not in the best interests of WT taking into account WT’s resources, the availability of remedies before other dispute resolution bodies, or any other reason.”

- The Appellant argued that WT’s actions in assessing the complaint had the substantive characteristics of an investigation under Article 3.2 DAAC.

63. “(3) Please explain whether Article 3.2 DAAC (which, unlike subsequent Article 3.3(E) DAAC, does not explicitly state that decisions are “unappealable”) read in conjunction with Article 4.2(A) DAAC, enables internal WT appeal of the Appealed Decision under Article 4 DAAC.”
- Article 4.2(A) DAAC provides as follows:

“4.2 *Appealable Decisions*

(A) *Appealable Decisions are those made under Article 3 of this Code or other decisions that WT rules expressly allow for appeal under this Code.*”
 - The Appellant argued that if the Appealed Decision was characterised as an investigation under Article 3.2 DAAC, it would in principle be internally appealable under Article 4 DAAC.
64. “(4) Given that the Appealed Decision refers to Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC, please explain whether Article 5.4(E)(i) DAAC enables internal WT appeal of the Appealed Decision under Article 4 DAAC.”
- Article 5.4(E)(i) provides as follows:

“*Right to Appeal: The decision to administratively close a case may be appealed by any party involved, in accordance with the appeal procedures outlined in Article 4 of this Code.*”
 - The Appellant confirmed that the Appealed Decision was in principle appealable under Article 5.4(E)(i) DAAC as it was issued under Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC.
65. “(5) If the Appealed Decision were susceptible to internal appeal to a WT Appeal Panel under Article 4 DAAC, please explain whether appeal should first be made to a WT Appeal Panel prior to any potential subsequent appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.”
- The Appellant acknowledged that Article 4 DAAC provides for proceedings before a WT Appeal Panel, while Article 4.12 DAAC states that only final decisions of a WT Appeal Panel may be appealed to the CAS.
 - However, the Appellant argued that the Appealed Decision expressly stated that it was not subject to appeal, no appeal deadline was communicated, and no appeal instructions were provided. Therefore, the Appellant was practically and normatively deprived of an internal remedy, meaning that no remedy could be exhausted prior to appeal to the CAS.

66. “(6) If the Appealed Decision were susceptible to internal appeal to a WT Appeal Panel under Article 4 DAAC, please explain what avenues the Appellant would have at this stage to avail himself of this option (e.g., including under Article 4.4(B) DAAC).”

- Article 4.4(B) DAAC provides as follows:

“Statement of Appeal: In the absence of a time limit set by agreement, regulation or other applicable rules governing the appealed decision, a Statement of Appeal must be received within 20 days following the appealed decision or the date of its discovery. Untimely Appeals shall be dismissed except in the case of extraordinary circumstances and upon approval of WT’s Judicial Committee. Incomplete Appeals may, at the discretion of WT, be given a onetime extension. Additional extensions must be based on a showing of good cause.”

- The Appellant acknowledged that while he had missed the 20-day deadline specified in Article 4.4(B) DAAC, WT could accept a late appeal in “extraordinary circumstances”. The Appellant asserted that this avenue of appeal could not be regarded as an effective internal remedy, as it depended on WT’s discretionary power.

67. The Appellant concluded that the Appealed Decision was issued pursuant to Article 3.3(E) DAAC, which is unappealable. Alternatively, even if the Appealed Decision had been appealable internally under Article 5.4(B)(i) and/or Article 4 DAAC, it had expressly excluded the possibility of appeal, meaning that there was no functionally accessible internal remedy to be exhausted. Therefore, the Appellant contended that CAS had jurisdiction.

D. The Respondent’s Response to the Sole Arbitrator’s questions

68. First the Respondent held that the Appellant was not a “Member” as defined in the DAAC, as he did not fall within any of the categories listed in Article 1.1 of the WT Integrity Code. The Appellant therefore did not have any legally protected interest in the enforcement of WT rules and could not maintain a complaint under Article 3.3 DAAC. The WT Global Integrity Unit (“GIU”) should have first analysed whether the Appellant had standing to file the Complaint, and should have then construed that he did not and that Article 3.3 was no longer applicable.

69. Second, the Respondent confirmed that Article 3.2 DAAC was applicable to the Appealed Decision because the WT GIU did not inquire into the Appellant’s standing and processed the Complaint as warranting an investigation.

70. Third, the Respondent confirmed that while there was no right to appeal under Article 3.2 DAAC *per se*, Article 4 DAAC permitted appeal of a decision issued pursuant to Article 3.8 DAAC or an administrative closure under Article 5.4(E) DAAC.

71. Fourth, the Respondent acknowledged that the Appellant did have the right to appeal the Appealed Decision pursuant to Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC.
72. Fifth, the Respondent held, that if the Appealed Decision were susceptible to internal appeal under Article 4 DAAC, a WT Appeal Panel rather than the CAS would be the appropriate avenue of appeal in the first instance.
73. Sixth, the Respondent confirmed that as the 20-day deadline for internal appeal had expired, the Appellant would be required under Article 4.4(B) to demonstrate “extraordinary circumstances” to be permitted to appeal internally. However, the Respondent asserted that the WT GIU’s erroneous statement that the Appealed Decision was internally unappealable, as well as the unique procedural status of the case, *may* constitute “extraordinary circumstances”.

E. The Appellant’s Reply to the Respondent’s Response to the Sole Arbitrator’s Questions

74. First, the Appellant maintained that he was a “Member” under the DAAC, and asserted that the Respondent’s interpretation of the provisions of Article 1.1(D) DAAC – incorrectly referred to by the Appellant as Article 1.2(D) DAAC – and Article 1.1 of the WT Integrity Code was erroneous:
 - In the first place, the Appellant argued that he fell within the regulatory scope of WT pursuant to Article 10 of the WT Statutes, thereby granting him the status of “Member” under the DAAC due to the principle of equality of arms and regulatory coherence. The provisions of Article 10 of the WT Statutes cited by the Appellant provide as follows:

“Article 10 Authority

10.1 All Members and Individuals engaging with World Taekwondo (WT) must recognize and abide by:

10.1.1 The WT Statutes and all related rules and regulations;

10.1.2 WT’s exclusive authority over all matters concerning Taekwondo under its jurisdiction;

10.1.3 The mandatory nature of WT rules, decisions, and sanctions;

10.1.4 Any appeal or dispute must:

10.1.4.1 Follow WT’s internal appeals and dispute resolution procedures before seeking external arbitration;

10.1.4.2 Be lodged in accordance with the WT Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code (DAAC);

10.1.4.3 Be brought exclusively before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) after exhausting internal WT remedies.”

10.1.5 Decisions made by WT and CAS are final and binding. Members and individuals must comply without attempting to hinder their enforcement.

10.2 Individuals under this section include those who:

10.2.1 participate as athlete in an event under the authority of WT;

10.2.2 acts as an official (trainer, coach, team manager, delegate, representative, doctor, etc.) of a team, a Member or its affiliates;

10.2.3 officiates as an international technical official or in a similar role;

10.2.4 organizes or helps to organize (staff, volunteer), a competition which is placed under the WT’s authority; and assumes any role within the Federation

10.2.5 are holders of a GMS license”.

- In the second place, the Appellant argued that Article 1.1 of the WT Integrity Code defines “Applicable Persons” as including coaches and athlete support personnel.
- In the third place, the Appellant referred to a previous decision issued against him by WT (DM25-023 (CYP)), which imposed a penalty for vexatious filing under Article 5.5 DAAC, as evidence of the fact that he had previously been recognised as a person subject to the DAAC.
- In the fourth place, the Appellant asserted that he could not be sanctioned under the DAAC and simultaneously not have the procedural standing to bring a complaint under the regulations, as such an arrangement would violate the principles of regulatory coherence and legal certainty, create unequal treatment, and contradict the fundamental principle of good governance.

75. Second, the Appellant reiterated that he was denied an effectively available internal remedy:

- In the first place, the Appellant claimed that the Appealed Decision was initiated and concluded expressly under Article 3.3(E) DAAC.
- In the second place, the Appellant highlighted that WT did not invoke Article 3.2 DAAC during its handling of the Complaint, and that it was unable to rely *ex post* on Article 3.2 DAAC as its legal basis.
- In the third place, the Appellant reiterated that the Appealed Decision did not provide appeal instructions and did not refer to a time limit for appeal or the provisions of Article 4 DAAC.
- In the fourth place, the Appellant argued that the Appealed Decision did not apply Article 5.4 DAAC autonomously, and that a remedy that contradicts the explicit wording of a decision could not be regarded as clear and effective.
- In the fifth place, the Appellant argued that the regulatory ambiguity of the Appealed Decision could not operate to his detriment, as he could not disregard an express declaration that the Appealed Decision was unappealable.

76. The Appellant concluded that no internal remedy existed to be exhausted, and that the CAS therefore had jurisdiction.

F. The Respondent's Reply to the Appellant's Response to the Sole Arbitrator's Questions

77. First, in contrast to the Respondent's position in its initial response to the Sole Arbitrator's questions, the Respondent asserted that the Appealed Decision was issued substantively as a screening-level discretionary determination under Article 3.3(E) DAAC, and was therefore unappealable internally. The Respondent characterised the Appealed Decision's multiple express statements that it was issued pursuant to Article 5.4(B)(i) in addition to Article 3.3(E) DAAC as "*language commonly associated with administrative closure*", and reiterated that even if the Appealed Decision were appealable internally as an administrative closure under Article 5.4(E)(i), such appeal may only be appealed internally to a WT Appeal Panel.

78. Second, the Respondent reiterated that even if the Appealed Decision were appealable internally, the Appellant failed to exhaust available internal remedies, rendering appeal to the CAS non-viable under Article R47 of the CAS Code. The Respondent also highlighted that the Appellant had failed to file an internal appeal within the 20-day time limit set out under Article 4.4(B) DAAC, that a determination as to whether extraordinary circumstances might justify leave to pursue a late appeal is a discretionary decision of the WT Judicial Committee, and that such a decision was not within the power of the Sole Arbitrator.

79. Third, the Respondent argued that no denial of justice had occurred, as the Complaint was properly processed by WT, which had acted consistently and within its regulatory discretion.
80. The Respondent concluded that in light of the foregoing, the CAS did not have jurisdiction.

V. JURISDICTION

81. Article 186 of the Swiss Federal Act on Private International Law (“PILA”) provides as follows:

“(1) The arbitral tribunal shall decide on its own jurisdiction.

(1bis) It shall decide on its jurisdiction without regard to any action having the same subject matter that is already pending between the same parties before a state court or another arbitral tribunal, unless there are substantial grounds for a stay in proceedings.

(2) Any objection to its jurisdiction must be raised prior to any defence on the merits.

(3) The arbitral tribunal shall, in general, decide on its jurisdiction by a preliminary decision.”

82. The autonomy of the CAS to rule on its own jurisdiction is well-established:¹

“According to Article 186 paragraph 1 of the PILA, the arbitral tribunal has priority when deciding on its own jurisdiction to rule on the dispute. This arbitration principle of the so-called Kompetenz-Kompetenz is internationally recognized and applies to CAS arbitration (through Articles R39 paragraph 4 and R55 paragraph 4 of the CAS Code).

More precisely, the principle of Kompetenz-Kompetenz means that it is up to the arbitral tribunal to decide (‘mit freier Kognition’) whether or not a person called before it is bound by the arbitration agreement and whether the submitted dispute lies within its jurisdiction or with the jurisdiction of state courts. It is the arbitral tribunal itself, and not the state court, which decides on its jurisdiction in the first place. Article 186 paragraph 1bis of the PILA (in force since 2007) gives the power to the panel to decide on its own jurisdiction, even if there is a pending procedure between the same parties before another arbitral or state court.”

83. Article R47 of the CAS Code provides as follows:

¹ Mavromati and Reeb, *The Code of the Court of Arbitration for Sport: Commentary, Cases and Materials (Second Edition)* (2025), pp. 31-32.

“An appeal against the decision of a federation, association or sports-related body may be filed with CAS if the statutes or regulations of the said body so provide or if the parties have concluded a specific arbitration agreement and if the Appellant has exhausted the legal remedies available to it prior to the appeal, in accordance with the statutes or regulations of that body.”

84. In the absence of a specific arbitration agreement, in order for the CAS to have jurisdiction to hear an appeal, the statutes or regulations of the sports federation against whose decision the appeal is being made must expressly recognise the CAS as an arbitral body of appeal; and the Appellant must have exhausted all internal remedies of the federation concerned.²
85. The Parties have not concluded a specific arbitration agreement and are in dispute as to whether the applicable regulations at hand provide for the jurisdiction of the CAS in the present case. The Sole Arbitrator recalls the following:
- *“It is important to remember that there is no uniformity at all when it comes to the scope of the arbitration clauses contained in the regulations of sports organisations. It is therefore important to read the arbitration clause carefully in order to determine whether CAS is competent to decide a particular dispute.”³*
 - *“It must also be noted that the CAS Court Office (and subsequently the panel) does not only control the existence of the arbitration clause/agreement but also its scope, and more precisely its applicability to the dispute at hand. The rules of federations may also limit the right of appeal to the CAS to a specific type of disputes. If the wording of the rule shows that the appeal to the CAS is limited to a specific type of issues, it must be examined whether the dispute at hand falls within this scope.”⁴*
86. Against that background, the Sole Arbitrator notes that Article 4.12 DAAC provides as follows:

“Appeal of Appeal Panel Decisions

² See CAS 2011/A/2421 & 2450 General Taweeep Jantararoj v. AIBA, para. 4.

³ Lewis and Taylor, *Sport: Law and Practice (Fourth Edition)* (2021), p. 1170. See too CAS 2011/A/2576 Curaçao Sport and Olympic Federation v. International Olympic Committee (IOC), para. 6.7 et seq.

⁴ Mavromati and Reeb, *The Code of the Court of Arbitration for Sport: Commentary, Cases and Materials (Second Edition)* (2025), pp. 434-35. See too CAS 2020/A/6747 Mehdi Sohrabi v. Union Cycliste Internationale, para. 55; CAS 2018/A/5853 FIFA v. TNDA & Damián Marcelo Musto, para. 86; CAS 2008/A/1571 Nusaybindemir SC v. TFF & Sirnak SC, para. 17.

(A) Final Decisions made by a WT Appeal Panel may be submitted exclusively by way of appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, which will resolve the dispute definitively in accordance with the Code of sports-related arbitration. The number of arbitrators shall be one unless otherwise agreed by the Parties. The language of the arbitration shall be English. The time limit for appeal is twenty-one days after the reception of the decision concerning the appeal.

(B) The submission of decisions to the Court of Arbitration for Sport shall occur only where explicitly permitted by the applicable regulations. This does not convert the internal character of WT proceedings into arbitration.”

87. Accordingly, only final decisions made by a WT Appeal Panel may subsequently be appealed to the CAS. The Sole Arbitrator is mindful that this type of provision is common in regulations of federations and sports-related bodies and aims to ensure the exhaustion of all internal remedies prior to recourse to the CAS. In *CAS 2021/A/8031 USF et al. v. FINA*, the Panel declined jurisdiction to rule on the appeal of a decision made by the FINA Executive body on the basis that the FINA Constitution limited CAS jurisdiction to appeals against decisions of the FINA Bureau. The Panel noted that “*in accordance with Rule 12.13 of the FINA Constitution, an internal legal remedy (appeal of the FINA Executive decision before the FINA Bureau) shall be exhausted prior to the recourse to the CAS, and this did not happen in the case at hand*” (para. 79).
88. The Parties do not dispute that the Appealed Decision is not a decision made by a WT Appeal Panel. However, the Parties also agreed in their initial responses to the Sole Arbitrator’s questions that the Appealed Decision erroneously stated that it was not susceptible to an internal appeal to the WT Appeal Panel. The Sole Arbitrator finds that the Respondent’s later attempt to recharacterize the Appealed Decision as substantively an exercise of discretion under Article 3.3(E) DAAC, and therefore unappealable internally, is unconvincing given that the Appealed Decision expressly referred on several occasions to both Article 3.3(E) and Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC as its legal basis.
89. This raises the issue of whether the Respondent’s *error* effectively precluded the Appellant from pursuing an internal appeal to the WT Appeal Panel and whether the CAS should therefore accept jurisdiction.
90. The Sole Arbitrator finds that the Appealed Decision was issued by the WT GIU, and expressly held Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC to be its legal basis alongside Article 3.3(E) DAAC. Decisions issued under Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC are unambiguously subject to an appeal to the WT Appeal Panel pursuant to a clear wording of Article 5.4(E)(i) DAAC, which provides as follows:

“Right to Appeal: The decision to administratively close a case may be appealed by any party involved, in accordance with the appeal procedures outlined in Article 4 of this Code.”

91. The Sole Arbitrator notes that there might be circumstances where jurisdictional provisions are ambiguous and an international federation’s erroneous statement that there is no right of appeal might fundamentally mislead a party in such circumstances, such that there might be scope for the CAS to exceptionally decide to effectively dispense with the requirement to exhaust internal remedies prior to an appeal to the CAS.
92. However, this is not such a case. The Appealed Decision expressly referred to Article 5.4(B)(i) DAAC as its legal basis and said article expressly provides for an internal appeal within the WT framework. In these circumstances, even a cursory look at the Appealed Decision and said provision of the DAAC would enable the Appellant to determine on the face of the applicable rules that the Appealed Decision was internally appealable irrespective of the erroneous statement to the contrary in the Appealed Decision.
93. Accordingly, the Appellant should have attempted to exercise this right of appeal. Failing to do so, the Appellant did not exhaust the internal remedies available to him. There is, therefore, no decision of the WT Appeal Panel that the CAS would be competent to review. This is a fundamental flaw of the present Appeal that the Sole Arbitrator cannot correct for the Appellant.
94. For completeness, the Appellant’s Statement of Appeal stated that “[t]his appeal is brought pursuant to Article 10.1.4 of the WT Statutes, which provides that decisions of WT’s judicial bodies may be appealed exclusively to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS)”.
95. Article 10 of the WT Statutes in respect of appeals to the CAS states as follows:

“Article 10 Authority

10.1 All Members and Individuals engaging with World Taekwondo (WT) must recognize and abide by:

10.1.1 The WT Statutes and all related rules and regulations;

10.1.2 WT’s exclusive authority over all matters concerning Taekwondo under its jurisdiction;

10.1.3 The mandatory nature of WT rules, decisions, and sanctions;

10.1.4 Any appeal or dispute must:

10.1.4.1 Follow WT's internal appeals and dispute resolution procedures before seeking external arbitration;

10.1.4.2 Be lodged in accordance with the WT Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code (DAAC);

10.1.4.3 Be brought exclusively before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) after exhausting internal WT remedies.”

96. These provisions do not contradict the provisions in the DAAC concerning the circumstances in which WT decisions can be appealed to the CAS. The clause cited by the Appellant (Article 10.1.4.3 of the WT Statutes) simply holds that appeals can *only* be brought before the CAS after an appellant has exhausted all internal remedies. This point merely reflects the second limb of Article R47 of the CAS Code (“[...] *and if the Appellant has exhausted the legal remedies available to it prior to the appeal*”). But the Appellant failed to do so here.
97. In light of the foregoing, the Sole Arbitrator finds that the CAS lacks jurisdiction to entertain the present Appeal. The lack of CAS jurisdiction is also the basis for the dismissal of the First Request for Provisional Measures, the Second Request for Provisional Measures, and the Third Request for Provisional Measures.
98. For completeness, and without prejudice to the conclusion at para. 97 above, which addresses the remit of the present Appeal, the Sole Arbitrator notes the following position of the Respondent in its response of 24 February 2026 to the Sole Arbitrator’s questions:
- “the Appellant could have appealed the Administrative Closure within twenty days under Article 4.4(B). That time has expired, and Appellant would therefore be required to show “extraordinary circumstances” to appeal. To be clear, those circumstances may include the GIU’s erroneous statement that the decision is not appealable as well as the unique procedural status of the case, although that is a determination for the Juridical Committee”.*
99. In light of this position, the Sole Arbitrator strongly encourages the Respondent to explore avenues to permit the Appellant to pursue an internal appeal within the WT framework in the matter at hand.

VI. COSTS

(...)

ON THESE GROUNDS

The Court of Arbitration for Sport rules that:

1. The Court of Arbitration for Sport does not have jurisdiction to decide on the appeal filed on 6 August 2025 by Mr. Kyriakos Stratouras against Decision DM25-027 (CYP) issued by World Taekwondo.
2. (...).
3. (...).
4. All other motions or prayers for relief are dismissed.

Seat of arbitration: Lausanne, Switzerland

11 August 2026

THE COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT

Vladimir Novak
Sole Arbitrator