



9th October 2025

Follow on from our previous correspondence and acknowledgement of your wish for an official apology.

Dear ~~redacted~~,

I write further to the recent correspondence dated 3rd September 2025.

Please accept our apologies for the delayed response, I trust that I kept you up to date in the meantime with the review process and its timeframes.

## Review of the original decision

After a further review from myself and Eric Li-Koo, we(the BDRA)

- The original complaint was not handled in an acceptable manner  
The counter-complaint should have been considered separately
- The response given was disproportionate to the infringement.

For all of the above, we take full responsibility and wholeheartedly apologise for not responding to your complaint in a manner befitting of a sports governing body, and for the subsequent distress caused by that response.

To take each element separately, as should have been the case originally, we would like to make the following updated statements:

### **The original complaint regarding the way in which an individual was admitted to the race and the subsequent impact to the scores**

The response to the original complaint should have focussed solely on the relevant facts, which were centred around whether Owen Knight should have been allowed to participate in just a subsection of an event that he had initially withdrawn from, albeit with extremely short notice.

This is one of those 'edge cases' that did not get considered when the rules evolved to the state they are in now. Unfortunately, because the participant concerned had announced that they were unable to attend the event at such short notice that they were not entitled to a refund, that place remained theirs and could not be filled from the reserve list. The club and the Race Director complied with the rules as they currently stand and the participant was entitled to race, even if they could not complete the entire day.

In hindsight, the concern that this situation is undesirable is a valid one, and it is something that the new rules sub-committee have high up on their agenda to resolve. We apologise for not communicating this to you.

Regrettably, this does mean that whilst the original response was not handled well, the adjudication based on the current ruleset was accurate and there is nothing further we can add here.

**The counter-complaint that the way in which the original issue was raised caused significant emotional distress and reputational damage**

The counter-complaint should not have been addressed within the same response to your original complaint, and the response did not need to be public. The BDRA should also have made it clearer that John Knight had stepped back from the whole thing for conflict-of-interest reasons, specifically to avoid accusations that Owen was taking advantage of the fact that his father was on the committee.

The facts are, a complaint was made on an open Discord channel that by its nature, tends to be an open forum inviting candid and sometimes emotionally charged opinions. By your own admission the original complaint contained an unnecessarily inflammatory remark but you immediately recognised this and removed the offending remark.

Regrettably we did not acknowledge this and furthermore, we inadvertently made things worse by referring to the now deleted remark in the response, which only served to escalate the situation.

Also regrettably, despite you removing the inflammatory remark it was actually too late because Owen had already seen it and the emotional distress and reputational damage on his side had already been inflicted.

Having the self-awareness to recognise when you've made a mistake would be commendable behaviour for an adult, never mind a junior member and we hope this statement goes some way towards correcting that oversight.

Unfortunately, our mishandling of the entire incident has led to emotional distress and reputational damage on both sides and for this we wholeheartedly and unreservedly apologise. A lesson for us all to learn is that a message published to a public forum is

never truly deleted. If we'd had proper processes in place for *privately* submitting potentially contentious complaints to the committee, and if we hadn't escalated tensions by then publicly dragging you into the counter-complaint, then we could have avoided this situation entirely.

We hope neither of you bear ongoing ill will or animosity toward the other. We would like to facilitate an opportunity to clear the air between yourself (accompanied by a responsible adult if you wish) and Owen Knight (similarly accompanied by John if he wishes).

I stress that this is a polite suggestion and not a demand, but I hope you will see the benefit in putting this behind us so that we can move forward.

### **The disproportionate response to the alleged infringement**

The committee should never have allowed this incident to have escalated to the point of a suspension being issued.

The incident was at best, an online disagreement that could have justified a formal warning if you hadn't realised and subsequently toned down the remarks yourself.

As a result of the way we poorly handled the matter, it is only right to rescind your suspension and wholeheartedly apologise that you were given a suspension in the first place. We hope you can accept this apology and take up the offer of a reconciliatory call with Owen Knight.

### **Commitment to do better**

Whilst we recognise that there was no intent by any party to cause any harm, the subsequent escalation of this matter ended up having undesirable consequences to all involved. Repercussions from this escalation will reverberate around the community for quite some time and the blame for this lies squarely at the feet of the BDRA.

Our commitment to improvement includes:

- Putting new procedures in place to ensure complaints can be submitted using more appropriate channels in future.
- Issuing a notice to all members to use the new process once we put it in place, plus a reminder to all members that discussions on Discord should remain cordial and respectful at all times.
- Performing a spring clean on the Discord server and reset expectations on acceptable use, content and language.

- Seeking to recruit volunteers to act as moderators for our Discord server.

With your approval, we would like to post this apology on the BDRA website as a reminder to all members of the perils of modern comms and social media — not only does everything that is written have the potential to be interpreted differently to the way in which the author intended, but also when published in the public domain it leaves a digital trace that can rarely be really deleted or forgotten.

Kind regards

*Matthew Neale*

Matthew Neale

(BDRA Secretary)

*Eric Li-Koo*

Eric Li-Koo

(BMFA and FAI Liaison Officer)