SWEDEN
TRIATHLON

Protokoll 6
Extra styrelsemöte

Datum: onsdag 27 augusti 2025
Tid: kl. 20:00-22:00
Plats: Digitalt via Teams

1. **Mötets öppnande**

2. **Närvaro**
   Närvarande: Kerstin Mogull (ordförande), Jonas Rylander (vice ordförande), Jonas Haglund, Pia Sundkvist de Beau (sekreterare), Åsa Miemois, Rebecka Bränsvik, Andreas Johansson, Axel Rosencrantz (aktivas representant), Lotta Johansson (personalens representant) och Eva Blomqvist (Tekniska kommitten, adjungerad).

   Ej närvarande: Daniel Belge, Mikael Kjellander (GS, adjungerad)

3. **Dagordningens godkännande**
   Dagordningen godkändes av mötet.

4. **Val av justeringsperson**
   Till justeringsperson valdes Andreas Johansson.

5. **Nationell verksamhet**

   5.1 Beslut gällande den inkomna överklagan av jurybeslutet vid Ironman 70.3 Jönköping.

   Lotta Johansson och Jonas Haglund i förbundsstyrelsen ingår i Tekniska kommittén tillsammans med Eva Blomqvist, som tillsammans grundligt arbetat fram rekommendationen till styrelsen. För att säkerställa opartiskhet deltar de därför inte i styrelsens beslut.

   Efter genomgång av Tekniska kommitténs arbete och rekommendation (bilaga 1) har Svenska Triathlonförbundets styrelse enhälligt beslutat att godkänna Lena Meißners överklagande. Detta innebär att tävlingsjurys tidigare beslut ogiltighetsförklaras, och att Lena Meißner återinsätts som segrare av Ironman 70.3 Jönköping 2025.

6. **Nästa möte**
   2025-09-02 digitalt kl. 19:30-21:00

7. **Mötet avslutas**

Vid protokollet:

_____

Pia Sundkvist de Beau

Ordförande:

_____

Kerstin Mogull

Justeras:

_____

Andreas Johansson

Summary of the work by the technical committee STF

Regarding the appeal by Ms. Meißner, the technical committee of the Swedish Triathlon Federation (STF) **recommends** the board to approve the appeal of Ms. Meißner, and thereby declare the decision of the competition jury invalid and reinstate Ms. Meißner as the winner of Ironman 70.3 Jönköping 2025.

Before reaching this recommendation, the technical committee has performed a thorough investigation of the case, considering the request of the appellant, and collecting all available documents from the previous instances (competition jury) as well as the applicable competition rules (from the Swedish Triathlon Federation as well as the Ironman Competition rules). The committee has during its investigation consulted with Riksidrottsförbundet (RF) to ensure compliance with legal principles of Swedish sports and the statutes of the federation and RF. Further, the committee has collected written statements from the Head Referee, the chair of the competition jury, as well as the Race Direction of Ironman 70.3 Jönköping. The appeal itself and all the collected material have been shared with the parties, to ensure transparency.

Following this investigation, the grounds of this recommendation are as follows:

1. Jurisdiction:

According to the Ironman (IM) competition rules Section 3.06, “RIGHT OF PROTEST OR APPEAL” the following holds:

(a) The athlete’s right to protest or appeal, if any, will be governed and handled by the Event’s sanctioning body, and/or the competition rules of the relevant National Federation, [...] ;

As the Swedish Triathlon Federation is the sanctioning body of IM 70.3 Jönköping 2025, it is clear that it is the Swedish Triathlon Federation (Svenska Triathlonförbundet) that should govern and handle the appeal.

Further, according to the Swedish Triathlon Federation’s competition rules Section B.ADMINISTRATIVA BESTÄMMELSER, the following holds:

“*10.4 Överklagande*
Tävlingsjuryns beslut kan överklagas hos Svenska Triathlonförbundet. Insänds senast tre dagar efter tävlingen. [...] I övrigt se RF stadgar kap 14.”

In essence, paragraph 10.4 of the Swedish competition rules states that the decision of a competition jury may be subject to an appeal, which will be handled by the Swedish Triathlon Federation. An appeal must be submitted within three days of the competition.

According to the statutes of the Federation, the board of the Federation is the decision body of Svenska Triathlonförbundet and will make decisions in any case brought to their attention. In summary, this establishes the jurisdiction of the board of the Swedish Triathlon Federation as the instance adjudicating the appeal.

2. Applicable rules:

While sanctioned by the Swedish Triathlon Federation, the IM 70.3 Jönköping 2025 race was governed and arranged by Ironman Sweden AB, part of the Ironman Group. It was understood by both parties, i.e. the Swedish Triathlon Federation and Ironman Sweden AB, at the time of sanctioning the event that despite being a race in Sweden the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules would be applied during the race (without exceptions). This was also communicated to the athletes through the event website and the race briefing.

In particular, in the athlete's guide the following information regarding rules could be found:

"*IRONMAN 70.3 Jönköping will be sanctioned by the rules included in the IRONMAN 2025 Competition Rules. For more information regarding these rules, please visit the following webpage: http://www.ironman.com/rules-and-regulations*
The Swedish Triathlon Federation will sanction and enforce the rules that are included in the IRONMAN 2025 Competition Rules."

Thus expressing that the Ironman 2025 Competition Rules would apply in full, without any local exceptions.

The specific rule Section 3.06, "RIGHT OF PROTEST OR APPEAL" in the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules that reads:

(a) The athlete's right to protest or appeal, if any, will be governed and handled by the Event's sanctioning body, and/or the competition rules of the relevant National Federation, [...] ;

is thereby interpreted as concerning only the governance and handling of protests and appeals, i.e. the administrative process of receiving and addressing protests, as well as appeals. While in all other aspects than the administrative process for appeals, it will be the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules that apply.

This means that only paragraphs 10 (and 9, as a consequence of references to the competition jury in paragraph 10), Section B "ADMINISTRATIVA BESTÄMMELSER", from the competition rules of the Swedish Triathlon Federation will be applicable, while **all** rules listed in the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules should still apply.

3. Eligibility of the appeal:

The appeal was submitted through e-mail by the legal representative of Ms. Meißner within 3 days of the competition, which is in accordance with the Swedish Triathlon Federation's competition rules Section B "ADMINISTRATIVA BESTÄMMELSER", paragraph 10.4, regarding appeals.

4. The appeal request:

In the appeal the request of the appellant (Lena Meißner, communicated by her legal representatives) is summarised as follows (Section D of appeal document):
"*In summary, the protest filed by Caroline Pohle must be rejected on multiple grounds:*

1. *It was, in fact, Caroline Pohle who acted in an unsportsmanlike manner, attempting to force our client Lena Meißner out of her lane and even pulling her by the shoulder shortly before the finish line.*
2. *The competition jury could have accessed the relevant evidence had it reviewed the available video material from multiple angles.*
3. *It cannot be proven that Lena Meißner intentionally attempted to obstruct her competitor — as even the jury itself acknowledged.*
4. *On the contrary, she was merely defending herself against unsportsmanlike conduct.*
5. *The jury was not legally permitted to issue this decision for several reasons. The ruling lacks legal basis:*
    - *The alleged conduct by Lena Meißner cannot be substantiated,*
    - *a protest regarding a judgment call is inadmissible, and*
    - *most importantly, the specific penalty imposed was not permitted under the applicable rules.*

For all these reasons, the decision must be reversed, and athlete Lena Meißner must be reinstated as the winner of the IRONMAN 70.3 Jönköping European Championship on July 6, 2025."

Where "the decision" refers to the decision by the competition jury.

5. Legal grounds for the recommendation to approve the appeal:

A) The Head Referee's (HR's) decision

Based on the account of the situation provided by the head referee, Lars Wessing, it is clear that the finish was monitored by the head referee personally. In his statement filed during this investigation, Mr Wessing writes, regarding his preparations and further assessment of the women's sprint finish:

"*[...] To monitor the finish accurately, I assigned TO "Assistant Finish" to observe from the left side of the finish gantry and TO "Chief Finish" from the right side, both instructed to assist in determining the winner. I positioned myself outside the finish area, on the front right side of the gantry, having moved a few spectators to ensure a clear view of the finish line. [...] Since there were no official finish cameras provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) or the timing company, I aligned my personal camera in accordance with this definition, utilizing any available technology as permitted by the rules (2.05.c). [...] The LOC attempted to position tape holders blocking my view of the finish line, but I instructed them to move to the rear to ensure an unobstructed view.*

As the athletes entered the final stretch, only two remained, with athlete #3 slightly in front on the left and athlete #1 positioned slightly behind on the right but was moving at a faster pace. Upon reaching the carpet, they were running side by side, very close together, maintaining their lines toward the narrow gantry. I observed that their arms touched on a few occasions; however, I did not see any intentional physical interference. They appeared focused on the finish line, rather than on each other.

When they crossed the finish line, I estimated that athlete #3 on the left was about 30–50 cm ahead of athlete #1 on the right, based on their torso positions. I consulted with my assistant officials, whose observations and the finish photograph confirmed this assessment. The decision was then communicated to the LOC, which announced the winner.

A few minutes thereafter, I was informed that athlete #1 was contemplating filing a protest. [...] I engaged with photographers who had recorded videos of the finish. However, due to the limited size of their displays, I was unable to determine clear evidence from these recordings. When athlete #1 recovered, less than 15 minutes after finishing, she approached me to file a protest for alleged interference during the finish. She claimed that athlete #3 had forcefully blocked her passing attempt. We discussed the situation, and I conveyed that I had not observed any conduct that warranted ruling. Despite this, she wished to submit a formal protest [...]"

Based on this statement, it can be noted that the head referee took into account all reasonably available evidence, including the registered finish time of the athletes, his own observations, observations of assistant referees, as well as video and photographic material of the sprint finish. Based on this evidence, the head referee made a judgement call, apparently in good faith, concluding that no unsportsmanlike behaviour had occurred, and was able to separate the two finishers based on both observations and photographic evidence. Thus, it is concluded that (1) the decision was taken by a referee authorised to make such field of play (FOP) decisions in this competition, and (2) the decision by the head referee to issue no penalties for unsportsmanlike behaviour, and to sign the result, constituted no legal error, and was not taken due to any bias, malice, bad faith, or arbitrariness. It is thereby to be considered a **valid FOP decision**.

B) The protest eligibility

According to the FOP doctrine, such FOP decisions can only be questioned under exceptional circumstances. In the specific case of the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules, this is expressed through Section 3.06 “RIGHT OF PROTEST OR APPEAL”, paragraph (b):

“*(b) No protest may be filed with respect to matters which were observed by or previously ruled upon by a Race Referee. No person may file a protest which requires a judgment call. A "judgment call," as used in these Competition Rules, means the resolution of a dispute involving one or more material facts that cannot be determined with certainty solely through the production of tangible physical evidence. The term "judgment call" shall include but shall not be limited to a resolution of:*

> *(i) any purported violation of the cycling position foul rules (including alleged drafting violations);*

(ii) allegations of blocking, obstruction, or interference; or
(iii) allegations of unsportsmanlike conduct."

Based on the FOP doctrine, and its specific implementation in the above paragraph, it follows that no protest may be filed against such a valid FOP decision, i.e. the judgement call made by head referee Lars Wessing. Thus, the protest filed by Ms. Pohle should have normally been rejected as ineligible by the competition jury, unless there was a suspicion of any bias, malice, bad faith, arbitrariness, or legal error.

From the text explaining the jury's verdict, it can be read:

"*The competition jury has ruled in favour for the protesting athlete Caroline Pohle. Lena Meißner is considered to have intentional or unintentional blocked the way of Caroline Pohle by reaching her arm over in front of her competitor in a position that is not natural for the direction she is running. That way she has interfered with the athlete coming from behind and that way gained a slight advantaged in the sprint finish.*

The competition jury can not rule if this move was intentional or unintentional therefore the decision is taken not to disqualify Lena Meißner for unsportsmanlike behaviour, but instead, Caroline Pohle is ruled as winner and Lena Meißner as second finisher."

And the response of the chairman of the competition jury, Henrik Brovell, states (when questioned about the process of handling the protest):

"*Process followed the rights of protest or appeal described in the IRONMAN competition rules Page 13, Article III Section 3.06 RIGHT OF PROTEST OR APPEAL and following the Swedish Triathlon Federations competition rules Page 10 section 9 describing competition jury and section 10 describing protest process.*"

The explanation, as well as the response made by the chairman of the jury in the course of this investigation, states no suspicion by the competition jury that the head referee's judgement call was made based on bias, malice, bad faith, arbitrariness, or as the result of a legal error. This leads to ***the conclusion that a legal error was committed by the competition jury, as they have not considered the Ironman Competition Rules Section 3.06 "RIGHT OF PROTEST OR APPEAL", paragraph (b), when accepting the protest***.

C) The jury decision

The investigation has also made inquiries regarding the process of the jury. From the statement of the chairman of the competition jury, it can be noted that a hearing was held and several parties were heard:

"

[...]

- *Hearings are conducted with Head Refeere and both athletes individually*
- *Internal review by the jury of photos and videos from the finish line and discussions around the incident and the decision to be taken.*
- *Both athletes are called back to the jury room where the jury shared the decision and also the reasoning behind it.*

- *Videos and photos considered in the process shared with the athletes together with the formal written decision via email*

”

and several types of evidence were consulted:

“

- *Protest statement form athlete Caroline Pohle - received from the athlete*
- *Video, shot straight from the front by Dojo Productions - collected by the jury prior to the jury meeting*
- *Photo stream shot straight from the front by Getty Images - collected by the jury prior to the jury meeting*
- *Instagram video shared by athlete Lena Meißner during the hearing shot from the left side.*

”

Thus, this investigation has detected no form of bias, malice, or bad faith in the handling of the matter by the jury.
However, the investigation has found a second legal error. In the statement of the jury, provided in response to this investigation, it is made clear by the chairman of the competition jury that the jury applied the following set of rules to make their decision:

“*Page 5, Article 2 section 2.01 (a) Practice good sportsmanship at all times;*
Page 10, Article 3 section 3.01 (a) Penalties
Page 33, APPENDIX A: Common Competition Rule Violations and Penalties - Using unsportsmanlike behavior”

Citing the competition rules, these paragraphs read:

Article II, Section 2.01 (a):
“*Practice good sportsmanship at all times*;”

Article III, Section 3.01 (a):
“*Failure to comply with any of the Competition Rules may result in an athlete being punished with a thirty (30) Second Time Penalty or a (two) 2:00 Minute Time Penalty (for the IRONMAN® 70.3®-branded Races); [...];*
disqualification from the Event, suspension from multiple Events, or expulsion for life from all Events;”

Appendix A, row three of the table:
“*Using unsportsmanlike behavior – DSQ and potential suspension*”

Citing again the jury decision, it should be noted that the jury confirms some form of interference has taken place, and states that an advantage was gained, but concludes that they are unable to judge whether this was intentional or not. Nevertheless, the competition jury still decides to take action, and change the result, overruling the judgement by the head referee:

“*The competition jury has ruled in favour for the protesting athlete Caroline Pohle. Lena Meißner is considered to have intentional or unintentional blocked the way of Caroline Pohle*

by reaching her arm over in front of her competitor in a position that is not natural for the direction she is running. That way she has interfered with the athlete coming from behind and that way gained a slight advantaged in the sprint finish.

The competition jury can not rule if this move was intentional or unintentional therefore the decision is taken not to disqualify Lena Meißner for unsportsmanlike behaviour, but instead, Caroline Pohle is ruled as winner and Lena Meißner as second finisher."

However, adjusting the official results, i.e. by changing the order of the athletes (leaving their finishing times untouched), is not a valid penalty listed by the Ironman 2025 Competition Rules, neither conforming to any rule exception listed in the Athlete's guide. Only time penalties, disqualification, suspension and expulsion are valid penalties that can be applied, according to the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules, which is also cited in the Athlete's guide. In particular, the jury's statement "*The competition jury can not rule if this move was intentional or unintentional therefore the decision is taken not to disqualify Lena Meißner for unsportsmanlike behaviour, but instead, Caroline Pohle is ruled as winner and Lena Meißner as second finisher*." indicates that in fact the jury does not even conclude that unsportsmanlike behaviour has occurred, but still makes a decision to apply a form of penalty (although not listed in the rules) without pointing out what specific infringement has actually taken place. An adjustment of the result has thus been made without legal grounds in the 2025 Ironman Competition Rules, which is clearly another legal error. Hence, even if the protest would have been eligible, and it is concluded that the jury has properly conducted their hearing and investigation, ***the decision of the jury is invalid due to legal error in the application of the Ironman Competition Rules, since revising the results in this manner has no legal grounding in the rules.***

D) The appeal eligibility

The decision by a competition jury is to also be considered a FOP decision, and as such the same exceptional circumstances as mentioned previously must apply, i.e. bias, malice, bad faith, arbitrariness, or legal error, for an appeal instance to be authorised to scrutinize and potentially alter such a FOP decision. In this case, as concluded above, there are **two legal errors** made by the competition jury, and as such that provides a **valid ground for the appeal instance (Svenska Triathlonförbundet) to consider the appeal**, and in this specific case ***to approve the appeal due to a legal error in the jury's decision process.***

6. Summary, in reference to the appeal request:

In relation to the appeal request, the investigation has concluded that points (c.f. section D in the appeal document) 1, 3, 4, and the first bullet under point 5, of the appeal summary:
"

1. *It was, in fact, Caroline Pohle who acted in an unsportsmanlike manner, attempting to force our client Lena Meißner out of her lane and even pulling her by the shoulder shortly before the finish line.*
2. *[...]*
3. *It cannot be proven that Lena Meißner intentionally attempted to obstruct her competitor — as even the jury itself acknowledged.*
4. *On the contrary, she was merely defending herself against unsportsmanlike*

conduct.

5. *The jury was not legally permitted to issue this decision for several reasons. The ruling lacks legal basis:*
    - *The alleged conduct by Lena Meißner cannot be substantiated,*
    - *[...]*
    - *[...].*

”

cannot be considered by the appeal instance, since these require judgement calls that should only be made on the FOP, and they are thus disregarded since no exceptional circumstances (bias, bad faith, etc) have been uncovered to warrant the re-evaluation of the original head referee judgement call.

In relation to appeal summary point 2:

“

1. *[...]*
2. *The competition jury could have accessed the relevant evidence had it reviewed the available video material from multiple angles.*
3. *[...]*

[...]

”

no evidence of bias, malice, bad faith, or arbitrariness in relation to the treatment of evidence has been found when investigating the decision making process of neither the head referee nor the competition jury. Thus it is concluded that the processing of evidence was sufficient.

However, in relation to the appeal point 5, second and third bullet:

“

[...]

5. *The jury was not legally permitted to issue this decision for several reasons. The ruling lacks legal basis:*
    - *[...],*
    - *a protest regarding a judgment call is inadmissible, and*
    - *most importantly, the specific penalty imposed was not permitted under the applicable rules.*

”

the investigation has found evidence of both these ***legal errors***, making the appeal body eligible for altering the FOP decision by the competition jury, and resulting in the recommendation below.

In summary, the recommendation for the board is thus to approve the appeal of Ms. Meißner, and thereby declare the decision of the competition jury invalid and reinstate Ms. Meißner as the winner of Ironman 70.3 Jönköping 2025.

Gothenburg 2025-08-25
Technical committee of the Swedish Triathlon Federation
Lotta Johansson
Eva Blomqvist
Jonas Haglund