

The IAAF General Secretary's opinion on the case occurred during the 8th World Cup in Athletics in Johannesburg

Let's **discuss** about the **false start rules**



The fact that the starter did not hear the acoustic signal in his headphone made the winner \$30.000 better off. The award for the runner-up was exactly that much less.

The false start detecting device emits an acoustic signal to alert the starter that an athlete's reaction time is less than 100/10000ths of a second, in other words, someone's start is false and as such should not be permitted. This is what happened in the 110 m hurdles at the IAAF World Cup in Johannesburg last September. The ultimate winner Falk Balzer's reaction time was 0.031, that of world record holder Colin Jackson 0.150, a difference of about 12 hundreds of a second. Balzer won by the margin of one hundredth. Jackson was obviously unhappy and . . .that was the end of it. One point more for Germany, one less for Great Britain -fortunately not effecting the final standings.

It was easy to understand Jackson's frustration. Under IAAF rules the Starter is the sole Judge of any fact connected with the start of the race. In other words again: no protest is allowed even if thousands in the stadium and millions in front of television see that there is an undeniable violation of a rule. Our sense of justice finds it difficult to accept.

Many insiders and fans raise the question: is it not time to review this rule? At the current level of technology an automatic recall is, no doubt, feasible. It could easily be heard and the words "false start - lane seven" even flash on the scoreboard.

Such an innovation could even well fit into our widely publicised efforts to make our competitions not only fair and just but also more spectacular. Does anyone have a ~~different~~ view? Let's discuss it.