



World Taekwondo Federation
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Presentation of the adidas Electronic Body Protector (EBP) to the WTF Ad Hoc Committee

Dear Mr. President,

As we have already informed you in our letter dated April 24, 2009 we offer you the detailed reasons as to why adidas has been forced to take the unfortunate decision not to participate in the presentation in Lausanne scheduled for May 6, 2009 under the conditions set by the World Taekwondo Federation.

Since the last demonstration in Seoul on January 12th, 2007 with a positive 5:3 vote of the ad Hoc Committee in favor of the adidas EBP we have been trying to establish communication with WTF to agree on joint, basic criteria to be fulfilled.

Since August 2008 we have consistently attempted to attain precise details for the proposed May 6th, 2009 set up and the corresponding criteria to be fulfilled. Also, following the results of the test given to the WTF by the Korean Institute of Science (KISS) we did not receive any concrete information whatsoever concerning what was to be requested by the WTF.

The invitation and test report finally were received on April 22nd, 2009 with a given deadline for confirmation of participation by April 26th, 2009. This can hardly be regarded as serious or realistic and is the reason for this reply with today's date.

The test criteria obviously lack any relevance for the sport of Taekwondo as well as for scientific principles. Furthermore, the submitted test procedure does not correspond to the WTF Competition Rules (WTF CR). In addition, not a single objective technical requirement is mentioned: CE, DIN standard, approval by Technical Control Board (TÜV) or any other similar globally acknowledged and standardized requirements. Also the entire criteria developed by KISS have nothing in common with scientific accuracy and procedure. This has been pointed out by a scientific advisory opinion provided by the renowned sport scientist Prof. Dr. Vieten (Elite-University of Konstanz).

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As an initial reference please find attached his advisory opinion. Besides his University Chair for Sports Sciences and Biomechanics Prof. Vieten is also President-Elect of the “International Society Of Biomechanics In Sports”.

There can be no doubt that the adidas system - *if subjected to relevant test criteria* - would certainly get the approval of the WTF.

Our real and proven reputation are thousands of athletes performing with the adidas EBP during training and competition all over the world.

The adidas Electronic Body Protector has been approved by the ETU [March, 2007] as well as the OTU [September, 2007]. We are in the process of gaining approval from the AFTU, as well.

It is well established and has already demonstrated proof of its functionality during exclusive use in the following important and prestigious tournaments (among over 200 other tournaments):

World & Continental Events

Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF) 2007	Australia	Sydney	17-21-Jan
European Senior Championships 2008	Italy	Rome	10-13-Apr
French-Speaking World Cup 2008	Gabon	Libreville	24-25-May
European Team Championship 2008	Turkey	Konya	24-26 Nov
Oceania Taekwondo Championship 2008	New Zealand	Auckland	6-7-Dec
European Junior Championships 2009	Sweden	Trelleborg	28-31-May
European Cadet Championships 2009	Croatia	Zagreb	3-5-Jul
European Taekwondo Championship under 21 - 2009	Spain	Vigo	6-8 Nov

International Main Events

2006

Prince Albert II Cup	Monaco	Monte Carlo	06-May
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2007

Argentina Open	Argentina	Buenos Aires	16-18-Nov
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2008

Trelleborg Open – European A-Class	Sweden	Trelleborg	9-10-Feb
German Open– European A-Class	Germany	Hamburg	8-9-Mar
Prince Albert II Cup	Monaco	Monte Carlo	31-May
Prince Hassan Championship	Jordan	Amman	07-09-Aug
Russian Senior Championship	Russia	Ulyanovsk	15-21-Sep
Argentina Open	Argentina	Buenos Aires	11-12-Oct
Croatia Open– European A-Class	Croatia	Zagreb	15-16-Nov
French Open– European A-Class	Paris	France	29-30-Nov
Chinese Taekwondo Championship	China		20-21-Dec

2009

Trelleborg Open– European A-Class	Sweden	Trelleborg	14-15-Feb
Dutch Open– European A-Class	Netherlands	Eindhoven	21-22 Mar
German Open– European A-Class	Germany	Hamburg	4-5 Apr
Spanish Open– European A-Class	Spain	Alicante	25-26 Apr
Austrian Open– European A-Class	Austria	Innsbruck	2-3-May

It would strike any competent person as extremely peculiar that such a system could be able to fail a test to determine its suitability for the sport of Taekwondo.

The major reason we have canceled the presentation to the Ad Hoc Committee is the selection of test criteria which have been devised in a way irrespective of the WTF Competition Rules of Taekwondo and lack the simplest indications of points concerning what is factually required in actual practice.

We would like to draw attention to only the most obvious shortcomings of the issued test criteria:

WTF would have expected the adidas system to detect certain hand strikes which according to the WTF Competition Rules are irrelevant to detection. These techniques (Hammer Fist Punch, Knife-Hand Punch, Down Palm Strike, Elbow Strike etc.) are not used in tournaments and are simply purely theoretical. From any viewpoint relevant for the sport there is no necessity for detecting these strikes. On the other hand, many legal techniques which must be detected as they are widely used are nowhere to be found within the test criteria (Front Kick, Side Kick, Push Kick, Bituro Kick). This further strengthens the conclusion that the test criteria are devised

haphazardly. adidas was given the impression that the detecting of a knee kick and the non-distinguishability between a hand strike and a kick would lead to a non-approval decision by the Ad Hoc Committee. The knee kick was always unlawful within Taekwondo rules. It would always have to be detected and annulled by the Referee (Art. 14 Lit. 5/1/h). It is, therefore, not a disadvantage of the adidas system. The criteria that hand and foot techniques have to be differentiated are in fact not a disadvantage of the adidas Electronic Body Protector, but rather an advantage:

For the scoring of hits the differentiation is not needed. Every hit within the legal scoring area, regardless of whether by hand or foot, leads to a point.

This is clearly stipulated in Article 11 paragraph 1 WTF (Competition Rules):

“Article 11: Permitted Techniques and Areas

1. Permitted Techniques

1) Fist technique: Delivering techniques by using the front parts of the forefinger and middle finger of the tightly clenched fist.

2) Foot technique: Delivering techniques by using the parts of the foot below the ankle bone”

So why does WTF demand this differentiation from the adidas system?

Systems with the ability to differentiate between hand and foot like the LaJust system do have significant disadvantages (both, hand and foot protectors have to be used) and pose a high legal risk as well as the possibility of manipulation.

The criteria demanding differentiation between hand and foot leads to the logical conclusion that a sensor device for the foot would be required with all the ensuing problems and risks.

The foot devices would be needed by all athletes in their respective sizes. The situation today with the LaJust system forces these devices to be passed on during a tournament from athlete to athlete with obvious risks.

Injuries incurred with the foot device resulting in contact with blood could lead to numerous infections (Hepatitis, HIV etc.). An athlete infected in such a way could take legal action against the legal entity which “forced” him to wear the foot device. Apart from the damage to Taekwondo itself this possible liability is a severe threat to all. WTF as well as any organizer of a tournament might be sued and damages may be claimed. Against such claims based on an impairment of health no insurance will provide coverage as the passing on of infected foot devices constitutes gross negligence. A limitation of liability is not possible as the responsibility for health and life damages cannot be excluded under any regional legislation.

Furthermore, the correct fit of the foot device for each athlete can not be assured. Even worse, oversized foot devices would give athletes an advantage to score more points than they would usually have, hence the risk of an unfair advantage and manipulation.

In the end, the test criteria were not acceptable, as the only approved system from LaJust was NOT tested against these criteria and was not even approved by the only body which can approve a system: The Ad Hoc Committee. adidas has purchased and tested the LaJust with independent organizations and it would surely fail the test which is now intended to be imposed on the adidas Electronic Body Protector.

We have analysed the other two systems who will participate in Lausanne, too. We respect and honor their investments. However, it is obvious they are not in a position to pass the test under the conditions set.

How can a WTF approved system like LaJust run an official WTF sanctioned tournament (Spanish Open, April 25-26th, 2009) under the personal guidance of you, WTF President Choue, lacking the required prerequisites for such an event? No electronic gloves were used to detect the scoring by punch. Judges were challenged with subjectively evaluating these points manually, a method the system was in fact explicitly to avoid. This represents a total contradiction to the test requirements of the Ad Hoc committee.

The inequality in treating different companies is not acceptable and does not do justice to the wonderful and fascinating sport of Taekwondo which the WTF should act to support in its best manner.

Numerous open questions still need to be urgently answered:

- Final Competence of the Ad Hoc Committee (Approval or Recommendation?)
- Who is responsible for the final decision?
- In case the test is passed, what is the next process?
- Does the system have to be presented to KISS?
- What is the process towards the World Championships?

We hope that this elaboration of the most apparent deficiencies of the proposed test shed light on adidas' decision to not take part in the presentation in Lausanne.


Our deepest concern is that the current practice of the WTF will not lead to Taekwondo being the high level competition sport it aspires to be. By not embracing new technologies to achieve a better and fairer objective scoring for all athletes it defeats its own proposed, noble goals.

As in all other 25 Olympic Sports where adidas is professionally involved by offering top performance products we will stay involved in Taekwondo as well, with increased intensity. The sport of Taekwondo and its value of being an Olympic sport is too valuable as to not undertake all measures to offer and accept support from a trustful global sporting goods player/partner such as adidas. We have been and will continue committing substantial investment in research, development and manpower in the sport of Taekwondo.

Once again, we underline our disposition to offer all our assistance and support in securing this decisive milestone for the sport of Taekwondo.

Kindly let us know in which binding and concrete manner we can attain the short term certification and official approval of the adidas Electronic Body Protector by the WTF. It would also be pertinent for us to receive a schedule of any corresponding future costs to be incurred by adidas versus the WTF.

Yours sincerely,



Frank Maier
Director Olympic & Regional Sports

Appendix:

- Advisory opinion on the Electronic Body Protector (Professor Vieten, University of Konstanz)
- adidas EBP System Overview
- Concept & System Description
- Fight Protocol (Hand & Foot techniques)
- Key Aspects & Benefits of the adidas EBP
- Bluetooth advantages