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HOT OFF THE PRESS UPDATE!! (25th July 2012)

Sascoc bows to CAS's pressure

Johannesburg - South Africa's Olympic governing body says it has been forced to include horse rider [Alex Peternell](#) in the Olympic team, two days after the country's lone equestrian entry was withdrawn.

Tubby Reddy, chief executive of the SA Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (Sascoc), said in a statement on Wednesday that the national Olympic body had been told by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to include Peternell in the eventing discipline for the London Games, which officially opens on Friday.

"This is the second attempt by Peternell to take Sascoc and the SAEF (SA Equestrian Federation) to CAS," Reddy said.

"As we all know, this athlete has been based in the United Kingdom for the last 11 years consecutively and we have now been instructed to include him in the equestrian discipline of eventing.

"It is indeed a very sad day for us as a country to be instructed to select an athlete into Team South Africa against our will, but being a disciplined member of the Olympic movement we have no option but to adhere fully to this decision."

On Saturday, CAS ruled in favour of Peternell, ranked 164th in the world, who objected to Paul Hart's selection on the grounds that Hart was ranked 442nd in the world.

Hart, who left with Team South Africa last week, was withdrawn by Sascoc from the Games.

Reddy said on Monday the SAEF maintained that Hart had been the "correct choice" and a decision was made not to fill South Africa's place in the eventing discipline.

Peternell returned to CAS, again appealing the decision, and again he was successful in his bid for inclusion.

"To Paul Hart, all I can say is that as Sascoc we tried assiduously and to the best of our ability to support you in your quest for Olympic representation and in fact challenged CAS twice in this process, indicating that it is our belief that your selection was in fact a fair process," Reddy said.

"Unfortunately with this ruling of CAS we cannot deviate in any way whatsoever as this ruling gives a clear indication that the selection of Peternell has been made by CAS, and we are now implementing their decision.

"It is with regret that one of our loyal countrymen, Paul Hart has to bear the brunt of this sad situation."

Reddy said a number of comments had been posted on Sascoc's website in support of Hart's inclusion ahead of Peternell.

"This decision is unfortunate as it forces upon the South African public an athlete that they do not necessarily recognise and one that they do not necessarily support," he said.

"While this whole affair is regrettable, for the sake of the Olympic Games it is important to move forward and focus our energies on the job on hand and concentrate on our team's preparation."

www.news24.com

HOT OFF THE PRESS!! (24th July 2012)

South Africa's Olympic governing body SASCOC made a final decision over the allocated eventing spot for London 2012. Two eventers Alex Peternell and Paul Hart met the qualifying standards, but the federation submitted Harts name. Peternell then took the matter to the court of arbitration for sport who ruled that he was the better qualified individual. SASCOC then referred the matter back to the federation to review their nomination.

"The federation maintain that in their opinion Paul hart is the correct choice and therefore have not seen their way clear to submit a nomination for Alex Paternell".

"Given this scenario.....the SASCOC board has decided that it will not utilise the one slot available to the eventing discipline at the Olympic Games."

Our sympathies go out to Paul Hart and the whole team involved that is required to perform at this level. It is sad that they have chosen for no one to represent South Africa in the equestrian disciplines.