

DQ'd on the last turn in the 800m Fly!

"I got DQ'd on the last turn in the 800m Fly! Why would the officials do that to me? It wouldn't have made any difference to the result."

Why indeed! The simple answer is that the reporting official saw the infringement. Having seen an infringement, the official is duty bound to report it which will normally result in a DQ.

It doesn't matter how 'minor' an infraction is, it has to be reported. If officials have to make judgements on how serious an infraction is then we will end up with inconsistent decisions as different officials can make different decisions as to what is serious enough to report. Inconsistent decisions will cause even more angst with swimmers so we stick with a 'literal' reading of the rules.

One bad turn in an 800m or 1500m event may well be inconsequential in terms of the results of most such races. Every turn being illegal is quite likely to affect the result. Should we allow, say, one or even two possible infractions before making a report? In a 100m event one illegal turn means every turn is illegal and clearly has to be reported so having an allowance for infractions in longer events would mean different rules depending on the length of the event. It would also mean that somebody would have to keep track of the count which is clearly impractical so we have no alternative but to report every infraction, irrespective of the distance of the event.

Officials sometimes see infringements which are actually slowing swimmers down i.e. there is clearly no competitive advantage. Those too will be reported as infringements for the same reason. If an official has to make a judgement on whether the infringement has given a competitive advantage then we are again exposed to inconsistent decisions so possible competitive advantage is not taken into consideration.

In a nutshell, DQ's are always frustrating and can seem even worse in a long distance event but the officials have no choice. If they see an infringement they report it without making a judgement as to how serious it might be or whether it might have given a competitive advantage.

Finally, if you have been DQ'd with what you consider to be a minor or irrelevant infringement, don't criticise the officials concerned for it. They are doing an essential job for Masters Swimming and deserve your encouragement, not criticism, for being prepared to do it.

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