



FREERIDE WORLD TOUR JUDGING METHOD

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1. INTRODUCTION

By definition, the term freeride is contradictory to the word competition. Some riders refuse to enter contests because of this definitional clash or simply would prefer to not be judged.

Though for some riders, freeride and competition fit together. They wish to compare themselves to other riders from time to time and have someone decide who produces the best show.

Therefore, we need judges.

When it comes to freeriding, we all know that there is different terrain and different ways to express oneself within this terrain. The goal of this judging system is to allow any style of riding to win on any given day. Whether a rider's strength is steep terrain, big airs, technical tricks or speed, each style should be able to win if on that day, the rider simply showed the most impressive run utilizing his own strengths.

Riders shouldn't have to adapt their riding to a system; the system should be adaptable to the riding.

So how can we create a judging system that is both fair and not restrictive?

Freeriding encounters the same dilemma as other disciplines such as surfing, skateboarding or freestyle skiing/snowboarding have. These respective sports have all gone through their own distinct experiences and it is interesting to see that they all ended up with similar judging systems. Systems with overall impression scores, given mostly by former riders respected by the new active generation, based essentially on emotions rather than mechanical descriptions. This handbook is a work in progress; it will evolve and change to better accommodate the sport and the riders.





Overall Impression

In the past, we tried to have scores for each criteria, (line, fluidity, control, jumps). We either had one judge per criteria or each judge was giving points for each criteria. Points were added together to make a final score. There are multiple reasons why we are using overall impression.

1. With criteria judges, it is much harder for the head judge to keep each judge utilizing the full scale of judging criteria. If the fluidity judge would score all the riders between 4 and 7 and the jump judge between 2 and 9, the jump judge would have a much bigger influence on the final result. The idea of multiple judges is to average the scores in order to be as fair as possible.
2. When judges were each judging all the criteria, the same situation would occur. One criteria would take too much value because it is easier to use the full scale on jumps than it is for control, fluidity or line. It made it difficult for someone riding steep and fast but with hardly any jumps to score well.
3. The fact is, the criteria are linked together. Splitting these elements is more confusing than convenient. A judge has to ask himself at all times how fast, how big and how in control a rider is compared to how steep, how exposed and in what snow conditions the action is happening to make up his mind. **A split criteria structured mind is key to good overall impression judging.**





2. JUDGING FORMAT AND SHEET

2.1. Judging Sheets:

On the judge sheets, next to the riders name is a graduated line from 0 to 10 with marks every tenth, giving judges a scale of 100 different possible scores. The judges will mark their score with a colour pen on the line. These graduated lines are placed on the judging sheet vertically to help a judge who wants to give a 5.4 fine tune his judgement by quickly comparing to other closely related scores. Next to the scoring line is the score box where the judge will write his final score in numbers.

Finally, next to the score box is a comment box where each judge can add comments on line, speed, jumps, crashes...

See Judge's Sheet in Appendix A.

2.2. Scale:

It is very important that judges use the full scale and are not afraid to give high marks to good runs and low marks to bad runs. There is nothing worse for a judge than being stuck and having to judge a whole contest between 4 and 6.5.

2.3. Setting First Scores:

Basically, all the riders will be judged compared to the score given to the first rider down. In order to give the most accurate score to the first rider, judges must prepare themselves accordingly.

They should check the face and analyze possible lines and imagine what could be a very hard or safe line on the face.

They should be informed of snow conditions to know if there will be heavy sluff, perfect powder, crusty snow, ice or rocky sections.

Use forerunners to calibrate judging for the day.

The head judge will make sure that all judges agree on the score of the first rider down and could open a discussion if opinions differ. If the first rider has a terrible run, this scaling of all the judges will wait until the first "normal" run. All other runs from that day will be judged according to the first calibration.

2.4. One Minute Of Judging:

In most cases, judges will get about one minute to come up with a final score. This can be long if all judges agree but very short if changes are needed. The head judge has a key role to interfere only if necessary and with confidence and solid arguments to avoid time loss.



0-10 seconds The first 10 seconds are used by each judge to decide around what score he is aiming, (4 to 5, or 6 to 7). Judges are asked to place the point of their pen on the judging scale around the mark they wish to give. The head judge sees right away whether all the judges agree on the run they saw or not.

If two judges are together and one disagrees, the head judge can ask this judge to rethink his score. If the head judge's own opinion was close to the two judges who agree, he will ask the third judge to bring his score closer to the others. If the head judge's own opinion was close to the judge who stands alone, he could either leave it the way it is or get the three judges into a discussion about the run.

11-55 seconds Without reaction from the head judge, the judge can go on with fine-tuning his judgement with confidence, knowing the other judges have about the same score. The judge will first mark the spot on his graduated line, then fill up his comment box, then compare this run with past close scores and finally mark his final score in the score box.

55-60 seconds the head judge communicates the scores to the competition administrator.

2.5. Validation:

At the end of the contest, the judges will get the overall results and ranking. They have 20 minutes to validate these results and are allowed to change scores if obvious mistakes have happen. This is not the time to discuss if a rider should have been 5th or 6th but to check if someone who should have been ranked around 5th is somehow ending up 13th.

In the case judges can't agree, the head judge has the final call to decide on the final result.

Together with the contest director, the head judge then signs and validates the result list.

2.6. Number of Riders:

It will be a different approach to judge a FWT event with 20 riders and a FWQ event with 90 riders at the start. During a FWT event, a judge should be able to remember all the runs of each rider in detail and judge by comparing all these runs with one another.

For a FWQ event, it is impossible to remember all the runs. Judges will have to remain focused, use their scoring lines to compare close scores and then compare their comment boxes to fine-tune their marks.



2.7. Viewing Equipment:

Judges will use binoculars, a TV screen or their bare eyes to judge. It is important that all judges use the same viewing system to avoid conflicts. If judges use binoculars, they should all have the same power.





3. JUDGES AND HEAD JUDGE ROLES :

3.1. Judges Panel:

Each Freeride World Tour contest will have two sets of judges: one for skiing and one for snowboarding. Each set is composed of three judges and one head judge. The score of the three judges are added together. The head judge doesn't give points. He is there to control and assist the three judges. For a Freeride World Qualifier event it is not to be excluded, however, from having one set of judges (a mix of skiers and snowboarders), which would judge both categories of riders.

3.2. Responsibility:

Judges are expected to act responsibly and respectfully. Athletes take their competitions very seriously. The judge's job is a commitment to quality.

3.3. Consistency:

The most important quality for a judge is his ability to remain focused for many hours in order to give every rider the same chances and a consistent level of judging.

3.4. Discussions:

Discussions between judges should be kept to the strict minimum. The head judge is allowed to speak to individual judges or have all judges take part in a discussion if needed.

The head judge has to check that all judges are working separately and not comparing scores.

If a judge missed an action because he lost the rider for a couple of seconds with his binoculars, he is allowed to ask the head judge what he just missed.

3.5. Fluidity of the Event:

The head judge should keep the event rolling. Speed up the slow judges and keep the event going.

3.6. Scale:

It is the head judge's duty to make sure the judges are using the full scale, especially when the first high score and the first low score should be given.

The head judge ensures that coherence is maintained in the overall judging of each run.



3.7. Judges Briefing:

Judges should be at the competition site at least one day prior to the first possible competition day. On top of the briefing by the head judge and the organizers they will visit the competition site, the judges tent location, study the face and inform themselves about the snow conditions. On FWT competition it is also mandatory for at least the head-judge to be present at the judges tent when the head-guide will, one day prior to the event, ride the face. When possible the head-judge shall ask either himself or one of his judges to ride the face with the head-guide to better feel what the conditions are like.

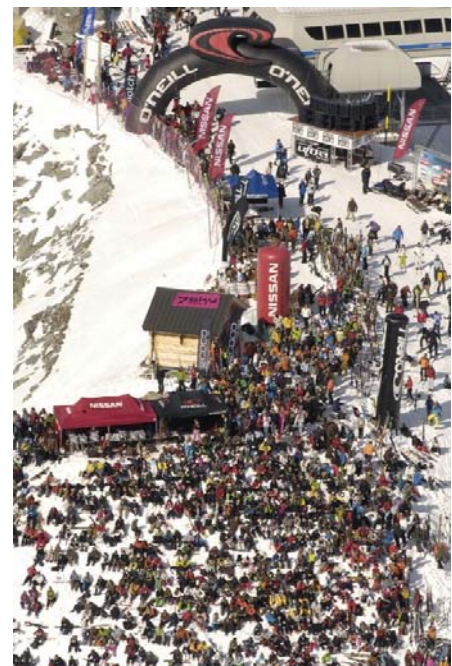
3.8. Judges Debriefing:

The head judge organizes a post-contest debriefing with his team in order to improve their performance in future competitions.

The head judge and the judges stay at the disposal of the riders to answer eventual questions and debrief them about their general perception of the judging for the event.

The head judge stays at the disposal of the media to explain the judging system and comment on riders scores.

The head judge then sends a brief summary of his evaluation of the competition and comments on the judging to the technical delegate of FWT Management SA, which will help improve the judging system in general.





4. JUDGING CRITERIAS AND TIPS:

4.1. Categories:

There are 5 main categories for which the judges have to pay special attention to and for which they will have to answer many questions:

- 1. Line:** Is the line original, easy, steep, has big jumps, well thought out or with much criss-crossing around?
- 2. Fluidity:** Is the rider going fast compared to where he is in the face? Is the rider following his line without hesitations? Does he slow down too much or takes unnecessary stops before jumps? Is he lost and searching for his way?
- 3 Control:** Is the rider in control at all times? Is he in control in the air? Did he control his landings? Did he manage to link turns in steep narrow places or did he slide down?
- 4. Jumps:** How big was the jump? How did the rider enter the jump? What happened in the air? How good did he stick his landing?
- 5. Crashes:** Crashes have to be looked at in an overall impression as well. Here are various examples and how they could be judged:

No Fall Zone:

Judges have to pay special attention to where falls happen. If a rider makes a mistake in a place where he is putting his life at risk because of extreme exposure, he must be strongly penalized. Riders have to understand that they are not supposed to take unnecessary risks in fatally exposed places.

Change of snow:

Riders might crash because they hit unexpected snow condition changes. Judges will have to answer these questions to decide how they will penalize these crashes: "Did it happen in a no fall zone and should the rider have therefore been more careful?" Could he recover without compromising the fluidity of his run? Was it close to the finish line at a place where the rider was only pointing down to the finish?

Stop landings:

Sometimes riders will decide to land in a way that they can stop themselves right away because there's no room in the fall line of the landing. Is this a crash? Judges have to ask themselves: "Did it look intentional? Was there any other way through without stop landing?" to decide whether they penalize it and how much.



Jump landings:

This will always be the trickiest part of judging. How do we judge landings in a fair way without compromising progression of the sport and at the same time not giving bonuses to riders taking risks but not cleanly sticking it?

It is important that riders get the feeling that risk pays only if it is successful when they see their scores. But all crashes shouldn't have the same point consequences.

In order to judge landings in a fair way, here are a few tips to help judges decide on how much they will penalize a landing crash:

- Did the rider lose control in the air or did he just not stick his landing, even though he looked perfectly in position to stick it?
- Did the run lose its fluidity? Could the rider recover without losing his speed, or did the rider come to a complete stop?
- Could the rider recover right away or did he need 50m to get his act together?
- Did the rider tumble head over heels before recovering, how many times?
- Did someone stick that same jump before and he just didn't?
- Was this landing as good as it could have been compared to the snow conditions and jump height?
- Was this crash in a no fall zone?

Obviously, the same backslap or but check will not be penalized the same on a 3m cliff versus a 15m cliff, or landing a 720° spin versus a basic straight jump. Scaling crash penalties is an overall judging that lies inside the overall impression of the run.

4.2. Judge While Watching:

In order to judge a run while they're looking at it, a good tip is to picture a thermometer scale. The temperature (score) goes up or down according to the rider's action on the slope. This way the judge can come up with a score right away at the end of the descent. He can then point at this score on his sheet and start to rethink about what he saw to fine-tune his judgement.

4.3. Time Limit:

Although speed is an important aspect of a run, there will not be a minimum time limit set in order to receive a score. Judges will simply lower their scores if they feel that a rider spent way too much time on the face. Since we will wait until a rider reaches the bottom to send the next one, judges will see the entire run and will be able to give a score.

4.4. Finish Line:

All riders shall cross the finish line in order to get a score. Snowboarders have to cross the finish line with at least one foot attached to their board.



4.5. DNS, DNF, NS:

DNS: A rider inscribed for the event but not showing up at the start will get a DNS (did not start) on the final ranking list. He will not receive any ranking points.

DNF: A rider who can't finish his run in case of injury will get a DNF (did not finish) on the final ranking list. He will not receive any ranking points.

NS: A rider who loses a ski during his run will get a NS (no score) on the final ranking list. All riders who are NS are ranked tied at the last place but are still getting the FWT ranking points of the last tied rider. In an event with 20 riders in which 4 riders lost a ski, the 4 riders are tied in 17th place and all will score the points of 20th place.

You have to have a score to be on the podium. In case we have less than 3 riders with scores, we could have a podium with one or two riders only. If all riders lose a ski during their run, there will be no winner. All the riders will score last position ranking points. (For example, all riders are getting the points of the 7th place in an event with 7 riders at the start whom all lost a ski.)



5. TRAINING METHOD FOR JUDGES

This judging manual also serves as the basis for the training method for the judges, which has been developed together with the Pro Freeriders Board. The objectives of the training method are to improve the overall quality and coherence of the judging system at both the FWT and FWQ level. The judging method will consist of a series of tests for future FWT judges, who will have to judge past years' competition runs and/or do real time judging at competitions to become FWT certified judges.



APPENDIX A: JUDGE'S SHEET



JUDGE:

SKI MEN

BIB	NAME	POINTS										COMMENTS	SCORE	
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		