

Communication No. 2626

SHORT TRACK SPEED SKATING PADDING MEASURES TO INCREASE SAFETY FOR SKATERS

(This Communication will replace ISU Communication No. 2365, as of May 1, 2024)

Taking into account the experience gained since the implementation of ISU Communication No. 2365, the ISU Council has decided to update and extend the specifications and guidelines relating to Rule 280, paragraph 5 on Rink Board Padding systems (hereafter called "Padding") in the ISU Special Regulations for Short Track Speed Skating. The purpose of this update is to establish further requirements and guidelines, mainly in regard to hybrid padding systems, in order to increase the safety of Skaters.

Any newly purchased Padding must fully comply with this ISU Communication. Hybrid Padding purchased prior to the release of this Communication and respecting the requirements of Communication No. 2365 needs to be integrated with the new requirements as outlined in **Section A and B.2**.

A. DEFINITION OF RISK ZONES IN SHORT TRACK SPEED SKATING TRACKS

The purpose of the protective Padding is to provide the best possible safety conditions for Skaters by reducing the risk of injuries when Skaters fall and hit the Padding. The quality and installation requirements for the Padding take into account that different safety measures may be required for different zones of the track. For this purpose, a "**crash zone**" is defined as an area where a fall can cause a significant impact on the Padding.

The track in Short Track Speed Skating can be divided into three zones, as illustrated by the drawing below:

1. Main crash zone, consisting of Main crash zone 1 and Main crash zone 2
2. Secondary crash zone
3. Low-risk zone ("Safe zone")

A.1 Main crash zone

Due to increase of speed and action in Short Track Speed Skating the main crash zone shall be extended on both sides of the track. Compared to the definitions in ISU Communication No. 2365, this extension will be referred to as Main crash zone 2.

Main crash zone 1 is generally considered to be the exit of the curves on both sides of the track. This area basically extends from the middle of the short side of the ice rink (the apex) up to about 10 meters ahead of the starting or finishing line at the center of the track.

Main crash zone 2 covers the first straight part of each curve, ending where Main crash zone 1 begins.

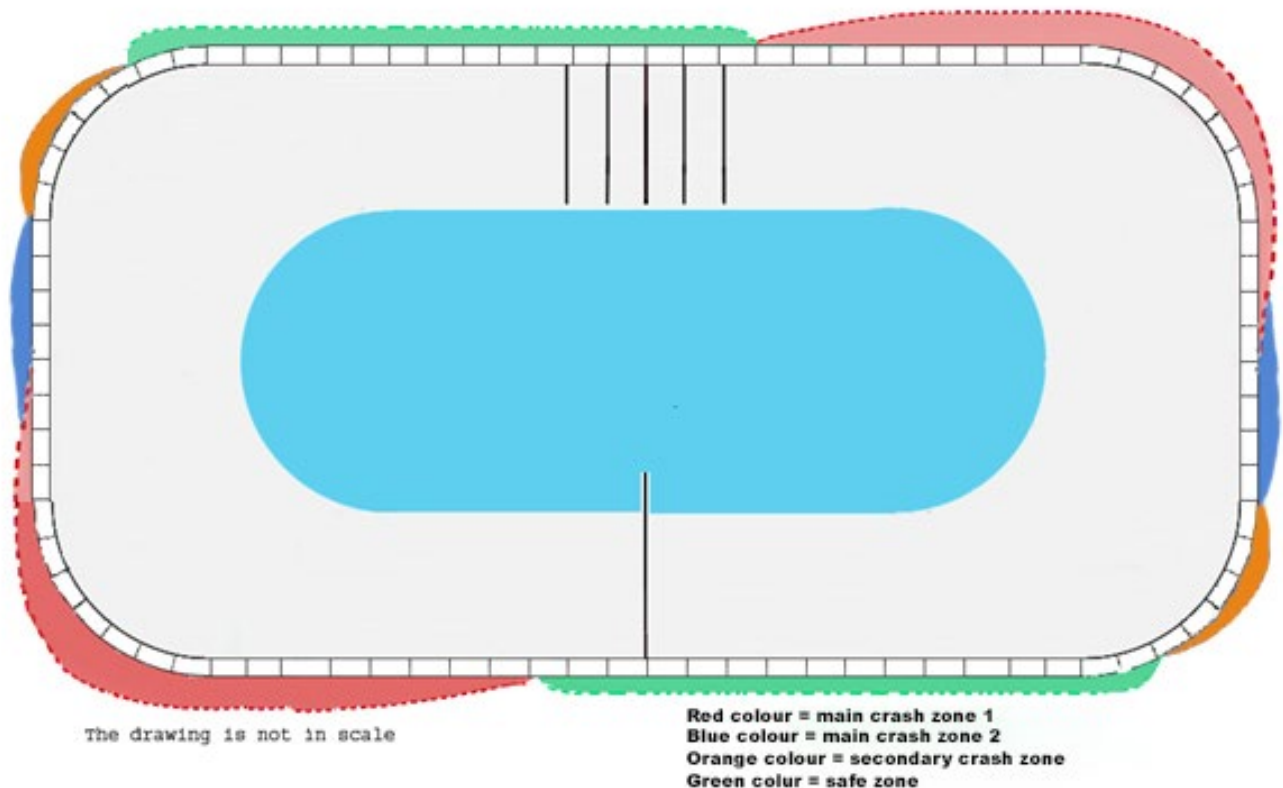
A.2 Secondary crash zone

The secondary crash zone in Short Track Speed Skating is generally considered to be the very first part of the entry of the curves, on both sides of the track. This area covers the curve part and ends with the first straight part where the main crash zone 2 begins.

A.3 Low-risk zone ("Safe zone")

This zone covers all remaining areas of the perimeter, mainly on the straight parts of the track.

The following diagram illustrates the location of the different zones:



B. CLASSIFICATION OF PADDING

Padding can be classified into the following main categories:

1. Moveable Padding
2. Hybrid Padding
3. Traditional rink board Padding
4. Basic Padding

B.1 Moveable Padding

A *Moveable Padding* is a self-standing installation consisting of single pads of a minimum width of 90 cm which are connected to each other through Velcro strips on the front part, as well as by 2-3 safety belts, or an alternative technical solution, on the back side of the pads. No rigid ice hockey boards are in place on the entire perimeter of the ice surface. Posts are fixed to the ground in defined places, depending on the entry and exit doors to access the ice surface. The purpose of the posts and belts is to keep the Padding stable. Upon impact the pads may **move up to 1,5 meters** towards the outside of the ice surface. The purpose of the movement of the padding is to reduce the impact force. It is mandatory to have a smooth surface under the pads to prevent Skaters getting injured as the pads are moving.

A Moveable Padding must fulfil the following minimum technical specifications and requirements:

- a) **Size of the pads:** Height 120 cm; Length 200 cm; Width 90 cm up to 110 cm.
- b) **Inside structure of the pads:** Composed of layers of different foam densities and two or more rows of alternating “open cell spaces” (also described as vacant, internal, air-spaces running from the bottom to the top of the Padding) or similar solutions. “Open cell spaces” shall not exceed half the width of the pad. The front layer of foam shall have a soft structure in order to absorb the first impact force.
- c) **Padding cover:** Composed of a soft (even at cold temperatures), anti-abrasive and water-resistant synthetic material with a vented top or back-edge that, upon impact, can permit immediate release of the air contained in the open cell spaces within the Padding.
- d) **Banner attachment strips:** For easy attachment of commercial banners, soft Velcro strips of 3 cm width shall be placed lengthwise at 10 cm from the top and 10 cm from the bottom of the Padding.
- e) **Material to cover the joint where two pieces of the Padding come together:** An overlapping Velcro strip of at least 15 cm shall cover the connection between pads to present a smooth exterior surface. This Velcro strip must be strong enough and overlap in the direction of skating.
- f) **Placement of the Padding:** A minimum of 20 cm and a maximum of 60 cm of the pads shall rest on a smooth ice surface with no obstacles or sharp edges underneath the pads. To guarantee a smooth ice surface the Padding shall be moved prior to and after each competition day and frozen ice pieces shall be removed with a grinder. A smooth area outside the ice surface shall be guaranteed by either placing a rubber floor (with no sharp edges between the ice and the rubber floor) or any alternative, stable technical solution that allows a fallen athlete to glide and stand up on a protected floor. The rubber floor shall cover the entire zone where the padding moves until it ultimately stops. No moveable parts or moveable floor protections are allowed.
- g) **Positioning of the Padding:** The moveable Padding shall be positioned in such a way that it allows the use of tracks in conformity with the ISU Rules.
- h) **Movement on impact:** On impact, the Padding may move up to 150 cm towards the outside of the ice rink. However, the Padding shall be fixed so as to inhibit a fallen Skater from passing underneath the Padding on impact. The use of posts for entry and exit doors, as well as for the purpose of fixing the Moveable Padding, should be reduced to a minimum. No posts shall be placed in the area of the main crash zone 1. Unless impossible for implementation reasons, posts should also not be placed in Main crash zone 2.
- i) **Padding control tension:** 2-3 belts shall be positioned at different heights at the back side of the Padding. The belts, the purpose of which is to control the movement of the Padding, shall be checked continuously and properly tightened. Alternative technical solutions instead of using belts may be proposed in the overall technical design of the Padding, however the basic function of the movement of the Padding must be guaranteed.
- j) **Repositioning of the Padding:** Dedicated personnel must be available for re-positioning the Padding to its initial position after movement due to impact. A colored external demarcation line shall exactly define the correct position of the Padding.
- k) **Installation of moveable Padding system and venue configuration**
The moveable Padding system must be properly installed in order to provide the highest level of safety for athletes. The installation must take into consideration the venue configuration and ensure that the necessary space is available to allow the proper movement of the Padding in the main and secondary crash zones.

B.2 Hybrid Padding

A *Hybrid Padding* is a system combining a Moveable Padding for the main crash zones with Traditional rink board Padding for the remaining part of the track. The system consists of two different sets of pads, with a minimum width of 90 cm for the pads to be used for the moveable part (in the main crash zones 1 and 2) and with a minimum width of 60 cm for the pads to be used in all other areas around the perimeter of the ice surface.

Rigid rink boards (ice hockey boards) may stay in place except for the main crash zones 1 and 2 where the rink boards are to be removed and replaced by moveable pads to cover those areas in accordance with the drawing in paragraph "A" of this document. The moveable pads shall be connected to the pads covering the remaining rink boards with 2-3 belts on the back side of the Padding or through an alternative technical solution. The moveable pads must be placed on the ice in such a way that an even inner line of the complete Padding is achieved. The pads covering the areas where rink boards remain, shall be installed with the weight of the pads resting on the surface of the ice, and the pads shall be firmly attached to the rink boards. All pads must be connected to each other with Velcro strips in order to provide a stable installation for the complete Padding.

For the moveable part of the system, all the requirements and technical specifications for a Moveable Padding as per B.1 above, must be fulfilled. For the remaining part of the system, as a minimum, all the requirements and technical specifications for a *Traditional rink board Padding* as per B.3 below, must be fulfilled.

B.3 Traditional rink board Padding (without moveable parts)

A *Traditional rink board Padding* consists of pads that are placed directly on the ice surface on the inside of the rink boards. There are no moveable parts in this kind of Padding. The following requirements and technical specifications must be fulfilled:

- a) **Size of the pads:** Height 120 cm; Length 200 cm; Width at least 40 cm for the straights and at least 60 cm for both the main and secondary crash zones.
- b) **Inside structure of the pads:** Composed of layers of different foam densities and two rows of alternating "open cell spaces" (also described as vacant, internal, airspaces running from the bottom to the top of the Padding) or similar solutions. "Open cell spaces" shall not exceed half the width of the pad. The front layer of foam shall have a soft structure in order to absorb the first impact force.
- c) **Padding cover:** The same as for the Moveable Padding.
- d) **Banner attachment strips:** The same as for the Moveable Padding.
- e) **Material to cover the joint where two pieces of the Padding come together:** The same as for the Moveable Padding.
- f) **Placement of the Padding:** The Padding must cover all rink board surfaces completely. The weight of the pads shall rest on the surface of the ice, and they shall be firmly attached to the rink boards. In order to reach the required 60 cm width in the crash zones a double layer of pads may be used.

B.4 Basic Padding

To provide adequate safety for races at a lower level (with limited speed) the following recommendations for a *Basic Padding*, based on the same principles as the Traditional rink board Padding, should be observed:

- a) **Size of the pads:**
 - Height: Equal to the height of the rink boards
 - Length: At least 200 cm
 - Width: At least 20 cm and at least 40 cm, or double pads, for the crash zones.
 - Form: The pads shall not have a sloped or angled outer surface.
- b) **Inside structure of the pads:** Composed of layers of different foam densities. The softer foam shall be applied in the front layer of the pad.

- c) Padding cover:** Smooth texture, low coefficient of friction, and excellent tear resistance.
- d) Placement of the Padding:** The Padding must completely cover all rink board surfaces, with the pads attached to each other. The weight of the pads shall rest on the surface of the ice and they shall be placed perpendicular to and be firmly attached to the rink boards. In order to reach the minimum width of 40 cm in the crash zones a double layer of pads may be used in these areas. The pads must be placed so that the part of the pads with the softer foam is facing the track, and the less soft part of the pads is facing the rink board side.

RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS

The above classification of Paddings specifies different levels of protective measures, taking into account that the protection requirements depend on the performance level of the participating Skaters and the competitive standard of the Competition. The classification reflects that System B.1 is considered to provide enhanced safety features as compared to System B.2, etc.

Rules and guidelines for the selection of the type of Padding to be used for different categories of International Competitions are given below. ISU Members should establish similar guidelines for Competitions organized at national level, considering the competitive level in comparison with the categories of International Competitions listed below.

C. EVENTS

C.1 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

According to the ISU Special Regulations for Short Track Speed Skating, Rule 280, paragraph 5.a), Moveable Padding is mandatory for the Olympic Winter Games. The Padding must comply with the specifications in Section B.1 above. The Padding must have been tested at an independent Testing Centre recognized by the ISU and must have reached the minimum requirements laid down in the technical Annex to this Communication and in Section D below. In addition to successful testing, the Padding shall have been successfully used at one or more ISU Events, or another high-level competition approved by and held under the supervision of the ISU, thereby also proving the quality of its setup and installation. The supplier of the Padding must have a reference list of delivery and installation of Paddings for several venues and several high-level Short Track Competitions with the participation of world class athletes. A letter of recommendation from the ISU for the procurement of Padding for Olympic Winter Games will only be issued if the above conditions are fulfilled.

The selection of the Padding must also take into account venue requirements for the final setup, including adequate space for the moveability of the Padding as indicated in C.2 below, as well as logistical change-over issues, considering that Short Track Speed Skating and Figure Skating will be sharing the same venue. The Organizing Committee of the Olympic Winter Games shall forward all technical drawings, installation details as well as all other specifications to the respective ISU Technical Delegates.

C.2 ISU CHAMPIONSHIPS, ISU WORLD CUP COMPETITIONS, WINTER YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES, ISU JUNIOR WORLD CUP COMPETITIONS

For the above-mentioned Events either a Moveable Padding or a solution with a Hybrid Padding, as per the specifications in Sections B.1. and B.2 above, shall be used. The required outside space for the proper movement of the moveable part of the Padding is 1,80 meters for the main crash zone 1 and minimum 1,30 meters for the main crash zone 2 and secondary crash zone. No fixed posts shall be applied in the Main crash zone 1. However, depending on special circumstances and special Venue configuration as well as the type of Padding to be installed, the ISU may evaluate on a case-by-case basis whether a smaller space and/or the use of posts can be accepted for the Main crash zone 2.

For all such Events a feasibility plan must be developed, including all the technical specifications and solutions necessary to ensure the correct setup of the Moveable pads. All technical details, including a precise drawing of the padding installation as well as floor protections must be communicated to the ISU in due time for the plan to be evaluated and for necessary adjustments to be made.

C.3 OTHER INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS FOR SENIORS AND FOR THE JUNIOR AGE CATEGORIES A AND B

For the above-mentioned Competitions as a minimum a Traditional rink board Padding, as per the specifications in Section B.3 above, must be used.

C.4 INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS FOR THE JUNIOR AGE CATEGORIES C AND D

A Basic Padding as per the specifications in Section B.4 above may be used for this category of Competitions as an alternative to a Traditional Padding.

C.5 SUMMARY OF MINIMUM PROTECTIVE LEVELS

EVENT TYPE	TYPE OF PADDING SYSTEM			
	Moveable Padding	Hybrid Padding	Traditional Padding	Basic Padding
Olympic Winter Games	✓	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
ISU Championships	✓	✓	Not applicable	Not applicable
ISU World Cup Competitions	✓	✓	Not applicable	Not applicable
Winter Youth Olympic Games and ISU Junior World Cup Competitions	✓	✓	Not applicable	Not applicable
International Competitions (Seniors and Junior A+B)	Not mandatory	✓	✓	Not applicable
International Competitions (Junior C+D)	Not applicable	Not applicable	✓	✓

D. REQUIRED TESTING

- a) In the case of new suppliers or newly manufactured pads for planned use as the Padding at Events listed in Section E. below, or at the specific request of the ISU for safety concerns, Padding manufacturers are obliged to send a test pad, which has exactly the same size and identical characteristics as the product to be offered, for testing at an ISU designated testing center. All technical details, such as foam materials used, information on the composition of the pads, detailed drawings, cover sheet specifications and the documentation of any additional tests performed, must be submitted to the testing center with a copy to the ISU.
- b) The manufacturer must cover all related costs for the testing procedure, including costs for shipment, etc. None of these costs will be refunded by the ISU, whether the test is successful or unsuccessful.
- c) The testing center will perform the scientific tests and release the testing data, including a certificate for the test results with reference to the benchmark indicated in the technical Annex to this Communication and notify the manufacturer and the ISU of the results. The ISU accepts no responsibility for this certificate nor any liability for any personal or material damage connected to the subsequent use of the respective Padding.

In the case that the test shows that the ISU requirements have not been reached, the ISU will forward this information to the organizers which intended to use the Padding. In such cases the ISU reserves the right to take action as indicated in section E. below.

- d) The main purpose of the testing is to compare the properties of Padding with a reference testing value, so that the basic quality of Paddings being considered for procurement or use can be verified, and so that manufacturers can use this as guidance for further product development. For ISU Events, the Padding must reach a benchmark value of at least 70 % improvement compared to the test value for the reference mattress (2x20 cm), as specified in the technical Annex to this Communication.

E. Implementation/Compliance of Padding to be used for the Olympic Winter Games, Winter Youth Olympic Games, ISU Championships, ISU World Cup Competitions, ISU Junior World Cup Competitions and other ISU Events

E.1 Event Application and Event allotment process

In order to control and ensure compliance with Sections C and D above, the ISU has established the following procedures during the phases of Event application and Event allotment:

- i) ISU Members applying for ISU Events, or which are involved in an application for the Olympic Winter Games or the Winter Youth Olympic Games, must provide upon application specific information on the Padding that it is planned to install. This information must include detailed specifications for the Padding itself and indications of the technical setup and installation of the Moveable or Hybrid Padding. The respective ISU Members must also confirm in writing that in case of being allotted the Event, they will install Padding complying with the definitions and specifications (as given in Section B above) of the relevant type of Padding for the Event as well as the minimum requirements based on the tests performed. This information will be a key factor for the ISU in the Event allotment process.
- ii) The ISU reserves the right to proceed with inspection visits of organizers which provide inadequate or insufficient information relating to the Padding foreseen to be used and to order a test of the Padding at an ISU designated testing center.

E.2 Actions in cases of non-compliance

In the case of non-compliance and/or unresolved issues, the ISU reserves the right to take the following steps:

- i) If the organizing ISU Member of an ISU Event or of the Short Track Speed Skating events at the Olympic Winter Games or the Winter Youth Olympic Games does not provide the information as indicated in paragraph D above, and/or the ISU has reasonable doubts that the minimum specifications will be met, the ISU may:
 - a) Require the replacement of the planned Padding by a Padding complying with the applicable requirements;
 - b) For ISU Events: transfer an already allotted ISU Event to another ISU Member or to another venue where the requirements will be fulfilled.
- ii) If, despite previous assurances and controls, it is observed shortly before the beginning of an ISU Event, the Olympic Winter Games or the Winter Youth Olympic Games that a Padding which is not in compliance with the above-mentioned requirements has been installed, the ISU Representative (at ISU Events) or the ISU Technical Delegates (at the Olympic Winter Games/Winter Youth Olympic Games) in consultation with the Chief Referee(s) of the Event may:
 - a) Demand, if still possible, that the Padding be replaced immediately by a Padding in compliance with the relevant requirements. If such replacement is possible, training sessions shall not commence or resume until the new Padding is in place. All costs for the replacement of the Padding shall be borne by the Organizer.

- b) Depending on the Padding in place, and for borderline cases only, demand after careful evaluation that the hosting ISU Member or the Organizing Committee provides a written and duly signed statement confirming its full and direct responsibility that the installed Padding ensures adequate protection at the same level as a Padding complying with the relevant requirements. This information must then be forwarded immediately to all participating teams.
- c) Cancel the ISU Event if the Padding which is deemed insufficient cannot be replaced in due time and a statement as per sub-paragraph (ii) b) cannot be obtained and/or accepted. The organizing ISU Member of the cancelled ISU Event will then be responsible for reimbursing all travel and accommodation expenses for all participants as well as all ISU Officials in attendance. This reimbursement obligation includes the ISU contribution payments already made to the organizing ISU Member and the loss of income (TV and/or sponsorship) or any other costs in relation to the cancelled ISU Event. In such case the organizing ISU Member is bound to reimburse to the ISU the total amount within one (1) year.

E.3 Safety precautions

All organizing ISU Members/Organizers shall take all appropriate safety precautions and, in addition, procure sufficient liability insurance covering the competitions. The ISU assumes no responsibility for, or liability with respect to, bodily or personal injury or property damage incurred in connection with sanctioned competitions (see ISU Regulations, Rule 119, paragraph 2 and the responsibility of the Organizers for medical services according to Rule 140, paragraphs 1-4). It is the sole responsibility of the ISU Member/Organizerj to install the padding system properly in consultation with the manufacturer.

April 26, 2024

Jae Youl Kim, President

Colin Smith, Director General