



2025:DHC:1853



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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

% **Date of Decision: 19.03.2025**

+ **W.P.(C) 1413/2025 and CM APPL.6842/2025 (Stay)**

SANCHIT BHANDARI

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Utsav Jain, Ms. Amrita
Kameshwar and Mr. Kameshwar
Srivastava, Advs.

versus

ROLLER SKATING FEDERATION OF INDIA AND ANR

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Dhruv Gautam and Mr. Abhishek
Tongar, Advs. for R-1.
Mr. Ruchir Mishra, SPC, Mr. Devvrat
Yadav, GP Mr. Sanjiv Kr. Saxena,
Mr. Mukesh Kr. Tiwari, Ms. Poonam
Jena Mishra and Ms. Harshita
Sharma, Advs. for R-2/UOI.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SACHIN DATTA

SACHIN DATTA, J. (ORAL)

1. The present petition filed by the petitioner challenges the decision of Roller-Skating Federation of India/respondent no.1 to conduct selection trials for the athletes to participate in the event "Speed Slalom-Senior Ranked Men" under the category of Inline Freestyle skating in the World Games, 2025, scheduled from 07.08.2025 to 17.08.2025 in Chengdu, China [*hereinafter referred to as the 'Chengdu Games, 2025'*].

2. It is submitted by the learned counsel on behalf of the petitioner that the petitioner is the only Indian athlete who qualified and secured a quota for



the Chengdu Games in the aforesaid category while participating in the World Skate Games, 2024, Italy (*hereinafter referred to as the 'Italy Games, 2024'*). It is submitted that extreme prejudice would be suffered by the petitioner if he is subjected to undergo selection trials for the purpose of participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025 when he has already earned his participation by virtue of his performance in the Italy Games, 2024.

3. It is pointed out that the petitioner is a professional skater since 2015, and has participated in the National Championship on several occasions, whereupon he also secured the title of National Champion. The petitioner also represented India in several international events such as World Skate Games 2022, Argentina; ASEAN Inline Freestyle Championship 2023, Singapore; Asian Roller-Skating Championship 2023, China and World Skate Games, 2024.

4. A circular dated 22.01.2024 came to be issued by respondent no.1, setting out a schedule and criteria for selection of skaters to for the Italy Games, 2024 scheduled to be held from 11.09.2024 to 14.09.2024.

5. In April, 2024, for the purpose of participation in the Italy Games, 2024, the respondent no.1 conducted trials at Chandigarh. Pursuant thereto, only two players i.e. the petitioner and one Mr. Jinesh Nanal successfully cleared the trials and were selected to participate in the Italy Games, 2024, under the 'Inline Free Style Skating Speed Slalom Senior Men' category.

6. It is submitted by the learned counsel for the petitioner that the petitioner had to bear his own expense in order to participate in the Italy Games, 2024 and accordingly paid an amount of Rs.2,55,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs Fifty-Five Thousand Only) to the respondent no.1 for the



purpose of his participation.

7. It is brought out, that in the Chengdu Games, 2025, Inline Freestyle Skating category in disciplines of Speed Slalom and Classic Slalom, will be introduced for the very first time. It is also pointed out that the Italy Games, 2024, served as a qualifying event for the Chengdu Games 2025.

8. As per the bulletin titled 'World Skate Games, 2024-Inline Freestyle, Italy', issued by 'World Skate', dated 20.07.2024, a total thirty-six (36) senior athletes in disciplines of Speed Slalom and Classic Slalom were to be qualified for the World Games 2025 from the quotas allocated to the following events:

- a. The World Skate Games 2024, Italy (24 Quotas) [the '*Italy Games, 2024*']
- b. Host Country (China) (8 pre-allocated quotas)
- c. The World Games Series – Hong Kong (4 Quotas)

Thus, for participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025, twenty-four (24) quotas were to be filled up based on participation in the Italy Games, 2024. Out of these, six best senior ranked men were to be selected in the relevant category i.e. "*Speed Slalom - Senior ranked men*" from amongst participants in the Italy Games, 2024.

The aforesaid bulletin issued by the 'World Skate' reads as under:

"THE WORLD GAMES CHENGDU 2025 (TWG2025) QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

At the World Games Chengdu 2025 Inline Freestyle will make its first appearance at this prestigious Games' program. Qualifying categories are Speed Slalom and Classic Slalom.

The thirty-six (36) Senior athletes selected to participate in TWG Chengdu



2025 will earn their quotas through any of the following:

- A. The World Skate Games - Italy 2024 will grant twenty-four (24) quotas in September 2024.*
- B. The World Games Series - Hong Kong will grant four (4) quotas in October 2024.*
- C. Host Country (China) has eight (8) pre-allocated quotas.*

Each National Federation will be able to obtain a maximum of eight (8) quotas:

- Speed Slalom - Two (2) female quotas*
- Speed Slalom - Two (2) male quotas*
- Classic Slalom - Two (2) female quotas*
- Classic Slalom - Two (2) male quotas*

Athletes' selection will be as described below:

A. The World Skate Games - Italy 2024

This World Championship is the qualifying competition to select the first twenty four (24) quotas from the participant National Federations (except China). They will be selected from the final ranking of each of the four following events:

- Speed Slalom - six (6) best Senior ranked women**
- Speed Slalom - six (6) best Senior ranked men**
- Classic Slalom - six (6) best Senior ranked women**
- Classic Slalom - six (6) best Senior ranked men**

** In case a National Federation has already completed its country quota, the next skater in the ranking -from a different country- will earn the slot. The obtained quotas are allocated to National Federations, which shall select and register athletes by March 30th 2025. Further information regarding the registration process will be shared at a later stage.*

*B. *The World Games Series - Hong Kong, October 2024*

The World Games Series is a new event from TWG and the first ever will take place in Hong Kong in October 2024. Further information will be shared in the next bulletin.

This Event is the second qualifying competition to select the remaining four (4) quotas for the World Games Chengdu 2025. The first place of each



discipline will earn the quota for one's National Federation:

- Speed Slalom Women Winner (1).
- Speed Slalom Men Winner (1).
- Classic Slalom Women Winner (1).
- Classic Slalom Men Winner (1).

C. Host Country

China, as the host country, will have eight (8) allocated quotas: two (2) men / two (2) women in Speed Slalom and two (2) men / two (2) women in Classic Slalom.”

9. It is pointed out that performance in the Italy Games 2024 was to serve as a qualification criterion for the purpose of participation in the Chengdu Games 2025. It was clearly mentioned that thirty-six (36) senior athletes “will earn their quotas” based on performance in the Italy Games.

10. As a matter of fact, in the Italy Games 2024, the petitioner secured tenth rank amongst all the athletes participating in ‘Speed Slalom - senior ranked men’. The ranking list is reproduced as under:



**Speed Slalom
Senior Men
Results**

Ranking	Name	Ctry	Q BT	KO BT	Remark
1	Amirmohammad SAVARI JAMALOUJEI	IRI	4,111	4,645	Gold
2	FU Yu	CHN	4,104	4,598	Silver
3	ZHANG Hao	CHN	4,065	4,617	Bronze
4	Reza LESANI	IRI	3,832	4,663	
5	Sobhan KHOSRAVANI	IRI	4,100	4,758	
6	WU Su Yu En	TPE	4,112	4,911	
7	YANG Kai Wei	TPE	4,124	4,875	
8	Parnthep RUJIREK	THA	4,370	4,668	
9	YU Jun Yan	CHN	4,073	4,681	
10	Sanchit BHANDARI	IND	4,232	5,495	
11	Paul MENET-CHAO	FRA	4,242	5,068	
12	CHENG Yu Hsiang	TPE	4,292	4,848	
13	Nanal Jinesh SATYAN	IND	4,316	5,251	



14. In the circumstances, the selection trials, scheduled by the respondent no.1 are yet to begin.

15. It is the case of the petitioner that there has been gross violation of petitioner's rights guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution of India inasmuch as the action of the respondent no.1 in subjecting the petitioner to fresh/ repeated selection trials, despite securing a quota by virtue of his performance in the Italy Games, 2024 is wholly arbitrary and contrary to the qualification criteria set out in the aforesaid bulletin issued by 'World Skate'. It is submitted that the said bulletin sets out a fair and judicious methodology for selection of athletes for the purpose of participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025. It is urged that subjecting the petitioner to another round of selection trials, would be onerous and prejudicial to the petitioner, especially considering the nature of sport. It is further submitted out that it was the respondent no.1's own understanding that the best performing Indian athletes in Italy Games, 2024 would be given a chance to represent India in the Chengdu Games, 2025.

16. Learned counsel of the petitioner also draws attention to the fact that apart from performance in the Italy Games, 2024, participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025 could also be earned by virtue of participation in the World Games Series, Hong Kong, 2024 (*'hereinafter referred to as Hong Kong Games, 2024'*). However, for the purpose of Hong Kong Games, 2024, no selection trial was conducted by the respondent no.1. It is submitted that, instead, the second-best performing athlete from India in the Italy Games, 2024, i.e., Mr. Jinesh Nanal was automatically selected to



represent the country in World Games 2025.

17. In the circumstances, learned counsel for the petitioner seeks that the respondent/s be directed to register the petitioner for participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025 in “Speed Slalom – Senior Ranked Men” category. It is further prayed that since the petitioner has already qualified for participation in the said event by virtue of his performance in the Italy Games, 2024, the respondents be refrained from undertaking any fresh selection trials for the purpose of participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025.

18. On the other hand, learned counsel for the respondent no.1 submits that the respondent no.1 being the National Sports Federation is responsible for conducting selection trials for all international events/national championships and was also responsible for conducting the selection trials for the participation in Italy Games, 2024.

19. It is further submitted that five months have already passed since the Italy Games, 2024 were held and given the time gap between the aforesaid event, and the ensuing Chengdu Games, 2025, a fresh trial would help to evaluate the latest performance and select the best possible athlete to represent the country.

20. In the counter-affidavit, filed on behalf of respondent no.1, a tabular chart has also been set out seeking to compare the performance of the petitioner with the other athlete (*viz.* Mr. Jinesh Nanal), who had participated along with the petitioner at the Italy Games, 2024. The said table is reproduced as under:

Championship	Jinesh Nanal	Sanchit Bhandari (petitioner)
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Current World Ranking (Speed Slalom Senior Ranked Men)	10 th	63 rd
62nd National Championships held in December 2024	1st Place (Gold Medal)	3rd Place (Bronze Medal)
World Skate Games held in September 2024	13 th Place	10 th Place
61st National Championships held in December 2023	1 st Place	No Medal
19th Asian Championships held in October 2023	8 th Place	12 th Place
Asian Games held in October 2023	Qualified	Not Qualified

21. Learned counsel for the respondent no.1 further submits that no prejudice would be caused to the petitioner if the petitioner participates in the selection trials proposed to be held by the respondent no.1. In case the petitioner emerges as the best athlete in the proposed selection trials, he will necessarily have the right to participate in the ensuing Chengdu Games, 2025.

22. It is refuted that the petitioner has already earned his participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025 by virtue of his participation in the Italy Games, 2024. Reliance is placed on a communication dated 01.10.2024, issued by the World Skate body to contend that the performance of the petitioner in the Italy Games, 2024 resulted in the country gaining a quota rather than the petitioner being selected for participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025.

23. Mr. Ruchir Mishra, learned counsel for Ministry of Sports states that it is for the concerned federation to take a decision as regards the selection process which has to be followed for the purpose of selection of athletes in an international event.

24. Having considered the contentions of respective counsel for the



parties, I find merit in the contention raised on behalf of the petitioner. The reasons are as under:

(i) The petitioner earned a berth for participation in the Italy Games, 2024 on account of his performance in the selection process for the same, held by the respondent no.1 in April, 2024 at Chandigarh. Further, it was on account of sheer dint of performance of the petitioner in the Italy Games, 2024 that he earned a berth/quota for himself and for the country in the Chengdu Games, 2025. But for the performance of the petitioner in the Italy Games, 2024, there would have been no scope for participation of any athlete from India in the Chengdu Games, 2025. In fact, as noticed, the petitioner invested significant resource of his own for the purposes of participation in the Italy Games, 2024. Thus, it would be wholly unfair, at this stage, after the petitioner has excelled in the Italy Games, 2024 and earned a slot for himself and for the country, to subject the petitioner to another round of selection trials where the petitioner would be competing with those athletes who did not perform as well as the petitioner in the selection trials held in April, 2024 (prior to the Italy Games, 2024) and in the Italy Games, 2024.

(ii) The petitioner has already undergone the rigors of participating in the selection process leading up to the Italy Games, 2024. From the bulletin issued by 'World Skate', it is evident that the performance in the Italy Games, 2024 was to serve as a spring board for participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025. The said bulletin records in unmistakable terms as under:



“The *thirty-six (36) senior athletes selected to participate in TWG Chengdu 2025 will earn their quotas through any of the following:*

A. *The World Skate Games - Italy 2024 will grant twenty-four (24) quotas in September 2024.*

B. *The World Games Series - Hong Kong will grant four (4) quotas in October 2024.*

C. *Host Country (China) has eight (8) pre-allocated quotas.*

Each National Federation will be able to obtain a maximum of eight (8) quotas:

- *Speed Slalom - Two (2) female quotas*
- *Speed Slalom - Two (2) male quotas*
- *Classic Slalom - Two (2) female quotas*
- *Classic Slalom - Two (2) male quotas”*

Thus, the Italy Games, 2024 were virtually in the nature of a ‘selection trial’ to select 24 out of the 36 athletes for the purpose of participation in Chengdu Games, 2025. The petitioner, being one of the athletes from India, based on his performance in the Italy Games, earned his participation in Chengdu Games, 2025. In these circumstances, there is inherent prejudice if the petitioner is compelled to be subject to another round of selection process. This is especially so since, as already noted, there would be have been no occasion for any athlete from India to participate in the Chengdu Games, 2025, but for the petitioner’s performance in the Italy Games, 2024.

(iii) Just as participation in the Italy Games, 2024 serves as a spring board for participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025, the participation in the Hong Kong Games, 2024 was also to serve as an avenue for earning a berth in the Chengdu Games, 2025. This is also evident



from the above extracted portion of the bulletin issued by “World Skate”.

For the purpose of participation in the Hong Kong Games, 2024, there was never any doubt that it would be the second best performing Indian athlete in the Italy Games, 2024, who would be entitled to participate in the Hong Kong Games, 2024. In fact, learned counsel for the respondent points out that the invitation for the Hong Kong Games, 2024 came in the name of the said athlete. The same demonstrates that in terms of the aforesaid bulletin of “World Skate” there was no scope for the respondent no.1 to hold any selection trial for the purpose of determining which Indian athlete would participate in the Hong Kong Games, 2024. Likewise, at this stage, there is no scope for conducting a fresh selection trial process for the purpose of participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025.

(vi) Learned counsel for the respondent has sought to emphasize that the ranking of the other Indian athlete who participated in the Italy Games, 2024 (Mr. Jinesh Nanal) is much better than that of the petitioner and therefore, the said athlete as also other Indian athlete/s deserves to get a chance for being considered for participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025. The said argument is fallacious. It is the matter of record that the petitioner’s selection for participation in Italy Games, 2024 was not gratuitous but was based on performance in the selection trials that were held prior to the Italy Games, 2024. Further, the petitioner opened the door for his (and thereby the country’s) participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025 on account of his



performance in the Italy Games, 2024. The said door cannot be shut to the petitioner at this stage, nor can the petitioner be expected to compete with the very athlete/s who he out-performed in the Italy Games, 2024. It would be quite incongruous to allow other athletes (including the second best performing Indian athlete in Italy Games, 2024) to vie for the berth/quota earned by the petitioner for the Chengdu Games, 2025. It would also be in the teeth of the stipulation laid down in the aforesaid bulletin of “World Skate” which contemplates that “selection” of senior athletes for the purpose of participation in the Chengdu Games, 2025, and thereby earning of country quota/s, would be based on performance in the Italy Games, 2024.

25. The petitioner having out-performed the other Indian athlete/s, who participated in Italy Games, 2024 (Mr. Jinesh Nanal), it is futile to contend that the said athlete (whom the petitioner outperformed in the Italy Games, 2024) enjoys a higher ranking, as compared to the petitioner.

26. A judgment of a Coordinate Bench of this Court in *Sushil Kumar vs. Union of India & Ors.* 2016: DHC: 4734 has recognized the right of an athlete to represent the country in the event for which the said athlete has secured the berth, by virtue of his/her performance in the qualifying games. It was held that same is neither perverse nor contrary to the National Sports Code of India, 2011 (hereinafter “NSCI, 2011”). In the said case, the Court was concerned with a situation where respondent no.5 therein had secured berth for India in the Olympic Games by virtue of his performance in the World Championship held prior thereto.



27. The stand of the petitioner in *Sushil Kumar vs. Union of India & Ors* (supra), was identical to the stand of the respondents in the present case and is recorded in the judgment as under:-

“3. Amit Sibhal, learned senior counsel for the petitioner stated that as a wrestler represents the country in international events, once the wrestler attains the qualifying position in the tournament, the wrestler merely secures a berth for the country and not for himself. He contended that the National Sports Development Code, 2011 [for short “Code, 2011”] stipulates that trials have to be conducted for selecting athletes to represent India in major international sporting events. Consequently, according to him, even after the berth had been secured, a trial has to be held.”

28. The Court in *Sushil Kumar vs. Union of India & Ors* rejected the aforesaid contention, *inter alia*, holding that although the NSCI 2011 gives flexibility to a concerned National Sports Federations to decide the process of selection and when to hold a trial, it would be reasonable and fair to select the respondent no.5 therein, to represent India in the Olympic Games in the concerned sporting event. In this context it was, it was specifically noticed as under:-

“47. The fact that India would not have had a berth in the 74 Kg Free Style Wrestling, had the respondent no.5 not won a Bronze in the World Championship September 2015 is crucial.”

It was also specifically noticed as under:-

“PRACTICE THAT A WRESTLER WHO HAS EARNED THE BERTH FOR THE COUNTRY WILL REPRESENT IT, IS NEITHER PERVERSE NOR CONTRARY TO CODE, 2011.

49. The selection procedure followed by the respondent no.4-WFI i.e. the wrestler who has earned the berth for the country will represent the country, does not show any element of perversity or anomaly in the instant case as the said practice has been followed by respondent no.4-WFI uniformly and consistently.



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50. *The said practice cannot also said to be contrary or in violation of Code, 2011.”*

29. In the present case, the concerned NSF/respondent no.1 has taken a converse position *viz.* that it should be allowed to conduct fresh trial even though it is the petitioner who has earned the berth for India in the Chengdu Games, 2025. This court is unable to overlook the untenability and irrationality thereof, in view of the facts and circumstances set out hereinabove.

30. In the circumstances, the present petition succeeds; the respondents are restrained from conducting any further selection trials for the purpose of participation in the World Games 2025, Chengdu, China in the “Speed Slalom – Senior Ranked Men” category. Further, the respondent no.1 is directed to register the petitioner for the purpose of participation in the World Games, 2025 Chengdu, China in the concerned event.

31. The petition is disposed of in the above terms. Pending application also stands disposed of.

SACHIN DATTA, J

MARCH 19, 2025/cl/sl