

MARATHON RUNNERS BANNED 6 MONTHS FOR 'INTENTIONAL' BIB-SWAPPING

7 APRIL 2023, MONACO: The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has banned Camilo Santiago of Spain and Ivan Zarco Alvarez of Honduras for six months each - from 9 February 2023 to 8 August 2023 - for violating the World Athletics' Integrity Code of Conduct (the Code) and the World Athletics' Manipulation of Sports Competitions Rules (MSC Rules) relating to a well-publicised incident at the 2021 Itelligence Citylauf Invitational Marathon in Dresden, Germany on 21 March 2021.

The day after the event, the Spanish running website, Soy Corredor, published an online article stating that Santiago competed in the marathon wearing Zarco's bib. On 23 March 2021, Santiago tweeted an apology, noting he had no malicious intent and that Zarco suggested he (Santiago) use his (Zarco's) bib to run the marathon as Zarco was suffering from plantar fasciitis. That same day, Zarco contacted World Athletics requesting the marathon result be attributed to Santiago.

Santiago and Zarco told the AIU investigation that Santiago's bag (containing his bib number) went missing just before the race and they explained to the race organisers that Santiago would run in Zarco's bib. Meanwhile, marathon organisers said: "No official would have indicated that an athlete could swap race numbers...and there were race-number printing facilities at the starting point of the marathon."

In presenting its case, the AIU highlighted the following: "Mr Zarco's and Mr Santiago's accounts of events were directly inconsistent with other evidence and did not demonstrate an honest attempt to correct the Marathon results, particularly in circumstances where Mr Zarco must have known that the result in question would have been a Honduran national record...The fact that Mr Zarco and Mr Santiago swapped bibs at all and were caught out in a public forum demonstrates that their conduct was unreasonable and it brought the sport into disrepute...The bib swap was an intentional arrangement for the purpose of altering Mr Zarco's Marathon results."

Both athletes signed admission and acceptance forms stating they breached the following Integrity Standards in the Code: Honesty (Rule 3.3.1), Maintain Integrity of Competition (Rule 3.3.4), Failure to Report (Rule 3.3.15), and Failure to Protect Reputation (Rule 3.3.17).

Additionally, they admitted breaching MSC Rule 4 (Manipulation of Competitions):

- 4.1 An intentional arrangement, act or omission aimed at an improper alteration of a result or the course of an Event or Competition in order to remove all or part of the unpredictable nature of the Event or Competition with a view to obtaining an undue Benefit for oneself or for others;
- 4.2 Inducing, instructing, facilitation or encouraging an Applicable Person to commit a violation of this Rule 4.

In arriving at the appropriate penalty, the AIU took into account the low level of international competition in which Zarco and Santiago compete. Further, the athletes' early admission allowed them to benefit from a lesser period of ineligibility of six months, as opposed to the one-year period of ineligibility which the AIU would have sought before a Disciplinary Tribunal.

Details here: <https://bit.ly/decision-santiago>

Details here: <https://bit.ly/decision-zarco>

About the Athletics Integrity Unit

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the World Athletics that manages all integrity issues - both doping and non-doping - for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.

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