
(2026) 03 DEL CK 0547

In the Delhi High Court

Case No : Letters Patent Appeal No. 104 Of 2026, Civil Miscellaneous Application Nos. 14068, 14069, 14070 Of 2026

President, Indian Olympic Association & Anr.

APPELLANT

Vs

Ski And Snowboard India & Anr

RESPONDENT

Date of Decision : 23-03-2026

Acts Referred:

National Sports Governance Act, 2025 — Section 2(p), 3, 4(4), 5, 16

National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026 — Rule 18

Citation : (2026) 03 DEL CK 0547

Hon'ble Judges : Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, CJ;Tejas Karia, J

Bench : Division Bench

Advocate : Gopal Jain, Aashita Khanna, Aanya Agarwal, Vidushpat Singhania, Neha Singh, Udit Dedhiya, Apurva Sachdev, Preyansh Gupta, Amit Rana

Final Decision : Disposed Of

Judgement

Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, CJ

1. Heard Shri Gopal Jain, learned senior counsel representing the appellants, Ms. Neha Singh, learned counsel appearing for respondent No.1 and Shri Udit Dehiya, learned special panel counsel representing the respondent No.2 and have perused the records available before us on this Letters Patent Appeal.

2. This Intra-Court appeal seeks to challenge the judgment and order dated 10.02.2023, passed by the learned Single Judge whereby the W.P.(C) No. 3418 of 2025 instituted by the respondent No.1 has been allowed, and the Office Order under challenge therein dated 13.10.2023 has been quashed.

At this juncture itself, we may state that the Office Order dated 13.10.2023, that was under challenge in the proceedings of the writ petition before the learned Single Judge, was passed by the appellant No.1 –President, Indian Olympic Association whereby an ad hoc Committee comprising of four members was appointed to manage the affairs of the respondent No.1–Ski and Snowboard

India, including selection of the athletes and making entries for participation of sportspersons in international events. The said ad hoc Committee was also mandated to conduct the elections of the executive committee of the respondent No.1.

3. The learned Single Judge, while allowing the writ petition by the impugned judgment and order has held that the respondent No. 1 is an independent body registered as a society under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960, and that the appellant did not have any jurisdiction or authority or power to replace the executive committee of the respondent No.1 by appointing an ad hoc committee to manage its affairs.

4. By the impugned order, the learned Single Judge has also observed that as a result of quashing of the Office Order dated 13.10.2023, the ad hoc Committee stood dissolved with immediate effect. The learned Single Judge has also appointed a retired Judge of this Court as the Returning Officer to draw up the list of eligible members and thereafter conduct the election of the respondent No.1, with a further direction that the exercise relating to conducting the election shall be concluded expeditiously and in not later than a period of 12 weeks.

5. The impugned judgment and order passed by the learned Single Judge has been challenged by the appellants primarily on two counts—(a) Article 17.5 of the Rules and Regulations of the appellant permits appointment of an ad hoc Committee of the respondent No.1 and (b) the direction issued by the learned Single Judge for conducting the election of the respondent No.1 by the impugned order is contrary to the provisions contained in the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (hereinafter referred to as 'Act, 2025') and the Rules made thereunder, namely National Sports Governance (National Sports Bodies) Rules, 2026 (hereinafter referred to as 'Rules, 2026').

6. It has been argued by learned senior counsel for the appellant that Article 17.5 of the Rules and Regulations of the appellant—Indian Olympic Association vests ample power with the appellant to appoint an ad hoc Committee for managing the affairs of any sports federation and further that the ad hoc Committee was appointed by the Office Order dated 13.10.2023 having regard to certain differences within the respondent No.1 and on the basis of various complaints received against it. Article 17.5 of the Rules and Regulations of the appellant is extracted herein below:

"17.5 Other Commissions/Committees

All required Commissions/Committees will be formed by the President to be ratified by the Executive Council or by the Annual / Special General Meeting."

7. So far as the submission of learned senior counsel for the appellant that Article 17.5 of the Rules and Regulations of the appellant, vests power and authority with the appellant to appoint ad hoc Committee, we may observe that such argument is highly misconceived and is based on a complete misreading of

the provisions contained in Article 17.5.

8. The Indian Olympic Association is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act whose affairs are governed by the provisions contained in the memorandum of association and the rules and regulations framed by the Indian Olympic Association. We may also note that the rules and regulations of the Indian Olympic Association have been framed by the Association for the purposes of governing its own affairs, and it is only in this context that the provisions contained in Article 17.5 have to be interpreted and understood. Article 17.5, as quoted above, states that all required Commissions/Committees will be formed by the President to be ratified by the Executive Council or by the Annual /Special General Meeting. In our opinion, the Commissions and Committees referred to in Article 17.5 refer to the Commissions and Committees of the Indian Olympic Association and by no stretch of imagination, the phrases 'Commissions' and 'Committees' occurring in the said Article can be interpreted to bring in its fold the Committees in relation to any other society or body. The Commissions and Committees referred to in Article 17.5 are necessarily to be the Commissions and Committees formed by the President of the Indian Olympic Association to transact certain businesses assigned to such Commissions/ Committees of the Indian Olympic Association alone and not those of any other body or society like the respondent No.1. Such an argument thus, is absolutely untenable, which merits rejection.

9. The second argument made by learned senior counsel for the appellant to impeach the impugned judgment and order passed by the learned Single Judge is also absolutely misconceived for the simple reason that the respondent No.1 is not a National Sports Federation recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, as has been admitted by learned counsel representing the Ministry. It is not even a National Sport Body in terms of Section 3 of the Act, 2025 and, accordingly, the provisions of the Act, 2025 are neither applicable to the respondent No.1; nor the affairs of the respondent No.1 can be said to be governed by the Act, 2025 unless it gets itself established as a National Sports Body in terms of the requirement of the provisions of the Act, 2025. It is also to be noticed that prior to enactment of the Act, 2025, the affairs relating to National Sports Federations were governed by the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Code, 2011') where any body or society to be termed as a National Sports Federation was required to be recognised by the Ministry. As already stated above, learned counsel for the respondent No. 2 has categorically stated at the bar that the respondent No.1 is not recognised as a National Sports Federation even under the old regime of the Code, 2011.

10. The fact that the respondent No.1 was not a recognised National Sports Federation under the provisions of the Code, 2011, has been recorded by the learned Single Judge in the impugned judgment and order, and the said fact is not disputed by the learned counsel representing the Ministry.

11. Learned senior counsel for the appellant has referred to certain provisions of the Act, 2025 and the Rules framed thereunder and has stated that, the direction issued by the learned Single Judge by passing the impugned judgment and order for holding the election, creates a situation of impossibility for the reason that unless and until in fulfilment of requirement of Rule 18 of Rules 2026, the respondent No. 1 amends its by-laws in conformity with the provisions of the Act, 2025, no such elections of the respondent No.1 could be ordered to be held. It has further been argued by learned senior counsel for the appellant that Section 4(4) of the 2025 Act provides that the mode of election to different bodies, committees and offices etc., shall be such as may be prescribed. He has also drawn our attention to Section 16 of the Act, 2025 which provides that on the recognition of the National Sports Board (to be established under Section 5 of the Act, 2025), the Central Government shall notify a National Sports Election Panel which will conduct the elections and since till date Section 16 of the Act, 2025 has not been notified to come into force as such, in absence of National Sports Election Panel to be established under Section 16 of the Act, 2025, no elections can be held. In this view, the submission is that the direction issued by the learned Single Judge for holding the elections of the respondent No.1 is not only untenable, but if the same is allowed to be held, it will be in infringement of the aforesaid provisions of the Act, 2025.

12. The aforesaid submission has been considered by us only to be rejected outrightly for the following reasons:

(a) Admittedly, the respondent No.1 is not a recognised National Sports Federation or a National Sports Body either under the provisions of the Code, 2011 or the Act, 2025 and, therefore, the question of applicability of the Act, 2025, over the affairs of the respondent No.1 does not arise at all.

(b) The respondent No.1 is an independent body duly registered as a society under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960, affairs of which, including the election of the executive body, are, thus, to be governed by the provisions of the memorandum of association and by-laws and rules and regulations of the respondent No.1.

(c) The requirement of amendment of by-laws of every National Sports Body in conformity with the provisions of the Act, 2025 as per the provisions contained in Rule 18 of Rules, 2025, is only in relation to a National Sports Body and since the respondent No.1 till date is not a National Sports Body as per the Act, 2025 or even a National Sports Federation in terms of the provisions of the Code, 2011, the reliance placed by learned senior counsel for the appellant on Rule 18 of the said rules is highly misplaced. Rule 18 of the Rules made under the Act, 2025 is extracted herein below:

“18. Miscellaneous

(1) Every National Sports Body shall, within a period of six months, amend its bye-laws in conformity with the provisions of the Act.

(2) The Central Government may, on receipt of the application from a National Sports Body, relax the provisions of these rules for a period of twelve months from the commencement of these rules and reasons for such relaxation to be recorded in writing.”

(d) It is also to be noticed that the Act, 2025 has been enacted by the Parliament with a view to giving effect to the emphasis of the Olympic Charter and the Paralympic Charter, which emphasise impeccable ethical behaviour in sports governance and necessitates the national sports governing bodies to align with such global governance standards. The Act, 2025, also aims to ensure that the sports bodies in the country manage their internal and external affairs in an open, fair and transparent manner in public interest. The Act also aims to provide for accessible, fair and effective measures for the resolution of grievances and disputes relating to sports.

(e) Prior to the enactment of the Act, 2025, the affairs of National Sports Bodies were governed and regulated by the Code, 2011, which contains certain non-statutory Rules. By enacting the Act of 2025 now, a statutory regime or framework for sports grievances in the country has been introduced. With a view to aligning the affairs of the National Sports Bodies with the provisions of the Act, 2025, certain provisions have been made in the said Act. Section 2(p) defines ‘National Sports Body’ to mean a national sports governing body such as the National Olympic Committee or the National Paralympic Committee or the National Sports Federation or the Regional Sports Federation, established under section 3. Section 2(p) of the Act, 2025 is quoted herein below:

“2. Definitions.— (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(p) “National Sports Body” means a national sports governing body such as the National Olympic Committee or the National Paralympic Committee or the National Sports Federation or the Regional Sports Federation, established under section3;”

(f) Section 3 of the Act, 2025, provides that the National Olympic Committee, the National Paralympic Committee, a National Sports Federation for each designated sport and a Regional Sports Federation for each designated sport shall be established as National Sports Governing Bodies.

(g) Section 4 of the Act, 2025 requires that every National Sports Body shall have certain provisions in their constitution governing their affairs, including the constitution of a general body, the executive committee and other related affairs.

(h) For the purposes of transition from the old non-statutory regime governed by the Code, 2011, to the statutory regime regulated by the Act, 2025, Rule 18 of the Rules, 2025, framed under the said Act provides that every National Sports Body shall amend its by-laws in conformity with the provisions of the Act within a period of six months. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India has issued a circular dated 22.12.2025 emphasising therein that in

accordance with the provisions of the Act, 2025, every National Sports Federation will be required to undertake appropriate measures to restructure its General Body to ensure that all their voting members and affiliate units are fully align with the provisions of the Act, 2025. The said circular also provides that in order to facilitate smooth transition under the new governance framework as also to allow adequate time for implementation of the statutory requirements under the Act, 2025, it has been decided that those National Sports Federations whose elections are scheduled to be held in the coming months, except the cases where there are specific directions by the Courts of law, will stand deferred till up to 31.12.2026 as a transitional measure.

(i) Much emphasis though was laid by learned counsel for the appellant on the aforesaid circular dated 22.12.2025 and Rule 18 of the Rules, 2025 as aforementioned, however, in view of the categorical statement made by the learned counsel for the Ministry that the respondent No.1 is not a recognised National Sports Federation, in our opinion, the affairs of the respondent No.1 are to be governed by the provisions of its memorandum of association and by-laws and the rules and regulations registered with the Registrar of Societies of the State of Karnataka in terms of the provisions of the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960, till the respondent No.1 itself decides to seek registration or recognition under the new statutory regime introduced by enacting the Act, 2025.

(j) Even if respondent No.1 is treated to be an affiliate of the appellant-Indian Olympic Association, learned senior counsel for the appellant has not been able to show any provision of law which permits the Indian Olympic Association to appoint an ad hoc Committee to manage the affairs of its affiliate body. The reliance placed by learned senior counsel for the appellant on Article 17.5 of the rules and regulations of the Indian Olympic Association has already been negated in the preceding paragraphs.

13. For the reasons aforesaid, in our opinion, the very premise of the argument of learned senior counsel for the appellant is based on an absolute misreading of the provisions of the Act, 2025 and the Rules made thereunder in view of the statement of learned counsel representing the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports that the respondent No.1 is not a recognised National Sports Federation either in terms of the Code, 2011 or a National Sports Body in terms of the Act, 2025.

14. We have already noticed that the respondent No.1 is a society registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, and therefore, it is an independent body whose affairs are to be governed only by the memorandum of association, its by-laws and the rules and regulations.

15. The need to fulfil the statutory requirements under the Act, 2025, and the rules made thereunder by the respondent No.1 would arise only once the respondent No.1 intends to be recognised or registered as a National Sports

Body in terms of Section 3 of the Act, 2025, which stage has not yet arisen. 16. The learned Single Judge, placing reliance on a judgment of this Court in Bihar Olympic Association vs. President Indian Olympic Association and Anr., (2025) SCC OnLine Del 1224, has held that the Indian Olympic Association is not vested with any authority or power to appoint any ad hoc Committee in relation to the functions of an independent body or association.

17. We are in complete agreement with the reasoning given and conclusion drawn by the learned Single Judge in the impugned judgment and order.

18. Our attention has lastly been drawn by learned senior counsel for the appellant that the learned single Judge impugned judgment and order has directed the appellant to pay the fee of the returning officer for conducting the election of respondent No.1. In this respect, we are of the opinion that since the respondent No.1 is an independent body whose affairs are to be governed by the provisions of its own memorandum of association, by-laws and rules and regulations, saddling the responsibility of bearing the expenses of conducting the elections on the appellant cannot be justified.

19. Accordingly, while upholding the judgment and order under appeal herein passed by the learned Single Judge to the extent it has quashed the Office Order dated 13.10.2023 and has observed that the ad hoc Committee stood dissolved with immediate effect and further directed for conducting the elections of the respondent No.1, we set aside the direction issued to the appellant for payment of the fee to the returning officer. The fee to the Returning Officer shall be paid by the respondent No.1.

20. The impugned judgment and order dated 10.02.2026, thus, stands modified to the aforesaid extent, and the appeal stands disposed of accordingly.

21. There shall be no order as to costs.