

MOTORSPORT SOUTH AFRICA

COURT OF ENQUIRY NO. 1300

**WPMC ALL TAR RALLY - KILLARNEY INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY
EVENT HELD ON 8 AUGUST 2026**

JUDGEMENT AND REASONS

A. INTRODUCTION AND NATURE OF THE ENQUIRY

1. This is the ruling of Motorsport South Africa (MSA) Court of Enquiry No. 1300, convened in terms of GCR 211 arising from the WPMC All Tar Rally held at Killarney International Raceway on 8 August 2026 (the event).
2. The enquiry concerns Car 28, driven by Mr Yani Hatzi, the substitution of the nominated navigator after the rally had commenced, the participation of Mr Hatzi's 14-year-old son, Alexi, as navigator for the balance of the rally, the identity and licence status of that substitute navigator, the information supplied to event officials when the substitution was discovered, and whether any event official committed a separate breach of the regulations.
3. The Court approaches the matter on the balance of probabilities. It distinguishes between the navigator substitution itself, for which Car 28 was excluded at the event, and the additional misconduct proved in relation to the participation of an underage and unlicensed minor and the subsequent concealment of his identity. That distinction avoids double punishment for the same sporting infringement while permitting the Court to sanction separate and materially more serious misconduct.
4. This matter is not merely a technical licensing infringement. The licensing and crew-eligibility regime is part of MSA's system of sporting control and safety. The deliberate

circumvention of those controls deprived officials of the opportunity to intervene and exposed a minor, fellow competitors, organisers, officials and MSA to risks which the licensing framework exists to manage.

B. COMPOSITION, APPEARANCES AND PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

5. The Court comprised Adv. Marcia Davids as Court President, sitting with Mr Eric Schultz and Mr Luan Oelofse.
6. The hearing took place virtually on 1 October 2026. Mr Yani Hatzi, Mr Danie Terblanche, Mr John Green and Ms Gaenor Maytham appeared. The event secretary, Mrs Terri Philander, was absent and her apology was recorded. The Court nevertheless had her contemporaneous written correspondence in the documentary bundle.
7. At the commencement of the hearing, the Court expressly invited any objection to its composition, jurisdiction, notice of enquiry, documents supplied or proposed procedure. No objection was taken. The participants confirmed receipt of the notice and documentary bundle and an adequate opportunity to prepare.
8. The Court identified the issues before evidence was heard and made clear that no conclusion had yet been reached on fraud, deliberate concealment, licence culpability or official misconduct. Material contradictions intended to be relied upon adversely were put to the person concerned. The Court is satisfied that the enquiry was procedurally fair.

C. MATERIAL BEFORE THE COURT

9. The Court considered, inter alia, the exclusion/fine form issued at the event; the Clerk of the Course report, the email correspondence generated after the event, the notes of the 22 August 2026 discussion with Mr Hatzi, Mr Hatzi's written apology/explanation, the event

Supplementary Regulations, the 2026 Western Cape Rally Club Regulations, the 2026 National Rally Standing Supplementary Regulations, the 2026 MSA General Competition Rules and the oral evidence received at the hearing.

10. The contemporaneous exclusion form records that Car 28 was excluded from the event and results because the competitor changed navigator without following the proper procedure and without permission of Stewards. The Clerk of the Course report similarly records that Car 28 was excluded for changing navigator without permission of Stewards.
11. The post-event evidence records that the nominated navigator, who had signed on for the event, appeared to hand in the time card after another navigator had been observed exiting Car 28. When officials sought the identity and licence of the substitute navigator, the substitute could not be produced and no valid MSA Rally competition licence was provided.
12. Mr Hatzi's later explanation identified the replacement as his son Alexi. He explained that the original navigator became severely nauseous and was vomiting, that Alexi was substituted between stages, and that the crew continued. The Court accepts the illness as the factual trigger, but not as a justification for the substitution or what followed.

D. APPLICABLE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

13. The event Supplementary Regulations provide that the event was held under the GCRs, Rally SSRs, event SRs and relevant category regulations. Competitors were required to read and understand those regulations.
14. Event SR 8 required both crew members in the Rally classes to hold at least a valid 2026 MSA Club Licence valid for Rally. Event SR 26 permitted a change of driver, crew member or vehicle only with the consent of the Stewards, for valid reasons, and in writing before 08h15 on 8 August 2026.

15. Rally SSR 104 provides that a crew comprises two competitors nominated as driver and co-driver/navigator and that both members of the crew must be on board throughout the rally, subject only to stated exceptions. Rally SSR 105(v) expressly provides that no change of competitor or crew may be made after the first car has taken starters' orders.
16. The Western Cape Rally Club Regulations require eligible drivers and co-drivers/navigators to hold a valid 2026 MSA Club competition licence valid for Rally. The evidence establishes that Alexi was 14 and did not hold an MSA Rally licence.
17. GCR 172(ii)(c) treats as a breach action having as its object the participation in a competition of a person who is not the holder of a licence appropriate to the event. GCR 172(iii) proscribes fraudulent acts or proceedings connected with a competition or motorsport generally. GCR 172(iv) proscribes proceedings or acts prejudicial to the interests of MSA or motorsport generally. GCR 172(vi) proscribes misbehaviour or unfair practice.
18. The Court does not convert this enquiry into a separate child-protection proceeding or make a finding of statutory child neglect. It does, however, regard the safeguarding principle as relevant to the seriousness and risk inherent in knowingly placing an underage, unlicensed minor into competition outside MSA's prescribed controls.
19. In considering sanction, the Court has had regard to COE 1253. That decision treated participation without the requisite competition licence as an extremely serious offence because of the potential ramifications and liability to MSA, organisers and officials if serious or fatal injury occurred. COE 1253 imposed three-year preclusion/suspension in circumstances of knowing unlicensed participation, together with a monetary fine against the entrant. It is not binding as a tariff, and the facts differ, but it is a material comparator demonstrating the seriousness with which MSA has previously treated knowing unlicensed participation.

E. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

20. Car 28 started the rally with the nominated navigator, Sebastian Swanepoel. After the second stage Mr Swanepoel became ill. Mr Hatzi personally decided to replace him with his son, Alexi Hatzi.
21. Mr Hatzi admitted that Alexi was 14, did not have an MSA Rally licence and completed the balance of the rally. The first two of six stages were completed with the nominated navigator and Alexi completed the remaining four stages.
22. No written permission for the substitution was obtained. It occurred after the rally had started and therefore after the point at which SSR 105(v) prohibited a crew change.
23. At the end of the event, when the Clerk of the Course asked who had replaced the nominated navigator, Mr Hatzi initially represented that his mechanic had acted as navigator. The mechanic was said to have gone home. A valid competition licence for that supposed navigator was not produced, instead a WPMC membership card was sent.
24. Mr Green and Ms Maytham observed Mr Hatzi emerge from parc fermé with a notably short navigator. At the later discussion Mr Hatzi confirmed that the navigator had in fact been his 14-year-old son, the evidence further established that Alexi did not possess a valid Rally licence.
25. At the hearing Mr Hatzi accepted the substitution but maintained that the illegality was unintentional and that Alexi's participation had not been hidden. When asked whether the original navigator's submission of the time card was intended to hide Alexi's participation, Mr Hatzi said it was totally unintentional and that neither navigator nor driver appreciated that anything wrong was being done.

F. ASSESSMENT OF THE EVIDENCE

(a) The substitution and participation

26. The substitution is proved beyond any real dispute by the exclusion form, the contemporaneous evidence and Mr Hatzi's own admissions.
27. The Court accepts that Mr Swanepoel became ill. That explains the predicament confronting Mr Hatzi, but it did not authorise a mid-rally substitution. The lawful course was to report the difficulty to the relevant officials and comply with their direction, not to install an unapproved substitute and continue.
28. Alexi participated as navigator for four of the six stages. This was substantial participation in the competition and not a momentary presence in the vehicle.

(b) Age, licence, knowledge and eligibility

29. Mr Hatzi knew his son's age. The Court also finds, on the balance of probabilities, that Mr Hatzi knew that Alexi did not possess the required Rally competition licence. This was not a case in which an application had been made and a competitor reasonably but mistakenly believed that a licence had been issued. No Rally licence existed and none could be produced when officials requested it.
30. The Court rejects any suggestion that unfamiliarity with the Rally SSRs answers the licensing issue. A competitor may be unfamiliar with a detailed procedural rule, but Mr Hatzi knew the basic facts: the substitute was his 14-year-old son and his son did not hold the licence required for participation in the Rally. Those facts are central to culpability under GCR 172(ii)(c).

(c) Deliberate concealment and credibility

31. The most significant credibility issue is the false explanation given when officials asked who the replacement navigator was. Mr Terblanche's evidence was clear: Mr Hatzi said his mechanic had been the navigator, the mechanic had left, and the requested licence could not be produced. That account was objectively false.
32. The Court is unable to reconcile that conduct with Mr Hatzi's evidence that Alexi's participation was not hidden from anybody. If there were genuinely no intention to conceal the substitution, there was no reason to identify a mechanic rather than Alexi when the Clerk of the Course directly asked who the substitute navigator had been.
33. The original navigator's appearance with the time card after Alexi had completed the balance of the rally is a further circumstance relevant to the overall probabilities. Standing alone it would not prove a scheme to conceal the substitution. In combination with the false mechanic account and the failure to produce the actual substitute when requested, however, it reinforces the conclusion that officials were not being given the true position.
34. The Court remains cautious about the precise word "absconded" and about uncorroborated references to staff being instructed to tell untruths. Those matters are not necessary to the Court's finding. The deliberate false identification of the substitute navigator is itself sufficient, when viewed with the surrounding circumstances, to establish concealment on the balance of probabilities.
35. The Court therefore finds that the concealment was purposeful. It had the practical effect of preventing officials, until after the event, from knowing that the person who had participated for four stages was Mr Hatzi's 14-year-old son and that he was unlicensed. It thereby frustrated the regulatory and safety controls that officials were required to enforce.

(d) Claimed ignorance and remorse

36. Mr Hatzi relied on this being his first rally and on unfamiliarity with the detailed regulations. The Court affords that explanation limited weight in relation to the initial crew-change decision, but it does not explain the later false mechanic account. One does not need knowledge of SSR 105(v) to know whether the person in the navigator's seat was one's mechanic or one's 14-year-old son.
37. The Court has considered the apology and the fact that Mr Hatzi ultimately admitted Alexi's identity, age, licence status and participation. Those are relevant considerations. They are, however, materially weakened by his persistence at the hearing in saying that there had been no concealment. That position is inconsistent with the contemporaneous false account given to officials.
38. The Court has also considered the statement attributed to Mr Hatzi, as recorded by the Stewards, indicating a preference to compete in Germany under the jurisdiction of the Deutscher Motor Sport Bund (DMSB). The Court does not regard this statement as constituting a separate disciplinary infringement, nor does it attach any independent punitive significance to it. However, insofar as the statement forms part of the circumstances surrounding Mr Hatzi's apology, it is relevant to the assessment of the sincerity and extent of his remorse. Genuine remorse entails an appreciation of the seriousness of the misconduct and its implications for the integrity, safety and regulatory framework of motorsport. The Court therefore affords the apology such mitigating weight as is justified by the evidence considered as a whole.

F. SAFEGUARDING AND RISK

39. The participation of a minor materially aggravates this matter. Alexi was not simply an unlicensed adult competitor. He was 14 years old and was placed into a competition vehicle for the majority of a rally without the licence and eligibility controls required by MSA.
40. Licensing is not an administrative formality. It is one of the mechanisms by which a motorsport authority regulates competence, eligibility, insurance, medical and event-safety exposure. Bypassing it deprived event officials of the opportunity to assess and prevent the participation before Alexi completed four stages.
41. The Court considers safeguarding as an aggravating circumstance. A parent who is also the competing driver bears an obvious duty of care toward a minor placed in the competition vehicle. Knowingly permitting an underage and unlicensed child to participate in a high-speed motorsport event outside the applicable authorisation framework created a foreseeable and unnecessary risk.
42. The Court makes no separate finding of child neglect, which falls outside the disciplinary scope of this enquiry. It finds, rather, that the conduct engaged the protective purpose underlying MSA's safeguarding framework and substantially aggravated the breaches of the GCRs.
43. The same conduct potentially exposed MSA, organisers and officials to significant consequences had an accident involving serious or fatal injury occurred. This concern is consistent with COE 1253, where the absence of a competition licence was characterised as extremely serious because of the far-reaching ramifications and liability that could arise from an incident involving an unlicensed participant.

G. FINDINGS AGAINST MR YANI HATZI

44. Post-start navigator substitution: PROVED.
45. Breach of Rally SSR 105(v) and Event SR 26: PROVED. The event exclusion already imposed addressed the sporting infringement.
46. Alexi aged 14: PROVED.
47. No appropriate Rally competition licence: PROVED.
48. Mr Hatzi's knowledge of the material licence/eligibility facts: PROVED. He knew his son's age and knew that Alexi did not hold the required Rally competition licence.
49. Alexi's participation for the majority of the rally: PROVED. He completed four of six stages after the substitution.
50. Deliberate concealment: PROVED. The Court relies principally on the false representation that the substitute navigator was a mechanic, coupled with the failure to identify Alexi when directly asked and the inability to produce a valid licence.
51. GCR 172(ii)(c): PROVED. Mr Hatzi caused the participation of a person who did not hold a licence appropriate to the event.
52. GCR 172(iii): PROVED. The false mechanic account constituted a deliberate fraudulent act or proceeding in connection with the competition, calculated to obscure the identity and licence status of the actual substitute navigator.
53. GCR 172(iv): PROVED. The conduct was prejudicial to MSA and motorsport generally because it undermined licensing, event control and safety and exposed the regulatory system to avoidable risk.
54. GCR 172(vi): PROVED. The conduct constituted misbehaviour and unfair practice. The Court recognises the factual overlap between the GCR 172 findings and will avoid mechanically multiplying punishment for the same conduct.

I. FINDINGS CONCERNING THE EVENT OFFICIALS

55. Mr Danie Terblanche: NO BREACH PROVED. He became aware of the substitution at the end of the event, investigated it, asked for the substitute's identity and licence and imposed the exclusion in the presence of the Stewards. There is no reliable evidence that he authorised the substitution or knowingly permitted an unlicensed minor to continue.
56. Mr John Green: NO BREACH PROVED. He became aware of the issue at or near parc fermé at the end of the event. He denied granting permission and explained that the SRs would not have allowed a post-start substitution.
57. Ms Gaenor Maytham: NO BREACH PROVED. There is no evidence that she authorised, facilitated or concealed the substitution.
58. Mrs Terri Philander: NO BREACH PROVED. Her contemporaneous correspondence assisted in bringing the matter to MSA's attention and seeking the identity and licence status of the replacement navigator.

J. SANCTION

59. The Court must impose a sanction proportionate not only to the prohibited crew change, but to the independently proved misconduct that followed and to the seriousness of knowingly permitting an unlicensed minor to participate. The existing exclusion remains relevant and the Court does not punish the crew-change offence twice.
60. The aggravating factors are substantial:
- (a) Alexi was only 14;
 - (b) he did not hold the required Rally competition licence;

- (c) Mr Hatzi knew the material facts concerning his son's age and lack of the required licence;
- (d) Alexi participated for four of six stages;
- (e) the conduct bypassed MSA's licensing and safeguarding controls;
- (f) officials were deprived of the opportunity to intervene during the event;
- (g) when directly asked who the substitute was, Mr Hatzi gave the false account that it was his mechanic;
- (h) the concealment was directed at the very facts - identity, age and licence status - that would have required official intervention; and
- (i) the conduct exposed MSA, organisers, officials, competitors and the minor to potentially serious safety and liability consequences.

61. The Court has considered the mitigating circumstances. The original navigator was genuinely ill; this was Mr Hatzi's first rally; he ultimately admitted the true identity of the substitute and accepted the event exclusion; and there is no evidence before this Court of a prior similar disciplinary finding. Those factors warrant consideration, but they do not neutralise the deliberate concealment or the safeguarding dimension.
62. COE 1253 is an important comparator. There the Court held that absence of a competition licence was an extremely serious offence and imposed three years' preclusion/suspension for knowing unlicensed participation. The present matter is not identical: the unlicensed participant here was the son of the sanctioned competitor and the existing exclusion has already dealt with the crew-change infringement. Conversely, the present matter contains aggravating features absent from a simple licensing case: the participant was a 14-year-old minor and the Court has found deliberate concealment of his identity from officials.
63. The Court does not accept that a substantial suspension would necessarily be disproportionate. Having regard to COE 1253, the safeguarding implications, the deliberate

concealment and the need for general deterrence, a substantial period of preclusion or suspension, coupled with a significant monetary fine, is justified.

64. The purpose of the sanction is protective and disciplinary. It must communicate that a competitor may not bypass MSA's licensing and safeguarding controls, place an underage and unlicensed minor into competition, and then frustrate official scrutiny by misrepresenting the identity of that participant.
65. The Court considers a two-year period of preclusion/suspension to be substantial but proportionate. It is shorter than the three-year sanction imposed in COE 1253, thereby recognising the genuine illness that precipitated the incident, Mr Hatzi's eventual admissions and the absence of a prior similar finding. At the same time, it reflects the additional aggravating features of the present matter.
66. The Court further considers a fine of R100,000.00 appropriate. A lesser nominal fine would insufficiently reflect the seriousness of the deliberate circumvention and concealment, while the combination of the fine and the period of preclusion/suspension provides both specific and general deterrence.

K. ORDER

67. The exclusion of Car 28 from the 2026 WPMC All Tar Rally imposed on 8 August 2026 remains undisturbed.
68. Mr Yani Hatzi is found to have breached Rally SSR 105(v) and Event SR 26 by effecting a post-start navigator substitution without the prescribed authority. No additional penalty is imposed merely for that breach because the event exclusion already sanctioned it.
69. Mr Yani Hatzi is found to have breached GCR 172(ii)(c), GCR 172(iii), GCR 172(iv) and GCR 172(vi) for the reasons set out above.

70. Mr Yani Hatzi is precluded from participation in, and suspended from, all MSA-sanctioned motorsport events for TWO (2) YEARS from the date of this judgment. Any consequential action concerning his competition licence must be implemented in accordance with the applicable GCR provisions.
71. Mr Yani Hatzi is further fined R100,000.00, payable in accordance with the applicable GCR provisions.
72. No breach is proved against Mr Danie Terblanche, Mr John Green, Ms Gaenor Maytham or Mrs Terri Philander, and the enquiry against them is dismissed.
73. The Court recommends that MSA reinforce at pre-event documentation and drivers' briefings that both Rally crew members must hold licences valid for Rally; that post-start crew substitution is prohibited; that any crew illness or retirement must immediately be reported to the Clerk of the Course; and that the licensing requirements relating to minors are integral to MSA's safeguarding and risk-control framework.
74. This ruling is subject to the rights and procedures applicable under the 2026 GCRs.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COURT

ADV MARCIA DAVIDS - Court President

Court Members: **MR ERIC SCHULTZ and MR LUAN OELOFSE** concurring

8 October 2026