

SPORT DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTRE OF CANADA (SDRCC)
CENTRE DE RÈGLEMENT DES DIFFÉRENDS SPORTIFS DU CANADA (CRDSC)

Citation: Team Pursuit Athletes v. Cycling Canada Cyclisme, 2026 CASDRC 37

File No: SDRCC 26-0816

(ORDINARY TRIBUNAL)

Date: 2026-08-10

TEAM PURSUIT ATHLETES
SKYLER GOUDSWAARD, FIONA MAJENDIE, JENNA NESTMAN, LILY PLANTE, and
JUSTINE THOMAS
(CLAIMANTS)

AND

CYCLING CANADA CYCLISME
("Cycling Canada")
(RESPONDENT)

REASONED DECISION

Submissions:

Dr. Emir Crowne, Counsel	On behalf of the Claimants
Amanda Fowler, Counsel	

Adam Klevinas, Counsel	On behalf of the Respondent
Cristy Cooper, Counsel	

Before:

Carol Roberts, Arbitrator

1. On May 22, 2026, I was selected by the parties as the Arbitrator under Subsection 5.3 (b) of the 2025 Canadian Sport Dispute Resolution Code (the “*Code*”) to hear the appeals of Skyler Goudswaard, Fiona Majendie, Jenna Nestman, Lily Plante and Justine Thomas (collectively, the “Athletes”) against Cycling Canada Cyclisme’s (“Cycling Canada”) decision not to enter a Women’s Team Pursuit team at the 2026 Tissot UCI Track World Championships.
2. The parties agreed that the complaint could be decided based on written submissions. They also agreed to simultaneously file main submissions on July 15 and reply submissions on July 21, 2026.
3. The initial complaint was filed by four of the five named athletes. I am advised that, at some point after the complaint was filed, counsel for the Athletes emailed SDRCC to add an additional complainant. That email was not copied to Cycling Canada.
4. Subsequent correspondence from the SDRCC included all five athletes, including notes of the Preliminary Meeting.
5. On July 24, 2026, I observed that Cycling Canada’s submissions identified only the original four complainants. Given that the submissions made references to “the Team as currently composed” and specifically to the four original complainants, I inquired into whether the addition of the fifth athlete would cause them to amend those submissions.
6. The Athletes objected to any further submissions or amendments on the basis that the notes of the Preliminary Meeting identified all five claimants and that Cycling Canada therefore knew the case it had to meet.
7. The *Code* is silent on amending pleadings. The law governing disputes is the applicable law of Ontario, that is, the *Ontario Arbitration Act, 1991*. (S.O. 1991 c. 17) (*Code* section 5.1)
8. Amending pleadings in arbitration generally requires the agreement of the arbitrator or the tribunal, or the consent of the other party. The addition of an additional athlete was done administratively without formal notice or the agreement of Cycling Canada or the Tribunal.
9. It is important to determine that the responding party, in this case Cycling Canada, has a fair opportunity to respond to what might constitute new claims. Section 19(1) of the *Arbitration Act, 1991* provides that the parties shall be treated equally and fairly. I do not consider that notes of the Preliminary Meeting constitute an “amendment” of the complaint, and in the absence of an agreement or proper notice, I have the jurisdiction to ensure they had full opportunity to respond.
10. Cycling Canada responded that the addition of the fifth athlete did not require any changes to its initial submissions. I note that Cycling Canada’s reply submissions did identify the fifth athlete and that it did not object to the addition of another Claimant. While Cycling Canada did offer some “clarifications” to those submissions, I have not considered those clarifications given its communication that no changes to its initial submissions were required.
11. On July 30, 2026, following a review of those submissions, I issued my decision to deny the appeal, with reasons to follow. These are my reasons.

OVERVIEW

12. Cycling Canada is the national governing body for cycling in Canada.
13. Cycling Canada is responsible for, among other things, selecting athletes to compete in international events across a range of disciplines, including those related to Track cycling, which includes Team Pursuit.
14. The five Athletes are members of the Women's Team Pursuit program.

The Decision

15. On December 18, 2025, Cycling Canada published its 2026 *Track Endurance Selection Policy* (the "*Policy*"). The *Policy* established eligibility and selection criteria for the Team Pursuit event.
16. On May 5, 2026, Cycling Canada communicated its decision not to enter a Women's Team Pursuit team at the 2026 Tissot UCI Track World Championships ("WTC") in Shanghai (the "Decision"). As this event is the first qualifying event for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, it effectively eliminates the Canadian Women's Team Pursuit team from the 2028 Olympics.
17. In communicating the Decision, Cycling Canada identified several initiatives to support development, including hosting development camps across Canada and identifying opportunities to develop track athletes, with a view towards "a return to International Team Pursuit competition in 2027 focussed on the objective of Brisbane 2032."
18. The Athletes contend that the Decision was procedurally unfair, substantively unreasonable, inequitable and not made in accordance with the applicable selection criteria. They seek an Order that Cycling Canada enter a Women's Team Pursuit team at the 2026 WTC.
19. Cycling Canada contends that the Decision was made in a fair and objective manner, that it was made after considering all relevant information, that it was evidence-based, and that it was not arbitrary, inequitable or discriminatory. It seeks to have the appeal dismissed.
20. Cycling Canada contends that the Decision is operational in nature, recognizing the need to allocate resources in the manner that best serves the long-term viability of the Women's Team Pursuit program and Cycling Canada's performance objectives.
21. The Athletes dispute Cycling Canada's characterization of the decision as an "operational" decision and thus not subject to the internal appeal process.
22. I conclude that it is unnecessary for me to decide whether the Decision is of an operational nature. Cycling Canada has accepted the jurisdiction of SDRCC and agreed to have this dispute decided on its merits.
23. This appeal is not about the individual abilities or performances of any of the Athletes, or the selection of one team over another. It is not about the "elimination" or "discontinuance" of the Women's Team Pursuit program, as suggested by the Athletes. It is, rather, whether the Decision not to enter a Women's Team Pursuit team at the 2026 WTC is justified, fair and reasonable, and not contrary to any of Cycling Canada's Policies.

Background

Jurisdiction

24. The parties agree that Cycling Canada has the jurisdiction and authority to determine its own programming and allocate constrained funding resources. The Athletes also did not challenge Cycling Canada's evidence that its current and future funding support, and particularly the funds allocated to the Track National Team program, is based on demonstrated podium potential.
25. Included with the Respondent's submissions was the affidavit of Phil Abbott, the Director of Endurance and the Women's Track Endurance Lead at Cycling Canada.
26. Mr. Abbott has been the Director of Endurance and the Women's Track Endurance Lead at Cycling Canada since March 3, 2025. Prior to that, he held several high-performance coaching and director roles dating back to 2004. Prior to beginning his coaching and administrative career, he was an elite road cyclist and competed in multiple National Championships and international tours.
27. The Athletes rely on Cycling Canada documents including emails and Management updates in support of their arguments. They also rely heavily on articles published in Canadian Cycling Magazine and other media reports which quote some of the Athletes. I have given little weight to the published articles which set out "facts" without sourcing the statements. I prefer the sworn evidence of Mr. Abbott along with the records submitted by Cycling Canada.
28. The Athletes did not dispute the following background narrative which is grounded in Cycling Canada's submissions, documentary evidence and Mr. Abbott's affidavit.
29. Cycling Canada receives funding assistance from Sport Canada based on recommendations from Own the Podium ("OTP"). The funding Cycling Canada received for the 2026-2027 year was less than it received in the 2025-2026 year, and of that amount, only \$175,000 was specifically allocated to the Track National Team Program, which encompasses both the Sprint and Endurance disciplines.
30. In OTP's January 20, 2026 communications to Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic national sport organizations ("NSO's"), OTP's CEO stated that the reduction in funding was due to an increase in the total number of sports on the Olympic program for 2028. The communication further observed that "the size of the athlete pool and strength of medal potential were critical factors in finalizing the ranking list and in determining funding recommendations."
31. In the same communication, NSO's were informed that funding for the balance of the Olympic quadrennial would remain under review, and that, for team sports, emphasis was to be placed on "potential to progress to quarter finals and medal round matches as opposed to potential to qualify for the Olympic and Paralympic Games."
32. Following the Paris 2024 Olympic Games where Canada did not secure a podium finish or advance to a medal final in any Track Endurance event, Cycling Canada engaged in a review of both its men's and women's Team Pursuit teams. The objective of the review was to establish the current and potential competitiveness of the Track Endurance programs. The

review was supported by data analytics carried out by sport scientists from the Canadian Sport Institute Ontario (“CSIO”), specifically Joshua Good, an Exercise Physiologist and Will George, CSIO Ontario’s Senior Sport Biomechanist.

33. The competitiveness review was ongoing at the time the *Policy* was published.

Selection Policies

34. The criteria used by Cycling Canada to select athletes to the Canadian team for International Track Endurance Events are set out in the *Policy*. It provides that selections are subject to the *General Selection Policy*. Both policies are published on the Cycling Canada website.

35. The *Policy* identified the 2026 Track Program Calendar and application deadlines, eligibility criteria, events considered for selection and specific selection criteria. In the “Selection Criteria” for each event was the following commentary:

CC reserves the right to modify the selection for these events based on an overarching strategy to support medal winning performances and support CC’s qualification strategies for the 2026 Elite Track World Championships and the 2028 Olympic Games.

36. Cycling Canada’s *General Selection Policy* provides that:

CC reserves the right to enter a larger or smaller team or no team at all in any category for any Event, regardless of the number of athletes who have met the specific selection Criteria, for reasons including, but not limited to, CC’s assessment of the athletes’ ability to meet the performance objectives; budgetary restrictions; or other factors not under CC’s control... (Section 5)

37. In a December 19, 2025 email notifying athletes about the publication of the *Policy*, Cycling Canada invited athletes interested in 2026 Track Endurance opportunities to submit expressions of interest by January 11, 2026. Cycling Canada sent out multiple reminders of the application and the deadline to potentially interested athletes, including on January 5 and January 10, 2026.

Performance Evaluation of Men’s and Women’s Teams

38. Mr. Abbott’s evidence was that fewer elite female riders applied to be part of the 2026 Team Pursuit program than Cycling Canada expected and hoped, while on the men’s side, several “key” riders did apply, including riders with Olympic experience. According to Cycling Canada, the lack of applications on the Women’s side “left the Team without individuals whose physical strengths and/or technical skills would have bolstered the Team’s competitiveness.”

39. In January 2026 Cycling Canada’s then-Interim CEO, Sebastien Travers, prepared a report for Cycling Canada’s Board of Directors which included an update on the competitiveness review. That review identified that Canada’s strongest medal potential was in the Women’s Omnium, with “...an outside opportunity in Women’s and Men’s Team Pursuit,” but that the latter “pathway was highly dependent on securing four committed riders....” Mr. Travers indicated that the first challenge facing that program was qualifying Team Pursuit squads for the World Championships:

There is interest from several high-level road athletes; however, availability remains constrained by ongoing negotiations with professional trade teams regarding time and access to track racing. ...

We also intend to take a more holistic approach to Olympic endurance selection and to fully leverage the additional multi-discipline opportunities available within the Olympic framework. This includes the ability to add a mountain bike or track endurance athlete to the road team, or conversely, to include a road athlete within the track endurance team, where such selections meaningfully enhance overall medal potential.

40. On January 30, 2026, Mr. Abbott and Laura Brown, who is the Men's head coach and Men's Track Endurance Lead, met with Mr. Good to discuss the construction of an "evaluation framework" to assess the men's and women's Team Pursuits medal prospects. According to Mr. Abbott, the parties agreed that:

- The Men's Team Pursuit "may remain a high-performance focus if the data supports a projected minimum Top-8 at Worlds";
- The Women's Team Pursuit "likely needs to pivot to a development pathway, redirecting focus to the Omnium, Madison and long-term 2032 Team Pursuit rebuild";
- "A consistent, rigorous evaluation framework must be applied to both programs to justify divergent outcomes"; and
- "Immediate needs include identifying committed riders, gathering missing performance data..., modelling team projections and defining selection/competition strategies for 2027-2028."

41. According to Mr. Abbott, he, Ms. Brown and Mr. Good agreed that a further analysis was required.

42. Mr. Travers prepared a follow-up report for the Board of Directors in March 2026. In his report, Mr. Travers identified challenges facing the Team Pursuit programs, and in particular the lack of depth on the Women's side:

Based on performance analysis and available athlete depth, the strongest medal potential at this stage lies in Women's Omnium. There is an outside opportunity in Men's Team Pursuit, however this pathway is highly dependent on securing four committed riders, most of whom would likely be racing full-time in professional road programs. On the Women's side, we currently do not have the depth to produce competitive times and results and are not forecasted to meet the Olympic qualification performances. For this reason, we have decided to shift the focus of the WTP from 2028 to 2032. Therefore, we do not plan to enter a WTP before April 2027 at the Milton World Cup. This will enable us to recruit and develop new talent, while being less reliant on Pro athletes moving from Road to Track for main events. Once we have an attractive and performing program, it will be easier to bring in such athletes. This decision should be communicated after the Hong Kong World Cup.

43. At the Pan American Championships in February 2026, the women placed third in the Team Pursuit event. At the Hong Kong World Cup in April 2026, the women's team (consisting of

the Athletes) finished 10th out of 12 teams, did not make it out of the qualifying rounds and were over 20 seconds slower in the qualifying round than the eventual winners of the event. The men's team finished 8th out of 13 teams. Their fastest time at the event was less than four seconds slower than that of the eventual winner.

44. Mr. Abbott's evidence was that neither the Hong Kong or Pan American Championship events nor performance data collected during that time "improved the outlook for the women's program."

45. On April 23, 2026 following the Hong Kong World Cup event, Mr. George produced an updated modelling of Canadian Team Pursuit times for both men and women dating back multiple Olympic cycles.

46. Mr. Abbott's evidence is that, after receiving the report, he and Ms. Brown "agreed that the objective data was sufficiently clear" to decide that:

...the men's program had committed riders, including those with Olympic experience, reasonably capable of mitigating existing performance gaps in the lead up to the 2026 WTC and, ultimately, the LA 2028 Olympic Games. In its current composition and based on the committed group of athletes, the gaps between the women's Team pursuit team and the targeted levels of performance remain too significant to consider the team competitive.

47. The modelling information and the conclusions of Mr. Abbott and Ms. Brown was communicated to Cycling Canada's High-Performance Senior Management Team ("HP SMT") on April 30, 2026. According to Mr. Abbott, the HP SMT agreed that the Women's Team, in its current composition and based on the group of athletes who had committed to the program was unlikely to be competitive at the 2026 WTC or to qualify for the LA 2028 Olympic Games or, even if they were able to qualify, they were not predicted to achieve a podium performance.

48. Although Cycling Canada was not required to communicate any selection decision for the 2026 WTC until the end of August, Mr. Abbott informed impacted athletes and coaches of the Decision by email on May 5, 2026:

Suite à un examen des performances internationales du Programme d'endurance sur piste féminin et de la poursuite par équipes au cours des 18 derniers mois, Cyclisme Canada a déterminé qu'il est peu probable qu'une équipe canadienne féminine de poursuite par équipes atteigne les objectifs de performance aux Championnats du monde sur piste de 2026.

Compte tenu des conclusions de cet examen et des contraintes budgétaires actuelles de Cyclisme Canada, il a été décidé de ne pas envoyer d'équipe féminine de poursuite aux Championnats du monde de 2026.

ARGUMENT AND ANALYSIS

49. Section 6.12 of the *Code* provides that the Panel has the power to review the facts and the law and has the discretion to substitute its decision for the decision that gave rise to the dispute.
50. It is well established SDRCC jurisprudence (see *Palmer v. Athletics Canada* (SDRCC 08-0080) that the standard of review of decisions of national sport organizations is one of reasonableness, not correctness, and that arbitrators should only interfere with a sport organization's decision when the decision has been demonstrated to be so "manifestly wrong" that it would be unjust to let it stand.
51. A reasonableness review is a robust but deferential standard of review of the decision (*Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) v. Vavilov*, 2019 SCC 65.) A review is based not on whether the reviewing court believes the decision is correct, but whether that decision was reasonable in the circumstances.
52. *Vavilov* determined that a decision will be unreasonable where there are sufficiently serious shortcomings in the decision such that it cannot be said to exhibit the requisite degree of justification, intelligibility and transparency, and is it justified in the context of the applicable factual and legal constraints. (at para. 99)
53. Further, a decision may be unreasonable if there is an absence of rational and logical reasoning or if it is not "justified in relation to the constellation of law and facts that are relevant to the decision." (at para. 105)
54. I find that Cycling Canada's decision was both fair and reasonable in the circumstances.
- Was the Decision procedurally unfair?*
55. The Athletes contend that Cycling Canada's decision to eliminate only Women's Team pursuit program, which is higher ranked and more successful than the Men's Team, and which had already secured a quota for the 2026 World Championships, without notice and with no opportunity to respond was unfair.
56. The Athlete's submission contains several incorrect assertions.
57. The evidence does not support the Athletes' contention that Cycling Canada has "eliminated" the women's Team Pursuit program. It has not. The Decision made was not to enter a Women's Team Pursuit team at the 2026 Tissot UCI WTC in Shanghai. As Mr. Abbott's email of May 5, 2026 stated, Cycling Canada intends to invest resources in Team Pursuit development initiatives with a view to a return to international Team Pursuit competition in 2027.
58. Although there is no dispute that the Canadian Women's team pursuit squads achieved Olympic bronze medals in 2012 and 2016 and a fourth-place finish in 2021, the historical performances of the Women's team pursuit squads are not relevant to this dispute. The issue is whether a women's team either as currently composed or composed of athletes who have expressed an interest in being considered for the Team in 2026, has podium potential, which both meets Cycling Canada's performance objectives - that is, to "*support medal winning performances and support CC's qualification strategies for the Olympic Games and future Elite Track World Championships*" - and is the primary basis for receiving OTP funding.

59. There is also no dispute that the international ranking of the Women's Team is currently one place higher than the Men's Team. However, there is no evidence that the Decision was based on a direct comparison between the Men's Team and the Women's Team's international rankings. Rather, it was based on CSIO's assessment, and which was accepted by Cycling Canada, of the competitiveness and podium potential of the Women's Team, both current and projected, given the interested and available athletes. International rankings were not factored into the analysis.
60. Cycling Canada says, and the Athletes did not dispute, that the entry quota for the 2026 WTC was secured through attendance at the Pan American Championships and Hong Kong World Cup rather than the Team's performance. Cycling Canada submits, and I accept that, as such, the quota spot is not an indicator of the Team's competitiveness. The Athletes respond that if mere attendance is enough to secure a quota spot, then withdrawing the Team "forfeits a pathway the Athletes had already secured, in favour of individual events for which Canada is not yet qualified." I find that the Decision was based on an analysis of several factors, the primary one being the potential of achieving medal winning performances, not simply achieving a quota spot.
61. Furthermore, as the SDRCC has previously decided, mere qualification for an event is not, in and of itself justification for selection for a high-performance event. (*Boulanger v. Canada Snowboard*, SDRCC 20-0462)
62. The Athletes also argue that Cycling Canada, as a federally funded National Sport Organization, "cannot withdraw competitive opportunities from female athletes while maintaining them for male athletes absent a compelling and transparent justification." They contend that the Decision creates a gender-based disparity in access to high-performance opportunities.
63. There is no evidence that the Decision bars the Athletes, or any other female cyclists, access to high-performance opportunities. In fact, the evidence is that Cycling Canada intends to enter women's Team Pursuit teams at events in the current programming year, including the Pan American Track Championships in 2027.
64. There is no policy which compels Cycling Canada to inform athletes of its intention to make the decision it did, or to afford them an opportunity to respond before it made the Decision. The Athletes cite no authority for the proposition that decisions of sport organizations regarding funding or team selection attract the same type of fairness considerations applicable to decisions made by government agencies or actors such as the right to notice of a hearing and the right to respond. I find they do not.
65. At least four of the five Athletes met with the National Team Coach between December 2025 and May 2026 to discuss their Individual Performance plan. While the Athletes say that they were not warned that "the program...would be eliminated on a comparative basis" during meetings with Cycling Canada, and that "none of these meetings preceded the Decision," I find no basis for these arguments. The Women's Team pursuit program was not "eliminated," and the Decision was not based on a comparison between the Men's and Women's Teams. The Decision was made after the completion of the updated CSIO report concluding that the Women's Team Pursuit team, based on the available athletes, did not have podium potential. The Decision took into account the report, together with the

recommendations of the High-Performance coaches, accepted by the HP SMT on April 30, 2026.

66. The Athletes contend that the *Policy*, which invited applications, provided for a mandatory performance camp starting September 21, and which established an application deadline, was “ignored” or “displaced” by Cycling Canada, which “withdrew the team before the application deadline and before any selection under the criteria could occur” based on an “undisclosed...comparison between the men’s and women’s programs that was never established in advance nor communicated to the athletes.”
67. I have found that Cycling Canada did not conduct any comparison of the men’s and women’s programs. Each program was assessed separately, using the same criteria and methodology. The Women’s Team was not “withdrawn” before the application deadline. The deadline for applicant to express interest in the Women’s Team Pursuit was January 11, 2026. The Decision was communicated on May 5, 2026.
68. I am unable to find that Cycling Canada ignored any of its *Policies*.
69. Section 5 of the *General Selection Policy* expressly provides that Cycling Canada had the ability to “enter a larger or smaller team or no team at all for any Event...” whether a team or athlete meets specified selection criteria.
70. The Athletes contend that Cycling Canada’s decision to enter “no team at all” is not an unfettered one – it must be exercised in good faith, for a proper purpose, on relevant considerations and consistently with Cycling Canada’s other “binding obligations.”
71. The Athletes contend that Mr. Abbott “represented that the team pursuit result in Hong Kong would not be a determining factor, provided the team competed.” Having made that representation, the Athletes now say that Cycling Canada cannot rely on those results as a basis for “eliminating their program.”
72. I have found that the Team Pursuit program has not been eliminated, and I accept, based on Mr. Abbott’s undisputed evidence, that the Decision was made on an evaluation of several factors, of which the results from the Hong Kong race were only one. Mr. Abbott’s evidence was that although Cycling Canada believed that, based on athlete availability, the Women’s Team Pursuit “would likely need to pivot to a development pathway” in January, no decision was made at that time while it “continued to monitor and gather performance related data through scheduled international opportunities” including the Hong Kong World Cup event. Mr. Abbott denied making the statement attributed to him by unnamed sources and relied upon by the Athletes.
73. The evidence is that the Decision took into account relevant considerations – that is, performance potential of the available pool of potential members of the Women’s team. There is no evidence the Decision was not exercised in good faith, or that it took into account irrelevant factors.
74. The Athletes also point to the 2026 National Team Athlete Agreement in support of their argument that they were entitled to procedural fairness. I find no evidence that supports the Athletes’ argument that Cycling Canada failed to comply with that Agreement.
75. The Agreement provides that Cycling Canada:

- must publish team selection and eligibility criteria for all National Teams at least three months before the selection. Cycling Canada published the *Policy* on December 18, 2025 in compliance with this clause;
- must not make any changes to any policies, rules and regulations regarding an athlete selection after the selection process has been published. There is no evidence Cycling Canada changed the selection *Policies* after they were published;
- conduct selection of members of all National Teams in conformity with the published selection criteria. There is no evidence that Cycling Canada failed to comply with the *General Selection Policy* which permitted it not to enter any team at all.
- notify athletes of selection or non-selection. Although this is not an individual or Team selection decision, Cycling Canada notified the Athletes, in writing, of its decision not to enter a Women's Team Pursuit team at the 2026 WTC in Shanghai.

76. I am unable to find that the Decision was procedurally unfair.

Was the Decision Predetermined?

77. The Athletes argue that the “divergent, gendered outcome” was predetermined, and made before the analysis on which Cycling Canada now relies.

78. I am not persuaded that the Decision was predetermined. I accept Mr. Abbott's evidence that the Track Endurance program was under review following the 2024 Olympics and that the performance potential of both the Men's and Women's Teams was of concern for Cycling Canada following the Teams' failure to make it out of the qualifying rounds at the 2025 Track World Championships.

79. I also accept Mr. Abbott's evidence that a key factor in determining the podium potential of both the Men's and Women's Teams was the available pool of committed athletes. It was only after receiving confirmation from the athletes following the application deadline (on January 11, 2026) that a more nuanced analysis of the performances of each Team could be made. While there were concerns about podium potential of the Teams based on the applicants in late January, the evidence does not support the Athletes' contention that the decision was made at that time. The evidence is that Cycling Canada agreed that additional data had to be considered to present a “defensible plan”, and CSIO was engaged to provide additional information to either reinforce or disprove Cycling Canada's initial views. Although Mr. Abbott's evidence is that he, Ms. Brown and Mr. Good agreed that a further analysis should be conducted by another independent organization, there is no evidence that was done, or if it was, what the analysis disclosed.

80. Ultimately, the Decision was made by Cycling Canada's HP SMT following an analysis of the Women's Team Pursuit team performances, including at the Pan American and Hong Kong races, as well as the CSIO reports.

Was the Study reliable?

81. The Athletes also challenge the validity and reliability of CSIO's data analysis, contending, among other things, that it is speculative, has a small sample size, contained no international benchmarks and contained an invalid pre/post-Paris comparison.

82. The report's author, Mr. Good, agrees that the analysis contained limitations. Those include factors identified by Ms. Brown in her email of April 17, 2026, including such things as lineup instability (changes in riders, injuries and rider availability), comparing qualification times given that some races are tactical, and a consideration of other countries' progressions.
83. There is no dispute that the review was predictive and that it had to factor in uncertainty. However, that does not invalidate the study. I find that it was reasonable for Cycling Canada's experts, including Ms. Brown, to accept the feasibility study's conclusion, despite the acknowledged methodological limitations.

Was the Decision Substantively Unreasonable or Inequitable?

84. I am unable to find that the Decision was unreasonable or inequitable.
85. The Decision relied on a report conducted by CSIO, an independent third party, which analyzed both the Men's and Women's Team Pursuit team podium potential. The data analysis was conducted using the same metrics and methodology. There was no direct comparison between the Men's Team and the Women's Team. The analysis, although predictive, identified a performance gap that was too significant to consider the Women's Team, in its present composition and based on the group of athletes currently committed to the program, to be competitive. Cycling Canada's experts agreed with the analysis.
86. I find that the Decision was not discriminatory nor was it unfairly based on any prescribed personal characteristics.
87. Although the Athletes also point to an independent assessment of Cycling Canada commissioned by the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner ("OSIC") to assess gender-based discrimination which found "significant concerns...indicating that decision-making by senior leadership/administration at Cycling Canada may...be influenced by systemic biases and stereotypes...resulting in gender discrimination" in support of their arguments that the Decision was discriminatory, I am unable to find merit in this argument.
88. The OSIC assessment was dated July 10, 2024 almost a full two years before the Decision was made and the Athletes have not provided any evidence to support their position that the concerns have not been addressed. Further, the 2024 report made no definitive findings of systemic bias; rather, it concluded that decision making by senior leadership may be influenced by bias and stereotypes.
89. Even if decisions made by Cycling Canada senior leadership leading up to the July 2024 report were influenced by bias or stereotypes, and that those decisions led, in part, to the underrepresentation of women at Cycling Canada's Team Pursuit program (as evidenced by the lack of applications for the Team pursuit team), about which I make no findings, that is not evidence the Decision was discriminatory.
90. The Athletes rely on the fact that that two members of the Board resigned following the Decision as evidence of the unfairness. Expressions of disagreement are commonplace in all aspects of sport. However, controversial decisions are not evidence that a decision was arbitrary or unreasonable.

Conclusion

91. I am unable to find that the Decision lacked transparency or justification. In my view, the Decision was supportable on the information before Cycling Canada and rationally connected to its published criteria and objectives. I find that it fell within a range of possible outcomes, and decline to Order the relief sought by the Athletes.

CONCLUSION

92. The appeal is dismissed.

DATED: August 10, 2026, Vancouver, British Columbia

Carol Roberts, Arbitrator