

>> RULES & TOOLS JUDGING



5. JUDGING CRITERIA

Only one unique score, “the overall impression,” will determine the riders’ final score.

Judges use a point system of a hundred increments from 0.0 to 10.0 to evaluate the run.

The line, air & style, fluidity, control, and technique are the five judging criteria.

A typical freeride competition should be judged by a panel of eight judges—three certified judges for ski and three for snowboard. Panels are led by one head judge per discipline. The Professional Freeride Board (PFB) and head judges have worked closely to create a judging system that allows potential judges to be trained, evaluated and then certified. The goal of this rider-approved system is to have a unified judging system for all FWT and FWQ and Juniors competitions that allows every style of riding the possibility to win.

Can I be an official judge for the FWT and FWQ events?

If you want to become a judge, simply download the judging files and complete them while watching the judging video. All details are to be found under

www.freerideworldtour.com/judges.html.

6. JUDGING MANUAL

6.1 Introduction

By definition, the term ‘freeride’ doesn’t really match to the word ‘competition’. Some riders refuse to enter contests because of this inherent clash or simply would prefer not to be judged. For some riders though, freeride and competition fit together. They wish to compare themselves to other riders from time to time and have someone decide who produces the best show. Therefore, we need judges.

When it comes to freeriding, we all know there different terrain and ways to express oneself within this terrain coexist. The goal of this judging system is to allow any style of riding to win on any given day. Whether a rider’s strength is steep terrain, big airs, technical tricks or speed, each style should be able to win if on that day, the rider simply showed the most impressive run utilizing their own strengths. Riders should not have to adapt their riding to a system; the system should be adapted to freeriding.

So how can we create a judging system that is both fair and not restrictive?

Freeriding encounters the same dilemma as other sports such as surfing, skateboarding or freestyle skiing/snowboarding. These respective sports have all gone through their own distinct experiences and it is interesting to see that they all ended up with similar judging systems: systems with overall impression scores, given mostly by former riders respected by the new active generation.

This handbook is a work in progress; it will evolve and change to better accommodate the sport and the riders.

6.2 Overall Impression

In the past, we tried to have scores for each criteria (line, fluidity, control, air & style and technique). Points were added together to make a final score. A problem occurred with this system: one criteria would take too much value because it is easier to use the full scale on jumps than it is for control, fluidity or line. It made it difficult for someone riding steep and fast but with hardly any jumps to score well.

Criteria are linked together. Splitting these elements is more confusing than convenient. A judge has to ask himself at all times how fast, big and in control a rider is compared to how steep, exposed and in what snow conditions the action is happening to make up his mind. A split criteria structured mind is key to good overall impression judging.

6.3 How to judge

JUDGE WHILE WATCHING

The judge is not a passive spectator of the run, he should be actively judging while watching. Each judge should have a score of 5.0pts in his head when the rider starts his run. A good tip is to picture a thermometer scale. The temperature (score) goes up or down according to the rider's action on the slope. This way the judge has a score in his head at all times and can come up with a first impression score right away at the end of the descent.

BE COMMITTED

Judges are expected to act responsibly and respectfully. Athletes take their competitions very seriously. The judge's job is a commitment to quality.

SILENT WHILE JUDGING

Discussions between judges should be kept to the strict minimum. If a judge is commenting on the runs, he is influencing the other judges. Only the head judge is allowed to speak to individual judges or have all judges take part in a discussion if needed.

ACTION BONUSES & PENALTIES

A judge has to learn and update himself regularly about bonuses and penalties, which should be applied to riding sequences during a run. A judge must be able to measure the point change ("temperature" of the run) for each action he sees.

Action Bonuses & Penalties should be adapted to each discipline and gender and even to the event venue. The following "Action Bonuses & Penalties" list should not be used as precise values. It has to be adapted to the disciplines and the venue.

AIR & STYLE

Each jump will be judged on overall impression. A judge has to ask himself whether the rider rides out of the jump sequence with a bonus or a penalty. In order to build up this overall impression, the judge has to look at the size of the jump, the control in the air, the added style or trick and the landing.

6.4 Scale

It is very important that judges use the full scale and are not afraid to give high marks to good runs and low marks to bad runs. There is nothing worse for a judge than being stuck and having to judge a whole contest between 4 and 6.5. It is very important to use the full scale.

6.5 Judging Sheets

On the judging sheets, next to the riders' name is a graduated line, scaled from 0 to 10 with marks every tenth, giving judges 100 different possible scores.

The judges will mark their score with a pencil on this line. Next to the graduated line are comment boxes for each criteria. In these comment boxes, judges should write down what made this run special.

Line: where in the face/difficulty/originality/use of terrain

Air&Style: number of jumps/size/tricks/style/landings

Fluidity: relative speed/stops/hesitations/unnecessary crossing/hiking

Control: riding control issues

Technique: bad turns/power turns/side slipping/backseat riding/counter rotation/bad or good slough management

If there is nothing special to say in one criteria, judges don't have to write anything.

Next to the comment boxes are gauges. Judges should mark a line showing excellent/good/average/below average/poor. These gauges are there so that riders can understand in which criteria they have been penalized without having to be able to read the judges' handwriting.

Each judge should develop a systematic way of describing a run (for example:

BS= backslap/BF=Backflip/CW=cart wheel/BC=butt check/...S-/S/S+ for speed, etc.).

Using the same order and wording enables easy comment comparison of two runs with close scores. A well-described run gives a judge the ability to explain to individual riders where and how he gained or lost points.

In the Fluidity comment box, there is a time box where judges will write the time of the run, measured by a race official. This measure should only be used to help splitting identical runs. It is not criteria.

Next to the comment boxes is the score box where the judge will write his final score in numbers.

6.6 Number of Riders

It will be a different approach to judge an FWT event with 20 riders then an FWQ event with 90 riders at the start. During an FWT event, a judge should be able to remember all the runs of each rider in detail and judge by comparing all these runs with one another.

For an FWQ event, it is impossible to remember all the runs. Judges will have to remain focused, use their scoring lines to compare close scores and then compare their comment boxes to fine-tune their marks.

6.7 Setting First Scores

Judges should check the face, analyze possible lines, and imagine what could be an easy, medium or difficult line.

They should be informed of snow conditions to know if there will be heavy slough, perfect powder, crusty snow, ice or rocky sections.

Forerunners should be used to calibrate judging for the day.

The head judge will make sure that all judges agree on the first top, good, average, poor and bad scores and could open a discussion if opinions differ. All other runs from that day will be judged according to the first calibration.

6.8 One Minute of Judging

In most cases, judges will get about one minute to come up with a final score. This can be prolonged or shortened if all judges agree changes are needed. The head judge has a key role to intervene only if necessary, with confidence and solid arguments to avoid time loss.

6.9 Validation

At the end of the contest, the judges will get the overall results and ranking. They have 20 minutes to validate these results and are allowed to change scores if obvious mistakes happened. This is not the time to discuss if a rider should have been 5th or 6th but to check if someone who should have been ranked around 5th is somehow ending up 13th.

In the case judges can't agree, the head judge has the final call to decide on the final result. On the FWT tour, if live scoring is used, the scores cannot be revised after the contest. The live score is the final score. Together with the contest director, the head judge then signs and validates the result list.

6.10 Viewing Equipment

Judges will use binoculars, a TV screen or their bare eyes to judge. It is important that all judges use the same viewing system to avoid conflicts. If judges use binoculars, they should all have the same power.

6.11 Particular cases

NO FALL ZONE

Judges have to pay special attention to the location where a fall occurs. If a rider makes a mistake in a place where he is putting his life at risk because of extreme exposure, he must be strongly penalized. Riders have to understand they are not supposed to take unnecessary risks in highly exposed places.

STOP LANDINGS

Sometimes riders will decide to land in a way that they can stop themselves right away because there's no room in the fall line of the landing. Is this a crash? In order to decide whether they penalize this and to what degree, judges must consider questions such as: "Did it look intentional? Was there any other way through without stop landing?"

JUMP LANDINGS

This will always be the trickiest part of judging. How do we judge landings in a fair way without compromising progression of the sport and at the same time not giving bonuses to riders taking risks but not cleanly sticking it?

It is important that riders get the feeling that risk pays only if it is successful when they see their scores. But all crashes shouldn't have the same point consequences.

In order to judge landings in a fair way, here are a few tips to help judges decide on how much they will penalize a landing crash:

- a. Did the rider lose control in the air or did he just not stick his landing, even though he looked perfectly in position to stick it?
- b. Did the run lose its fluidity? Could the rider recover without losing his speed, or did the rider come to a complete stop?
- c. Could the rider recover right away or did he need 50m to get his act back together?
- d. Did the rider tumble head over heels before recovering, how many times?

- e. Did someone stick that same jump before and he just didn't?
- f. Was this landing as good as it could have been compared to the snow conditions and jump height?

Obviously, the same backslap or "butt check" will not be penalized the same on a 3m cliff versus a 15m cliff, or landing a 720° spin versus a basic straight jump.

7. JUDGES AND HEAD JUDGE ROLES

7.1 Judges Panel

Each Freeride World Tour contest will have two sets of judges—one for skiing and one for snowboarding. Each set is composed of three judges and one head judge. The score of the three judges are added together and divided by three. The head judge doesn't give points. He is there to control and assist the three judges.

In order to have an event running smoothly and without too much waiting between runs, all FWT and FWQ events should have two judge panels, one for ski and one for snowboard.

7.2 Consistency

The most important quality for a judge is his ability to remain focused for many hours in order to give every rider the same chances and a consistent level of judging.

The head judge has to check that all judges are working separately and not comparing scores. If a judge missed an action because he lost the rider for a couple of seconds with his binoculars, he is allowed to ask the head judge what he just missed.

7.3 Fluidity of the Event

The head judge should keep the event rolling and speed up the slow judges.

7.4 Scale

It is the head judge's duty to make sure the judges are using the full scale, especially when the first high score and the first low score should be given.

The head judge ensures that coherence is maintained in the overall judging of each run.

7.5 Judges Briefing

Judges should be at the competition site at least one day prior to the first possible competition day. On top of the briefing by the head judge and the organizers they will visit the competition site, the judges tent location, study the face and inform themselves about the snow conditions. At FWT competitions it is also mandatory for at least the head-judge to be present at the judge's tent when the head-guide rides the face one day prior to the event. When possible the head-judge should ask either for himself or one of his judges to ride the face with the head-guide to better feel what the conditions are like.

Looking at the venue before a competition, judges with the head-judge should imagine and evaluate possible lines in order to be able to decide, on contest day, from the first rider on, if he just saw an easy, medium or difficult line.

Judges should be present at the riders meeting the day before the contest to present themselves to the riders.

7.6 Judges Debriefing

The head judge organizes a post-contest debriefing with his team in order to improve their performance in future competitions.

The head judge and the judges stay at the disposal of the riders to answer questions.

The head judge stays at the disposal of the media to explain the judging system and comment on riders' scores.

The head judge then sends a brief summary of his evaluation of the competition and comments on the judging to the technical delegate of FWT Management SA, which will help improve the judging system in general.

7.7 Action Bonus & Penalties listing

HOW TO SCALE BONUSSES & PENALTIES:

Negative points

DENOMINATION	CRITERIA	DETAIL OF ACTION	PTS
Back seat (SKI) Hand drag/ body drag (SNB)	Air&Style	Skier is being compressed during landing and is touching snow/skis with his butt	-0.5 to -1
Light Backslap (SKI) Butt check (SNB)	Air&Style	During landing, skier touches the snow with his back. The skis stay flat on snow and in the fall line	-1 to -2
Full Backslap (SKI) Full Butt check (SNB)	Air&Style	During landing, skier/snowboarder touches heavily the snow with his back. The skis/board base are visible / sideways in the air	-2 to -2.5
Stops	Fluidity	0.1pts per seconds of stop	-0.1 / sec
Sliding	Technique	Not carving/riding in the fall line but side slipping	-0.1 to - ...
Loss of control while riding	Control	Nose of skis/board dive in the snow Catching a hidden rock > off balanced	-0.1 to - 0.5
Crashing while riding	Control	Simple crash (body fully touches snow)	-0.5 to - 1.5
Loss of control in the air	Air&Style	Arms flapping / body stretched	-0.1 to - 0.5
Hiking up	Line	On skis or "frog" technique on snowboard	-0.1 / sec
Full cartwheel	Control	Full tumble, head first deduction per lap:	

Positive points

Style / grab in the air	Air&Style	Grabs or stylish posture in the air brings bonuses to the rider	+0.1 to +0.5
180 or Half-cab (switch 180)	Air&Style	Depending on size of the jump	+0.2 to +0.5
Switch riding	Technique	If in control and same speed than normal	+0.2 to

			0.5
360 / Backflip	Air&Style	One full spin	+0.5 to +1
Side flips / Lincolns	Air&Style	Considered as a 360 / Backflip, but if stylish = gets as well the Style/Grab bonus	+0.5 to +1
720 / Double Backflip	Air&Style		+1 to +2
Superfast section	Fluidity	Straight down or fast through narrow chute	+0.2 to +2

7.8 Time

Although speed is an important aspect of a run, there will not be a minimum time limits set in order to receive a score.

Runs will be timed and this indicator should be written down in the Fluidity comment box. However, time should only be used as an indication or to split scores of similar runs, which were on the same exact line.

7.9 NS, DNS, DNF, DQ

NS: A rider who loses a ski during his run will get a NS (no score) on the final ranking list.

A snowboarder who has to take off his board or unbuckle one foot at any time during the run will get a NS.

If the finish line is hard to access without pushing, snowboarders will be allowed to take off one foot or their board without getting a NS.

All riders who are NS are ranked tied at the last place but are still getting the FWT/FWQ ranking points of the last placed rider.

In an event with 20 riders in which four riders lost a ski or didn't finish, the four riders are tied in 20th place and all will score the points of 20th place.

DNS: If a rider is registered for the event but fails to appear at the start they will get a DNS (did not start) on the final ranking list. The athlete will not receive any ranking points if this happens on qualifying day but will get the points of the last ranked rider after all NS and DNF if it happens on a final day. If someone qualified for the finals but can't compete the next day in case of injury, they should still get the points of last place on final day.

In an event's final day with 20 riders in which four riders did not start, the four riders are tied in 20th place and all will score the points of 20th place.

DNF: A rider who cannot finish their run in case of injury will get a DNF (did not finish) on the final ranking list. The rider will get the points of the last ranked rider tied with all NS.

In an event with 20 riders in which four riders lost a ski or didn't finish, the four riders are tied in 20th place and all will score the points of 20th place.

DQ: A rider could be DQ (disqualified) if they ride through a closed area or show up at the start without mandatory gear such as for example helmet, back protection, avalanche transceiver, backpack with shovel and probe, and harness if specified for the event. They will place last on the ranking, after all NS, DNF and DNS and will not score any points.

Athletes must score to place on the podium. In a case where a competition has less than three riders with scores, a podium may only be comprised of one or two riders. If all riders lose a ski during their run, there will be no winner. All the riders will score last position ranking points. (For example, all riders are getting the points of the 7th place in an event with seven riders at the start who all lost a ski.)

7.10 Training Method for Judges

This judging manual also serves as the basis for the training method for the judges, which has been developed together with the Pro Freeriders Board. The objectives of the training method are to improve the overall quality and coherence of the judging system at both the FWT and FWQ level. The judging method will consist of a series of tests for future FWT judges, who will have to judge past years' competition runs and/or do real time judging at competitions to become FWT certified judges.

8. CATEGORIES

For FWQ events with over 80 riders the SKI judges panel could judge only SKI Men when the SNOWBOARD judges panel could judge the other 3 categories (SKI Women, SNB Men, SNB Women) which would result in a faster running event and the same number of riders to judge for each panel.