

Date: 24.11.2024**Time:** 20:00 hrs**Subject:** STEWARDS DECISION No. 11**Document No:** 2.13

From: The Stewards
To: The Organisers of FORUM8 RALLY JAPAN 2024
Cc: All Competitors / crew members
All Officials
FIA WRC Commission
FIA Road Sport Committee
FIA Safety Committee
FIA Closed Road Commission
FIA Road Sport Director
ASN Japan Automobile Federation

The Stewards, having become aware about an incident occurred on SS12, having received a report from the Clerk of the Course and having heard from him on behalf of the Organiser, have considered the following matter and determine the following:

- Facts** On Saturday 23rd November 2024 at 10.33 hrs, a van with a sole occupant entered SS12 at Marshal Post 5 and was driven in the opposite direction for 520 m to the Start of SS12.
Marshal Post 5 was secured only by tape and Marshals, with no physical barrier in place, such as a vehicle parked across the road.
The incident was not immediately communicated to Rally Control by the Marshals officiating the Stage, with the first communication coming to the FIA Sporting Delegate in Rally Control via the Team Representative for Competitor No. 33.
When the van appeared in front of the Stage Commander, he stopped car No. 33 from starting the stage.
- Offence** Failure to take reasonable measures, thus resulting in an unsafe situation (2024 FIA International Sporting Code Article 12.2.1.h).
- Decision**
- 1- The Organisers shall be jointly and severally liable to pay a fine of **€ 50,000.00**
 - 2- An additional fine of **€ 100,000.00** is imposed on the Organisers which is applied with suspension of sentence subject to the following conditions:
 - a) The Organiser must conduct a full marshals' training with specific modules on road surveillance and communications in cooperation with a dedicated FIA Task Force, the FIA Safety Department and the ASN Japan Automobile Federation before the next WRC Rally Japan 2025.
The training results with a comprehensive presentation and report will be sent to the FIA Commissions and Committees above-mentioned.
 - b) No further breaches by the Organiser of Art. 12.2.1.h) of the 2024 FIA International Sporting Code in the next WRC Rally Japan 2025 (or the comparable Article in future editions of the FIA International Sporting Code if changed).
 - 3- The present decision to be forwarded to the above-mentioned FIA Commissions and Committees and to the ASN Japan Automobile Federation.

In accordance with Art. 12.8 of the 2024 FIA International Sporting Code, fines shall be paid within 48 hours of their notification. Any delay in making payment may entail Suspension during the period a fine remains unpaid.

Reason

As stipulated in Art. 11.11.3 of the 2024 FIA International Sporting Code, the Clerk of the Course is responsible for conducting the event in accordance with the applicable regulations. The Stewards summoned and heard from the Clerk of the Course, Mr. Haruo Takakuwa, on Saturday 23rd November 2024 at 12.30 hrs. The hearing was also attended by the Deputy Clerk of the Course, Mr. Osamu Yoda.

The Stewards required the Clerk of the Course to provide and put in place:

- a) An immediate action / contingency plan to ensure the safe running of the remainder of the Rally (Sections 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) and a contingency plan of any future risks of public vehicles entering onto Special Stages.
- b) A report detailing how a public vehicle accessed and entered SS12.

Furthermore, the Stewards informed the Clerk of the Course that under the authority provided to them by Article 11.9.3.r of the 2024 FIA International Sporting Code, they would immediately and permanently stop the Competition should the contingency plan be compromised or breached or should there be any deviation from the contingency plan agreed with the FIA Safety Delegate.

The hearing was adjourned until after the running of SS15.
The hearing was reconvened at 16.50 hrs.

The Clerk of Course reported that the contingency plan of ensuring that each accessible junction had a physical barrier of either a motor vehicle or water-filled blocks was put in place and that the remaining special stages on public roads of Saturday ran without further incidents.

The incident report regarding the invading vehicle was also submitted to the Stewards. An unknown van entered the stage on Saturday at 10:33 hrs by passing through the tape and past the Marshals at Marshal Post 5, approximately 520 m after the start of SS12.

The vehicle had previously breached two check points surveyed by Security Guards. Once in front of Marshal post 5, the car broke the restriction at that post 5 (520 m after the Start of SS12).

The car continued driving 520 m in the opposite direction of the Stage before stopping in front of Car No. 33 at the start of the Stage.

The car's driver did not follow the marshals' instructions, refusing to move his vehicle out of the way and therefore the Police were called.

The Police arrived at approximately 11:00 hrs and took the driver away.

Neither the Security Guards nor the Marshal at post 5 informed the officials at Rally Control.

The Stewards heard from Mr. Akira Toda, the Police and Gov't Liaison Officer, who confirmed that unfortunately the two check points surveyed by the Security Guards were assigned to two different companies and there was no communication between them. Therefore, the first opportunity to contact Rally Control was at Marshal Post 5, approximately 2 km after the driver breached the first check point.

The Deputy Clerk of the Course also informed the Stewards that unfortunately the Marshals through SS12 only had an internal radio network. The Marshal at post 5 informed the Start control but the person in charge at the Start did not inform the Rally Control immediately.

At that moment car No. 33 was at the Start of SS12 and when the unknown car appeared in front of the crew, the Co-driver immediately called his team, who informed the FIA Sporting Delegate at Rally Control. This was the first communication to Rally Control of the incident.

The SS12 was then immediately stopped.

The Clerk of the Course agreed with the Stewards that the incident occurred was serious and the lack of communications could have contributed to a serious accident.

It is imperative that human safety must be of the highest priority and the Clerk of the Course proposed to increase the safety measures to enable the event to continue in a safer manner. These measures include to block all junctions with a proper solid barrier. The Clerk of the Course worked in conjunction with the FIA Safety Delegate to validate these additional measures. The Stewards consider that it would be expected that these measures should have been put in place as part of the event Safety Plan.

The event continued to its conclusion without any further incident of the same nature.

Nevertheless, this issue cannot be considered as an isolated occurrence as in 2022 there was a similar case where a vehicle had entered a special stage from an unmarshalled junction where the taping was missing and in 2023 there was a similar case of lack of communication between the Zero Car and Rally Control, resulting in the first competition car on the stage coming across the Zero Car parked in the middle of the stage.

The Stewards concluded that the Organisers were in breach of Art. 12.2.1.h of the 2024 FIA International Sporting Code and in view of the severity of the offence a fine was imposed on the Organisers.

An additional fine was imposed on the Organisers with suspension of sentence in order to encourage the continuous improvement on marshals training with a specific focus on safety.

All interested parties are reminded that they have the right to appeal certain decisions of the Stewards, in accordance with Article 15 of the 2024 FIA International Sporting Code and Chapter 4 of the FIA Judicial and Disciplinary Rules.

The Stewards can be reached through the FIA WRC Stewards Secretary email address: wrcsecretary@fia.com



Edoardo Delleani
The Stewards



Wayne Christie



Kunihiro Tabata

RE: STEWARDS DECISION 11 – FORUM8 RALLY JAPAN 2024

This Stewards Individual Communication was notified verbally to and accepted by the Clerk of the Course. A physical copy was delivered by hand.

<i>Name (in block letters):</i>	HARUO TAKAKUWA	<i>Date:</i>	24.11.2024
<i>Position:</i>	CLERK OF THE COURSE	<i>Time:</i>	21:23

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