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Athletes Told They Can't Wear Memorial Stickers on Helmets

By The Moscow Times

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SOCHI — Athletes at the Sochi Games will not be allowed to use helmet stickers as a mark of respect for Canadian freestyle skier Sarah Burke, who died in an accident two years ago, the International Olympic Committee said Monday.

The IOC has told at least one athlete, Australian snowboarder Tora Bright, to refrain from using a sticker.

"It is not the rule that really is very important at all actually," said IOC spokesman Mark Adams. "In cases like this rules are not the most important thing. For us it is a question of what is appropriate and where would be the best place.

"We are very keen to help people who want to have a remembrance or do something and to do that in what would be the appropriate place," he said.

"We have, as with a lot of the athletes here, huge sympathy. She really needs to be well remembered ... and absolutely, we want to help the athletes to remember her in some way and there are all sorts of things we can do."

He said the IOC could help organize another event or news conference to remember multiple Games champion Burke, who died in January 2012 from injuries sustained in a training crash in Park City, Utah.

Burke had successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the superpipe event at this year's Sochi Games and several athletes have been seen wearing tape on their foot straps with her name written on it.

"I ride with a Sarah sticker on my snowboard and helmet always. The IOC however, consider Sarah stickers 'a political statement' and have banned them. WOW," Bright wrote on social networking site Instagram.

The IOC also sent a letter to the Norwegian Olympic Committee reminding them that their decision to wear black armbands in memory of an athlete's relative who had died before the start of the Olympics in Russia was inappropriate.

The brother of cross-country skier Astrid Uhrenholdt Jacobsen died suddenly a day before the Games opened and they wanted to commemorate him and support their athlete.

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