

# Vanessa Mae Gets 4-Year Ski Ban For Fixing Her Way Into Sochi Olympics

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Vanessa Mae, competing for Thailand under her father's name Vanakorn, skis during the first run of the women's alpine skiing giant slalom event at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics at the Rosa Khutor Alpine Center, in this file picture taken Feb. 18, 2014.

Pop violinist Vanessa Mae has been banned by the International Ski Federation for four years over the manipulation of giant slalom races which allowed her to qualify for Russia's Sochi Olympic Games at the last minute.

A panel from the world ski agency, or ISF, also banned five officials, including the race chief, starter and FIS technical delegate, for between one and two years over the four giant slalom races at Krvavec, Slovenia in January which were organized at the request of Mae's manager.

The results gave Mae the number of FIS points necessary to be able to take part in Sochi.

FIS listed a series of irregularities such as official results including competitors who had not taken part and races staged in irregular weather conditions.

"The Hearing Panel found to its comfortable satisfaction that the results of the four ladies giant slalom races that took place on Jan. 18 and 19 at Krvavec were manipulated," said the FIS in a statement.

The manipulation resulted in "the calculation of FIS Points that do not reflect the true performance of the competitors that participated in those events and in particular the points awarded to Vanessa Vanakorn [Mae]."

Mae, a British citizen, competed for Thailand at the Games in Russia in February under her father's surname of Vanakorn, finishing a distant last of the 67 finishers in the giant slalom.

"The results of two giant slalom races on Jan. 19 included a competitor who was not present at, and did not participate in, the Krvavec competitions," said FIS.

"Another competitor was placed second in one race despite the fact she fell. Her time is understood to have been adjusted afterwards by more than 10 seconds."

"At least one competitor started away from the starting gate outside the automatic timing wand that was manually opened by the starter when she was already on the course."

It went on to list five further irregularities and said "the competitions were organized at the request of the management of Vanessa Vanakorn, through the Thai Olympic Committee in its capacity as the FIS member national ski association".

The panel said it would recommend that the FIS council, which next meets on Nov. 18, annul the results of the races and eliminate all points earned by all competitors.

Countries which did not have a skier ranked among the world's top 500 were allowed to send one male and one female skier to the Winter Olympics if they met a high enough standard.

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