

Community urged to support Olympic rules on brand protection and advertising

Spectators as well as competitors all need to play by the Olympic rules on brand protection and advertising during the staging of the equestrian events in Hong Kong, the Director of Intellectual Property, Mr Stephen Selby, said today (August 2).

Speaking at a press briefing on protecting intellectual property, Mr Selby said there was a dress code for spectators as well as competitors at every Olympic event.

“The 'rules of the game' do not just apply to competitors. Spectators and the host city all have to play fair as well,” he added.

Mr Selby said Olympic Games rules expressly prohibited advertising inside the spectator areas at Olympic venues, noting that not even official sponsors were allowed to advertise inside the spectator areas.

He added that no form of advertising or other publicity was allowed in and above the stadia, venues and other competition areas that were also considered part of the Olympic sites. Commercial installations and advertising signs are not allowed in the stadia, venues or other sports grounds.

He said spectators needed to check the rules written on their admission tickets.

“If spectators are wearing clothes or carrying accessories with large or obvious advertising messages on them, they can be required to remove them or cover them up.

“That is one of the conditions under which they are allowed into the venue to watch the event,” he said.

Mr Selby appealed to the public to follow the dress code and co-operate with staff at the equestrian events venues.

He said normal brand names on clothing would not be a problem.

He also appealed to the public not to be tempted to accept commercial promotional items that might be given away for free near Olympic event venues.

“It would be disappointing to accept a branded gift item but then have to leave it

outside when you go through the ticket barrier,” he said.

“In previous Olympic events, there was a situation where blocks of spectators carried similar branded items that had been handed out for free by certain advertisers. We want to avoid that in Hong Kong because it falls foul of the rules laid down by the Olympic authorities,” he added.

Mr Selby said the Government had done much work in the past year to educate the business community and advertisers about “fair play in commerce” for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

“We have been heartened to see such a high degree of co-operation from the business community,” he said.

“Hong Kong businesses also have their corporate brands to protect, so they understand why the Olympic Games and their official sponsors go to such lengths to protect their brand names.

“The huge majority of companies and businesses in Hong Kong have worked very responsibly.”

The House Rules for the 2008 Beijing Olympics Equestrian Events can be viewed at www.equestrian2008.org, under the section on "Spectators". For further information, please contact Miss Vivian Tang at 2961 6879.

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