

COURT OF APPEALS

JUDGEMENT OF THE COURT OF APPEALS Lincoln Larson vs. SOM COA Ref. No. 26-04-SE April 08, 2026

FACTS IN BRIEF

On March 8, 2026, following Race 2 for Group 6 at the Hoosier Racing Tire SCCA Super Tour at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, Jason Fichter, driver of Spec MX-5 (SMX) #7, filed a Protest against Lincoln Larson, driver of SMX #16, alleging the use of a “non OE oil filter” in violation of General Competition Rules (GCR) 9.1.7.1.D.6.13.a.

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM), George DeLong, Paul Gauzens, and Thomas Kirchman (Chair) met, heard witnesses, and reviewed the evidence. The SOM determined the oil filter in SMX #16 when examined and photographed in post-race impound was not an OE replacement filter. The SOM penalized Mr. Larson with loss of position, moving him behind all compliant cars and assessed 0 points on his competition license.

Mr. Larson appealed the decision of the SOM.

DATES OF THE COURT

The SCCA Court of Appeals (COA) Scott Bowman, Jack Kish, and Laurie Sheppard (Chair) met on April 2, 2026, to review, hear, and render a decision on the appeal.

DOCUMENTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE RECEIVED AND REVIEWED

1. Request to Appeal from Lincoln Larson, submitted March 16, 2026.
2. Official Observers Report and related documents, received March 25, 2026.
3. Additional witness statement from Bob Stretch, received March 25, 2026.
4. Additional witness statement from Logan Stretch, received March 25, 2026.
5. Chair SOM's Response to Appeal, received March 27, 2026.
6. Race Director's Response to Appeal, received March 31, 2026.

FINDINGS

In his appeal, Mr. Larson asserted Mr. Fichter did not submit the protest within the required 30-minute time frame following the end of the Group 6 race as required by GCR 8.3.1.F. (Cars in impound may be protested within 30 minutes after any session.) He further stated the oil filter part number is not stated in the rule set although some other part numbers are. Mr. Larson also said there was no notation made in SMX #16's logbook although GCR 8.3.3. states, “Non-compliant item(s) will be noted in the car's

Vehicle Logbook.” He argued the protested drivers were told they could leave the impound area, but before they could do so, they were told they must remain – in his words, they were “reimpounded” without authority.

The SOM combined the protests against Cars #16, #48, #57 and #83 as all protests were identical and considered all as one. After consulting Race Director Kathy Barnes, the SOM accepted the protest as timely due to circumstances beyond the control of the protestor. The SOM interviewed Mr. Larson, driver of #16, Gavin Vaughan, driver of #48, and Johannes Saito, entrant for #57 and #83. The SOM reviewed pertinent GCR technical specifications, the Technical Inspection Report for each car prepared by Class Compliance Chief Scott Schmidt, and examined photographs of each car’s oil filter in place during post-race impound. The SOM concluded the oil filter on each of the four cars was not an OE engine oil filter.

The COA notes GCR 8.3.1.F. states in its preamble to the time limit table, “...the SOM may extend the time in cases where the protestor can show ... they were unable to meet the deadline because of circumstances beyond their control.” Testimony from Race Director Kathy Barnes described Mr. Fichter’s attempt to file the protest before she was available to receive it due to her responsibility to review other on-track issues during the race. The documented receipt time of the protest by the Race Director is 3:00pm. SOM Chair Tom Kirchman documented the SOM’s consideration of circumstances beyond the protestor’s control which caused the SOM to accept the protest with a justified 11-minute delay.

The COA reviewed all documents and photos considered by the SOM and researched the public availability of required parts information both in the GCR and on the internet. GCR 9.1.7.1.D.6.13.a. says, “OE engine oil filter is required; no substitutions permitted.” GCR Appendix F. Technical Glossary contains the following definition: “OE – The described part is that which came on the vehicle or that which would be purchased from the original vehicle manufacturer or an authorized dealer for replacement.” An internet search for “OE engine oil filter for 2012 Mazda MX-5” (an eligible car for the SMX class) returned multiple sources for Mazda part number LF05-14-302B to be used for MX-5 model years 2006-2015. GCR 9.1.7.1.C. says in part, “If the Mazda Factory Manual or these rules provide only a partial specification or no specification at all, the Mazda parts may not be modified beyond what is permitted in these rules.”

GCR 5.12.3.C.4. authorizes a Race Director or Chief Steward to “Direct cars to be impounded at any time during the event.” The COA finds the four protested cars were impounded under the authority of the Race Director and examined for violations alleged in Mr. Fichter’s protest. The SOM carefully determined the protest was submitted per the GCR and their ruling was thoughtfully considered and consistent with the General Competition Rules and the penalty guidelines. Although the non-compliance was not

documented in the vehicle's logbook, that oversight alone is not sufficient grounds to overrule the SOM decision.

The COA finds the SOM acted within their authority and made a thoughtful and reasoned decision based on the evidence. The penalty assessed was within their purview. However, they did not apply the appropriate penalty points under GCR 7.4.A. which states, "Penalties assessed by the SOM ...accumulate points on the member's record according to the following schedule". A penalty of Loss of Finishing Position accrues 2 penalty points on the member's competition license.

DECISION

The Court of Appeals upholds the decision of the SOM with the addition of 2 penalty points on Mr. Larson's competition license. Mr. Larson's appeal is well founded, and his appeal fee, less the amount retained by SCCA, will be returned.

COURT OF APPEALS

JUDGEMENT OF THE COURT OF APPEALS Gavin Vaughan vs. SOM COA Ref. No. 26-05-SE April 08, 2026

FACTS IN BRIEF

On March 8, 2026, following Race 2 for Group 6 at the Hoosier Racing Tire SCCA Super Tour at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, Jason Fichter, driver of Spec MX-5 (SMX) #7, filed a Protest against Gavin Vaughan, driver of SMX #48, alleging the use of a “non OE oil filter” in violation of General Competition Rules (GCR) 9.1.7.1.D.6.13.a.

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM), George DeLong, Paul Gauzens, and Thomas Kirchman (Chair) met, heard witnesses, and reviewed the evidence. The SOM determined the oil filter in SMX #48 when examined and photographed in post-race impound was not an OE replacement filter. The SOM penalized Mr. Vaughan with loss of position, moving him behind all compliant cars and assessed 0 points on his competition license.

Mr. Vaughan appealed the decision of the SOM.

DATES OF THE COURT

The SCCA Court of Appeals (COA) Scott Bowman, Jack Kish, and Laurie Sheppard (Chair) met on April 2, 2026, to review, hear, and render a decision on the appeal.

DOCUMENTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE RECEIVED AND REVIEWED

1. Request to Appeal from Gavin Vaughan, submitted March 16, 2026.
2. Official Observers Report and related documents, received March 25, 2026.
3. Additional witness statement from Bob Stretch, received March 25, 2026.
4. Additional witness statement from Logan Stretch, received March 25, 2026.
5. Chair SOM's Response to Appeal, received March 27, 2026.
6. Race Director's Response to Appeal, received March 31, 2026.

FINDINGS

In his appeal, Mr. Vaughan asserted Mr. Fichter did not submit the protest within the required 30-minute time frame following the end of the Group 6 race as required by GCR 8.3.1.F. (Cars in impound may be protested within 30 minutes after any session.) He further stated the oil filter part number is not stated in the rule set although some other part numbers are. Mr. Vaughan also said there was no notation made in SMX #48's logbook although GCR 8.3.3. states, “Non-compliant item(s) will be noted in the

car's Vehicle Logbook." He argued the protested drivers were told they could leave the impound area, but before they could do so, they were told they must remain – in his words, they were "reimpounded" without authority.

The SOM combined the protests against Cars #16, #48, #57 and #83 as all protests were identical and considered all as one. After consulting Race Director Kathy Barnes, the SOM accepted the protest as timely due to circumstances beyond the control of the protestor. The SOM interviewed Lincoln Larson, driver of #16, Mr. Vaughan, driver of #48, and Johannes Saito, entrant for #57 and #83. The SOM reviewed pertinent GCR technical specifications, the Technical Inspection Report for each car prepared by Class Compliance Chief Scott Schmidt, and examined photographs of each car's oil filter in place during post-race impound. The SOM concluded the oil filter on each of the four cars was not an OE engine oil filter.

The COA notes GCR 8.3.1.F. states in its preamble to the time limit table, "...the SOM may extend the time in cases where the protestor can show ... they were unable to meet the deadline because of circumstances beyond their control." Testimony from Race Director Kathy Barnes described Mr. Fichter's attempt to file the protest before she was available to receive it due to her responsibility to review other on-track issues during the race. The documented receipt time of the protest by the Race Director is 3:00pm. SOM Chair Tom Kirchman documented the SOM's consideration of circumstances beyond the protestor's control which caused the SOM to accept the protest with a justified 11-minute delay.

The COA reviewed all documents and photos considered by the SOM and researched the public availability of required parts information both in the GCR and on the internet. GCR 9.1.7.1.D.6.13.a. says, "OE engine oil filter is required; no substitutions permitted." GCR Appendix F. Technical Glossary contains the following definition: "OE – The described part is that which came on the vehicle or that which would be purchased from the original vehicle manufacturer or an authorized dealer for replacement." An internet search for "OE engine oil filter for 2012 Mazda MX-5" (an eligible car for the SMX class) returned multiple sources for Mazda part number LF05-14-302B to be used for MX-5 model years 2006-2015. GCR 9.1.7.1.C. says in part, "If the Mazda Factory Manual or these rules provide only a partial specification or no specification at all, the Mazda parts may not be modified beyond what is permitted in these rules."

GCR 5.12.3.C.4. authorizes a Race Director or Chief Steward to "Direct cars to be impounded at any time during the event." The COA finds the four protested cars were impounded under the authority of the Race Director and examined for violations alleged in Mr. Fichter's protest. The SOM carefully determined the protest was submitted per the GCR and their ruling was thoughtfully considered and consistent with the General Competition Rules and the penalty guidelines. Although the non-compliance was not

documented in the vehicle's logbook, that oversight alone is not sufficient grounds to overrule the SOM decision.

The COA finds the SOM acted within their authority and made a thoughtful and reasoned decision based on the evidence. The penalty assessed was within their purview. However, they did not apply the appropriate penalty points under GCR 7.4.A. which states, "Penalties assessed by the SOM ...accumulate points on the member's record according to the following schedule". A penalty of Loss of Finishing Position accrues 2 penalty points on the member's competition license.

DECISION

The Court of Appeals upholds the decision of the SOM with the addition of 2 penalty points on Mr. Vaughan's competition license. Mr. Vaughan's appeal is well founded, and his appeal fee, less the amount retained by SCCA, will be returned.

COURT OF APPEALS

JUDGEMENT OF THE COURT OF APPEALS Johannes Saito vs. SOM COA Ref. No. 26-06-SE April 08, 2026

FACTS IN BRIEF

On March 8, 2026, following Race 2 for Group 6 at the Hoosier Racing Tire SCCA Super Tour at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, Jason Fichter, driver of Spec MX-5 (SMX) #7, filed a Protest against Tyler Gonzalez, driver of SMX #57, alleging the use of a “non OE oil filter” in violation of General Competition Rules (GCR) 9.1.7.1.D.13.a.

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM), George DeLong, Paul Gauzens, and Thomas Kirchman (Chair) met, heard witnesses, and reviewed the evidence. The SOM determined the oil filter in SMX #57 when examined and photographed in post-race impound was not an OE replacement filter. The SOM penalized Mr. Gonzalez with loss of position, moving him behind all compliant cars and assessed 0 points on his competition license.

Johannes Saito, entrant for SMX #57, appealed the decision of the SOM.

DATES OF THE COURT

The SCCA Court of Appeals (COA) Scott Bowman, Jack Kish, and Laurie Sheppard (Chair) met on April 2, 2026, to review, hear, and render a decision on the appeal.

DOCUMENTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE RECEIVED AND REVIEWED

1. Request to Appeal from Johannes Saito, submitted March 18, 2026.
2. Official Observers Report and related documents, received March 25, 2026.
3. Chair SOM's Response to Appeal, received March 27, 2026.
4. Race Director's Response to Appeal, received March 31, 2026.

FINDINGS

In his appeal, Mr. Saito asserted Mr. Fichter did not present the protest within the required 30-minute time frame following the end of the Group 6 race as required by GCR 8.3.1.F. (Cars in impound may be protested within 30 minutes after any session.) He further stated “the rules are the rules and should be applied equally to all competitors” while arguing the protest should be voided as it was filed after the deadline cited above.

The SOM combined the protests against Cars #16, #48, #57 and #83 as all protests were identical and considered all as one. After consulting Race Director Kathy Barnes,

the SOM accepted the protest as timely due to circumstances beyond the control of the protestor. The SOM interviewed Lincoln Larson, driver of #16, Gavin Vaughn, driver of #48, and Mr. Saito, entrant for #57 and #83. The SOM reviewed pertinent GCR technical specifications, the Technical Inspection Report for each car prepared by Class Compliance Chief Scott Schmidt, and examined photographs of each car's oil filter in place during post-race impound. The SOM concluded the oil filter on each of the four cars was not an OE engine oil filter.

The COA notes GCR 8.3.1.F. states in its preamble to the time limit table, "...the SOM may extend the time in cases where the protestor can show ... they were unable to meet the deadline because of circumstances beyond their control." Testimony from Race Director Kathy Barnes described Mr. Fichter's attempt to file the protest before she was available to receive it due to her responsibility to review other on-track issues during the race. The documented receipt time of the protest by the Race Director is 3:00pm. SOM Chair Tom Kirchman documented the SOM's consideration of circumstances beyond the protestor's control which caused the SOM to accept the protest with a justified 11-minute delay.

The COA finds the SOM acted within their authority and made a thoughtful and reasoned decision based on the evidence. The penalty assessed was within their purview. However, they did not apply the appropriate penalty points under GCR 7.4.A. which states, "Penalties assessed by the SOM ...accumulate points on the member's record according to the following schedule". A penalty of Loss of Finishing Position accrues 2 penalty points on the member's competition license.

DECISION

The Court of Appeals upholds the decision of the SOM with the addition of 2 penalty points on Mr. Gonzalez's competition license. Mr. Saito's appeal is well founded, and his appeal fee, less the amount retained by SCCA, will be returned.

COURT OF APPEALS

JUDGEMENT OF THE COURT OF APPEALS Johannes Saito vs. SOM COA Ref. No. 26-07-SE April 08, 2026

FACTS IN BRIEF

On March 8, 2026, following Race 2 for Group 6 at the Hoosier Racing Tire SCCA Super Tour at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta, Jason Fichter, driver of Spec MX-5 (SMX) #7, filed a Protest against Nate Cicero, driver of SMX #83, alleging the use of a “non OE oil filter” in violation of General Competition Rules (GCR) 9.1.7.1.D.13.a.

The Stewards of the Meeting (SOM), George DeLong, Paul Gauzens, and Thomas Kirchman (Chair) met, heard witnesses, and reviewed the evidence. The SOM determined the oil filter in SMX #83 when examined and photographed in post-race impound was not an OE replacement filter. The SOM penalized Mr. Cicero with loss of position, moving him behind all compliant cars and assessed 0 points on his competition license.

Johannes Saito, entrant for SMX #83, appealed the decision of the SOM.

DATES OF THE COURT

The SCCA Court of Appeals (COA) Scott Bowman, Jack Kish, and Laurie Sheppard (Chair) met on April 2, 2026, to review, hear, and render a decision on the appeal.

DOCUMENTS AND OTHER EVIDENCE RECEIVED AND REVIEWED

1. Request to Appeal from Johannes Saito, submitted March 18, 2026.
2. Official Observers Report and related documents, received March 25, 2026.
3. Chair SOM's Response to Appeal, received March 27, 2026.
4. Race Director's Response to Appeal, received March 31, 2026.

FINDINGS

In his appeal, Mr. Saito asserted Mr. Fichter did not present the protest within the required 30-minute time frame following the end of the Group 6 race as required by GCR 8.3.1.F. (Cars in impound may be protested within 30 minutes after any session.) He further stated “the rules are the rules and should be applied equally to all competitors” while arguing the protest should be voided as it was filed after the deadline cited above.

The SOM combined the protests against Cars #16, #48, #57 and #83 as all protests were identical and considered all as one. After consulting Race Director Kathy Barnes,

the SOM accepted the protest as timely due to circumstances beyond the control of the protestor. The SOM interviewed Lincoln Larson, driver of #16, Gavin Vaughn, driver of #48, and Mr. Saito, entrant for #57 and #83. The SOM reviewed pertinent GCR technical specifications, the Technical Inspection Report for each car prepared by Class Compliance Chief Scott Schmidt, and examined photographs of each car's oil filter in place during post-race impound. The SOM concluded the oil filter on each of the four cars was not an OE engine oil filter.

The COA notes GCR 8.3.1.F. states in its preamble to the time limit table, "...the SOM may extend the time in cases where the protestor can show ... they were unable to meet the deadline because of circumstances beyond their control." Testimony from Race Director Kathy Barnes described Mr. Fichter's attempt to file the protest before she was available to receive it due to her responsibility to review other on-track issues during the race. The documented receipt time of the protest by the Race Director is 3:00pm. SOM Chair Tom Kirchman documented the SOM's consideration of circumstances beyond the protestor's control which caused the SOM to accept the protest with a justified 11-minute delay.

The COA finds the SOM acted within their authority and made a thoughtful and reasoned decision based on the evidence. The penalty assessed was within their purview. However, they did not apply the appropriate penalty points under GCR 7.4.A. which states, "Penalties assessed by the SOM ...accumulate points on the member's record according to the following schedule". A penalty of Loss of Finishing Position accrues 2 penalty points on the member's competition license.

DECISION

The Court of Appeals upholds the decision of the SOM with the addition of 2 penalty points on Mr. Cicero's competition license. Mr. Saito's appeal is well founded, and his appeal fee, less the amount retained by SCCA, will be returned.