

7th RGNUL Sports & Entertainment Law Mediation Competition

25th - 27th April, 2025

GENERAL INFORMATION



FINAL ROUND

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Final Round: General Information

A Deep Dive into the Exciting World of Adaptive Chassis Control System (ACCS)

BRIEF ON THE PARTIES

As the 2025 Formula 1 season nears its conclusion, the fight for the Drivers' and Team Championships between Apex GP and Falcon Racing has been overshadowed by controversy. With just two races remaining, every strategic and technical advantage was under scrutiny and Falcon Racing's Adaptive Chassis Control System (ACCS), an advanced aerodynamic innovation that had provided the team with a clear competitive edge, has been dragged into the spotlight.

Falcon Racing had adapted ACCS earlier in the season, a system developed in collaboration with Innovatech Systems. The technology allegedly dynamically adjusted the aerodynamic balance of the car in real-time. Throughout the season, Falcon's on-track dominance in high-speed corners had been attributed to superior engineering and no formal complaints were lodged. Falcon's cars had also undergone several compliance checks as per the Council for Aerodynamic & Driver Regulation's (CADR) Technical Regulations. However, no irregularities were reported. Due to the competitive nature of Formula 1, Falcon had not disclosed any information regarding the existence or working of the ACCS with the media or competing teams. It is pertinent to note that teams are not required to mandatorily disclose the implementation of new technologies or systems as long as it is compliant with the CADR Technical Regulations. The onus is on the CADR to screen teams for anomalies.

BACKGROUND OF FACTS

Following the Japanese Grand Prix in November, and during the month-long break before the Brazil Grand Prix, Apex GP began raising serious concerns behind closed doors. Team engineers analyzing Falcon's race data suspected that Falcon Racing was influencing aerodynamics mid-race, exploiting a regulatory loophole. Apex argues/claims that the system violates the fundamental principles of fair competition by exploiting a regulatory loophole, specifically Article 3.15 of the CADR Technical Regulations, which governs the legality of aerodynamic components:

“Any system or device that affects aerodynamic performance must be rigidly attached to the chassis of the car and remain immobile under normal operating conditions. Any mechanism that actively alters aerodynamic characteristics while the car is in motion, unless explicitly permitted, is prohibited. Compliance shall be determined through static testing and any further evaluations deemed necessary by CADR.”

Apex contends that the dynamic functionality of the ACCS in live race conditions allows Falcon to optimize aerodynamic performance in a way not anticipated by the regulations. Apex further contends that it may also be the reason why no irregularities are picked up during the static testing. Apex believes that this indirect manipulation of aerodynamic properties breaches the intent of Article 3.15, granting Falcon an unfair advantage that goes beyond traditional car setup strategies.

Falcon, in response, insists that their cars have passed all CADR-mandated static compliance tests throughout the season and that there is nothing illegal about their cars. Falcon believes that it has merely operated within the technical guidelines and that the ACCS is groundbreaking, but legal innovation, comparable to past advancements in aerodynamics and energy efficiency. Falcon Racing is rather concerned that a formal investigation of the ACCS by the CADR at the bequest of Apex, which would require them to hand over confidential information to the CADR and the complainant, could result in a leak of their intellectual property. The same could be adapted by Apex and other teams, effectively vaporising their advantage.

THE DISPUTE AND THE CALL FOR MEDIATION

The situation escalated when confidential ACCS data was leaked to the media, exposing certain proprietary design details and software algorithms. While the leak was not sufficient to replicate the ACCS technology, the leak has severely impacted Falcon Racing, whose engineers spent years developing the technology. Falcon has accused Apex GP of orchestrating the breach, arguing that the timing of the leak, just as Apex began calling ACCS into question suggests a deliberate attempt to pressure CADR into action. Apex has denied any involvement, maintaining that its opposition to ACCS is based purely on competitive integrity. The CADR, caught in the middle of growing speculation, had not yet conducted dynamic tests to validate either claim. It is of note that such dynamic tests are unheard of and have never been implemented before in Formula 1.

Meanwhile, in July 2025, an internal Innovatech Systems dispute had surfaced, with a senior engineer, Nardwuar Newey, resigning and reportedly joining Apex GP. This fuelled further tensions, as Falcon suspected that confidential data had changed hands, while Apex GP dismissed the claims as an attempt to deflect scrutiny from Falcon's questionable advantage.

Despite the rising tensions, both teams have refrained from filing an official protest with CADR. A full-scale investigation would likely have disastrous consequences, potential disqualifications, a mid-season rule change, or even litigation over leaked intellectual property. Any FIA ruling at this stage could invalidate results, cast doubt on the championship outcome, or force last-minute technical restrictions that neither team could afford.

Instead, both teams agreed to resolve the matter through mediation, seeking a solution that would preserve competitive integrity while avoiding a regulatory crisis. Apex GP called for a mediation between the team principals and Falcon agreed to the same, making them the Requesting and Responding Party respectively. Apex GP's team principal, Zak Black, is represented by Enzo Auditore and Falcon Racing's team principal, Toto Horner, is represented by Godric Latifi. With only two races remaining, and with the season and reputations on the line, both teams have entered mediation with the goal of reaching a mutually acceptable resolution, one that avoids a formal CADR ruling while ensuring the championship's integrity remains intact.