

First case arising from death of unregistered runner heard in Xiamen



Medical staff gives first aid to Wu, who fell down at Xiamen International Half-Marathon, Dec 10, 2016.[Photo/Sina Weibo]

The first case related to the death of an unregistered runner in China has been heard by a local court in Xiamen, Fujian province, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The runner, surnamed Wu, died after crossing the finish line in the Xiamen International Half-Marathon in December.

An investigation found that Wu was not registered to race, but had procured a number bib from a woman surnamed Li. In January, Wu's wife, surnamed Liang, filed a lawsuit against both the half-marathon organizers and Li, seeking 1.23 million yuan (\$180,000) in compensation.

The Xiamen's Haicang District People's Court accepted the case.

The increasing popularity of running in China has produced a second-hand trade in bibs allowing those that miss out on the lottery to buy a place in a race.

The court must decide whether the organizer should be blamed for a lack of supervision during the race, whether Li's behavior should be treated as goodwill or not, and whether there was a causal link between her behavior and Wu's death.

According to Liang, the organizer should take responsibility for her husband's death as the running number Wu began with an "F" for "female", a clear indication that it was not his bib. She also argued Li bears some responsibility because marathon running requires real name registration and privately trading number bibs is not allowed.

The organizer insists they are not liable for compensation as Wu's death was unpredictable.

The organizer reportedly paid Wu's family 100,000 yuan earlier for humanitarian purposes.

Three judges and four jurors presided over the hearing and are yet to hand down their judgement.

The judgment will set a precedent for other sports lawsuits.