



Judges pull pin on Shane

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AN ILLAWARRA tradesman has returned from the International WorldSkills competition with an eighth placing.

Shane Ashton, 22, travelled to Calgary, Canada recently to represent Australia at this year's International WorldSkills Competition.

Individuals from 26 different trade and skill categories, including carpentry, horticulture, hairdressing and plumbing were selected as part of the 29-member Skillaroos team.

Mr Ashton, who lives in Kiama and works at K & R Fabrications at Unanderra competed in the "Construction Steel Work" category, where more than 50 countries were represented.

However, Shane's father Greg said a "harsh" penalty prevented Shane from attaining a higher-placed finish.

"With less than one minute left on the third day Shane removed a pin from his fabrication to fill a hole," Greg said.

"When time was up that pin had not been replaced.

"Although the pin was supplied and had nothing to do with his ability at all, one of the judges protested that his work was not assembled.



Penalty pain - Shane Ashton picked up an eighth placing.

"It took five seconds to replace the pin however one of the judges protested that time was up.

"The ridiculous penalty was six points in every 100 plummeting him from clear third to eighth position.

"With only one day to go it was impossible to make up that many points.

"It broke my heart to watch something like that

happen to someone that worked so hard. "It still hurts.

"Even on the last day of competition Shane gave it all right to the end.

"We are so proud of him and the manner in which he handled himself."

While disappointed with the result, Shane said he was also "pretty happy" with the way he performed.

"You can't change what's happened," he said.

"It seemed unfair, because it wasn't based on an actual skill, but you can't change it.

"I was very happy with my job; it was better quality than most of them and knowing that I could compete with the best was great."

Chairperson of the TAFE Illawarra Regional Committee Troy Everett said he was extremely impressed with Shane's performance.

"Shane put absolutely everything into his training and competition," Mr Everett said.

"It has been great to see him grow from a hardworking apprentice to a very skilled and confident tradesperson," Mr Everett said.