



MULTI-SPORT  
ORGANIZATION

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALL USA DANCE MEMBERS, ASSOCIATES,  
SUPPORTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE DANCE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

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### **LANDMARK DECISION AT THE WDSF 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **WORLD DANCESPORT FEDERATION REMOVES ALL SUSPENSIONS AFFECTING DANCESPORT ATHLETES, OFFICIALS PARTICIPATING OUTSIDE OF WDSF EVENTS, REINSTATING ALL PREVIOUSLY SUSPENDED MEMBERS**

USA Dance, member organization of the World DanceSport Federation for the United States, is pleased to announce that the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) at its 2012 Annual General Meeting in Berlin, Germany, in a landmark decision, has removed all suspensions affecting DanceSport athletes and officials participating outside of sanctioned-WDSF competitions, and will reinstate immediately all previously suspended athletes to active member status.

USA Dance Executive Committee representatives attending the WDSF AGM were Ken Richards, DanceSport Vice President, and Lydia Scardina, President. USA Dance united with eight additional National Governing Bodies representing the countries of Canada, Germany, Sweden, New Zealand, Finland, Iceland, Wales and Denmark. The nine-country group had joined together to defend the athlete's "freedom to participate" in DanceSport competitions and events throughout the world, a policy that USA Dance has strongly defended in the United States for both athletes and officials. At the meeting itself, the nine countries were joined by additional supporting countries, which included Portugal and England, whose representatives spoke in support of removing the WDSF suspensions.

At the WDSF meeting, USA Dance and Denmark also presented letters from their respective National Olympic Committees, outlining why the WDSF policy of suspending athletes was not acceptable under the provisions of the Olympic Charter and the laws of individual nations.

Among the most significant statements during the WDSF meeting was read from the letter provided by the United States Olympic Committee to USA Dance and presented by USA Dance President Scardina:

“. . . athletes should not be used as pawns in disagreements between sports organizations. Stated in another way, athletes should not be used as a way to gain an advantage by one organization over another. This not only is in violation of the athlete's right to practice sport,

but merely causes retaliation by both organizations against athletes who compete in the other organization's events, placing the athletes in the middle, without recourse and without having committed any wrong, except fulfilling their desire to compete. It further ignores that competition among organizations can be beneficial to sport."

The U.S. Olympic Committee letter also warned that "...suspending U.S. athletes, merely because they participated or are intending to participate in a rival organization's event, threatens the USOC's and USA Dance's compliance with the Olympic Charter, violates the (Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports) Act and USOC Bylaws and contravenes the principles of fair play. Accordingly, such actions cannot be enforced in the U.S."

Additionally, the delegate from Germany reported receiving a similar reply from the International Olympic Committee outlining why the suspension of athletes was not an acceptable practice.

The Canadian Federation President Sandy Brittain, Ken Richards of USA Dance, as well as representatives from various countries, further spoke about both legal and administrative difficulties that National Governing Bodies faced implementing with consistency the suspension policies.

After listening to the delegates' statements and understanding the growing discontent which the suspensions had created throughout the global DanceSport community, the WDSF Presidium announced that it would no longer suspend athletes and officials for participating in competitions outside of the WDSF and would remove any current suspensions in place.

As USA Dance President Scardina explained, "This is the best possible result for athletes and officials throughout the world. The WDSF decision demonstrates the effectiveness of a true democratic sports organization, where member federations have a strong voice and are heard at the highest level to affect important organizational changes. This is truly a landmark decision for the future of DanceSport, and we are thrilled with the positive impact it will have on our athletes and officials. Now, all of the WDSF DanceSport initiatives can move forward on an accelerated development track."

"USA Dance would like to express our appreciation to all of the federations that united for positive change and that spoke so eloquently at the AGM in support of all athletes and officials and their freedom to participate in competitions of their choice. We are grateful to the National Olympic Committees of the United States and Denmark and the International Olympic Committee for providing guidance and direction to us at this turning point in our sport's future. And, our final thanks go especially to the Presidium of the WDSF for listening to its delegates and responding with insight and compassion," Ms. Scardina further stated.

### **KEN RICHARDS, USA DANCE DANCESPORT VICE PRESIDENT, ELECTED TO WORLD DANCESPORT FEDERATION PRESIDUM**

USA Dance is also proud to announce that Ken Richards, DanceSport Vice President of USA Dance, was elected to the WDSF Presidium by the delegates at the World DanceSport Federation's Annual General Meeting in Berlin, June 17-19, 2012. This move by the delegates was a special recognition of leadership achievement by Mr. Richards, who was instrumental in bringing together the group of national federations that succeeded in changing

the WDSF suspension policy. Mr. Richard's was successful in garnering the majority of votes to secure his new Presidium post, and, as Ms. Scardina explained, "Ken's election provides USA Dance and the athletes and officials from the USA with a strong voice and presence within the Presidium of the WDSF."

As Ken Richards commented, "This new elected position was a complete surprise and such a strong vote of confidence by my colleagues. It is very rare that a candidate nominated from the floor is elected over the recommendation of the WDSF Standing Committee and I am honored. Now the real work begins."

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