



Recognised by the IOC · Member SportAccord, ARISF, IWGA and IMGA



To the  
Member Federations of the  
International DanceSport Federation  
(IDSF)

St. Cugat, SPAIN, March 18, 2011

## **IDSF In Italy – An Update From The President**

The IDSF Presidium has been carefully monitoring recent developments in Italy following the appointment of a special administrator of the Italian IDSF Member **Federazione Italiana Danza Sportiva** (FIDS) by the authority of the Italian Olympic Committee or *Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano* (CONI) of February 8, 2011.

The IDSF Managing Committee received a full copy of the Resolution of CONI appointing the administrator, and ordered a translation into English by a certified professional Translator. The Managing Committee has now had a full opportunity to review that translation and to make further enquiries. We attach for your information and records, two copies of the Resolution, in the original Italian and in the certified English translation.

We also provide to you an Executive Summary on pages 2 – 5.

## *Executive Summary*

IDSF President Carlos Freitag has held several discussions with former FIDS President Ferruccio Galvagno, and met with Mr. Galvagno at Barcelona, Spain, for five hours on March 1, 2011. Mr. Galvagno gave a full and clear account of what has happened, including explaining in detail the background of the present situation in Italy.

During the period since February 8, we have received some messages about "serious accusations against FIDS and its President." We have taken some time to report to you was because we wanted to investigate the situation to determine the facts. At no point have we received or discovered any facts or details about any misconduct by FIDS or Mr. Galvagno, other than the complaints in the CONI Resolution which states that FIDS has acted inconsistently with CONI's policies *by permitting people who are trainers and coaches to judge DanceSport competitions.*

FIDS respects CONI's jurisdiction and policies, but Mr. Galvagno advises us that FIDS had understood that CONI was prepared to make an exception for DanceSport adjudication because of the circumstances of our sport.

Many people in DanceSport have always openly recognized the potential conflict of interest in a system which permits coaches and trainers to judge. Only IDSF has taken formal and systematic steps to preserve, protect and promote impartiality in DanceSport judging, by establishing and regularly updating a clear and comprehensive ***IDSF Adjudicators' Code of Conduct and Standards of Ethics***, a copy of which is attached for your ease of reference.

Some time ago the IDSF Managing Committee considered trying to make and enforce a rule that judges cannot adjudicate competitions in which athletes who have taken lessons from them are competing. We have no stake in any judge's or trainer's views on this subject, and we concluded from an analysis of the sport and the people who are available to make the sport work, that any exclusion of trainers and coaches from judging is not possible from a practical standpoint. In all important competitions, it can be expected that at least one athlete will participate who was coached by one of the judges. Under such circumstances, no judge would be able to adjudicate which would effectively mean that IDSF and its Members would have to either (a) turn a blind eye to violations of the rule or (b) cancel most of our competitions; and we believed that the sporting world would understand that we cannot and will not do either of those things.

Therefore, regardless of the position of CONI, the only practical alternative we can see is to vigorously enforce and regularly update our ***IDSF Adjudicators' Code of Conduct and Standards of Ethics***. This would include establishing direct legal relationship between IDSF and each IDSF adjudicator by an agreement in writing, and including vigorous in-competition and post-competition scrutiny of adjudicating results.

After careful analysis, the Managing Committee believes that the present problem in Italy has developed because some adjudicators associated with our rival federations have engaged in a coordinated public-relations campaign against our judges and FIDS in Italy, saying that a system in which judges are concurrently trainers will lead to subjectivity in adjudicating. Remarkably, we understand that these same adjudicators are also trainers and coaches, which leads to questions about their motives and their true agenda as other judging systems use adjudicators who are also trainers and coaches.

After he was appointed, CONI's special administrator immediately changed the adjudication rules for DanceSport in Italy, requiring all judges have to sign an agreement that they will not judge any athlete from their team and that they have not given lessons to any athlete in the competition. Only a few Italian judges are able to sign this agreement.

This campaign against FIDS, from what we know, has been promoted vigorously by WDC based on the WDC campaign slogan "Freedom To Dance". The campaign started about two years ago by Mr. Pregnolato who was formerly a responsible official inside FIDS and served as head of their academy. His position was terminated by FIDS, and subsequently Mr. Pregnolato was very critical of FIDS and Mr. Galvagno. We have received information that a group which shares Mr. Pregnolato's opinions started a public relations campaign against FIDS and Galvagno in Italy and have spent large sums of money on publishing their opinions in important Italian media and TV as well as sending numerous letters to CONI complaining about the FIDS judging system and the fact that FIDS would not tolerate FIDS athletes supporting some major competitions in England.

So in our view, the truth is more basic. The concern of the Italian critics is not that Italian DanceSport judges are also trainers, but they try to weaken FIDS. It would appear that their real complaint is that under the long-recognized doctrine of Freedom of Association, FIDS has begun to progressively enforce its rule that its athletes cannot participate in competitions which are not registered in the IDSF system, *including WDC's largest and most profitable competitions, which are produced in England.*

It would seem that some WDC Members have, not too surprisingly, begun to lose business.

In addition, as you know, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to reach an agreement with WDC, IDSF followed the advice of IDSF's late Ambassador-At-Large, Juan Antonio Samaranch, to establish our own IDSF Professional Division or "PD". As one of our largest and most prominently successful members FIDS was the leader in this difficult process, and FIDS President Ferruccio Galvagno was person who was its most vocal and visible spokesman from 2006 until its creation. As a result Mr. Galvagno was the single person who was most identified with these initiatives.

IDSF finalized the creation of the PD at our 2010 Annual General Meeting last June. As a result, in a short time we will be able to build up a strong professional competition field in Standard and Latin DanceSport.

WDC is aware of this and also knows that the current IDSF World Champions and some other top DanceSport athletes are no longer "changing" to the WDC but remain with IDSF to compete in the IDSF Professional Division.

WDC is not pleased with this development and some of their athletes and trainers have sent letters to the newspapers in Italy and to CONI, emphasizing their complaint that that FIDS is not allowing Italian athletes to go to the WDC's most important competitions in England.

As a result of their campaign to CONI, CONI has taken action against FIDS in order to investigate something which is actually a political diversion and a commercial tactic by WDC's Italian judges, who are also dancing businesspeople.

In answer to our questions, Mr. Galvagno denies all claims that either he or FIDS has done anything wrong, but in a remarkable gesture, he has not tried to oppose CONI's investigation but rather in agreement with the President of CONI, Mr. Gianni Petrucci, he voluntarily resigned as President, encourages CONI's work, and offered to cooperate fully with the investigations.

CONI has asked the highly-respected Italian sport administrator and official Dr. Luca Pancalli to serve as CONI's commissioner inside FIDS, until they can determine the facts. Mr. Galvagno has publicly promised to cooperate fully with Mr. Pancalli.

We believe that an Italian group has seriously misled CONI about our sport. We respect CONI and we understand that it must step in where the reputation of sport is called into question. We are part of the same IOC family as CONI and we are grateful for their work, but in this matter, we are

of the strong opinion that CONI has been misinformed and misled about the judging of DanceSport and that information has been manipulated for purposes that work against sport in Italy.

We have written to the CONI-appointed administrator, Dr. Pancalli, to request a meeting with him to discuss with him the allegations against FIDS and DanceSport, and to inform him fully about what we believe is the underlying political and commercial basis for the complaints against FIDS in Italy.

We have also advised the President of SportAccord, Mr. Hein Verbruggen, and the President of ARISF, Mr. Jan Fransoo, of the situation, in view of the potential dangers to other sports.

We will inform you about further developments as they occur. However, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions or concerns.

Yours truly,

International DanceSport Federation (IDSF)

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' followed by a large, sweeping flourish that ends in a small hook.

Carlos Freitag  
IDSF President