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Sant Cugat, 15 April 2016

COMBAT COMPETITION MANIPULATION | THE TASK FORCE

In a letter circulated to his fellow members of the WDSF Presidium on 13 April, WDSF President Lukas Hinder announced his ambitious plan to install a Presidential Task Force in order to combat competition manipulation in all of its forms. Here is the full text of Hinder's missive.

The problem is as old as our sport. It was with us from day one, in our best moments as well as in the worst. There it was, frequently stirring debate, occasionally creating controversy. But now it puts in question everything we stand for.

Having whom we consider to be the best and the brightest standing floorside and adjudicating our competitions came at a high price. It always did, but in view of recent developments, this price has gone up exponentially. So much in fact that we may well arrive at the watershed moment: we either rise to the occasion or else ... Change or be changed!

Over the past few years, this federation has been working harder than ever to improve the process of judging the performances put in by our athletes. It has done so comprehensively: from the very fundamentals of how an assessment is made to the education, qualification and selection of those making it. We have also gone to great length in trying to instil appropriate ethical values in everyone who officiates at our competitions.

But even with our new, transparent and fair system of adjudication finally in place, the scourge of bias and favouritism seems to hit us with more virulence than ever. The worst we can do is to shrug it off as the "old" problem persisting in spite of our many efforts to overcome the flaws in previous systems. Even if it is the same problem in nature, it has grown drastically in scope for the following reasons.

- More competitions than ever before are held under our auspices. As their number increases year after year, so does the number of adjudicators needed to officiate. Supervision and control of the latter become increasingly difficult.
- Recent alliances forged between trainers to collaborate in training camps or similar ventures bring about more conflicts of interest when they officiate as adjudicators at our competitions. If serving the sport in a dual role as trainer and adjudicator was conflict-prone in the past, trainers grouping under the colours of a team, stable or whatever the construct make it only worse.

While we want the best and the brightest to continue making their judgments based on the expertise that only they can bring to the task, we have to be much more proactive in



combatting any form of bias and favouritism. Even in their mildest forms, they both constitute serious competition manipulation!

During the past few months, we had important championships where the validity of the final results was put in question publicly, with the 12 adjudicators standing accused of partiality, or others where couples refrained from entering because they (purportedly) considered the judging panels to be compromised. If we cannot find a solution to this, certainly the most urgent of our problems, we should not have to be overly concerned about all the others we need to address in the future.

In order to deal with competition manipulation, I am forming a Presidential Task Force to look into reported incidents as well as to develop tactics and methods to combat it in all of its forms and at all levels. I will personally lead this Task Force and make it my priority of the one-year term as WDSF President to which I am standing for election at the 2016 AGM.

In the very near future and prior to the AGM, I will announce the composition of this task force, naming the members who will come from different constituent groups within the World DanceSport Federation community. Athletes and adjudicators will be represented – the National Member Bodies too.

Others, such as trainers, coaches and athletes' representatives, will get invited to provide their input during roundtable discussions with Task Force members that are held concurrently with major competitions throughout the year. All details on the Task Force's work and on the entire process that WDSF embarks upon to combat competition manipulation will be made public through the regular WDSF communication outlets.

It should go without saying that parallel to the specific work undertaken by the Task Force, WDSF shall continue all of its efforts to further improve

- The systems of judging,
- The education and qualification of judges,
- The selection of judges and
- The enforcement of all applicable codes and standards of ethics.

This is to be done through its standing commissions and committees as well as through the WDSF DanceSport Academy.

All of the measures aim to restore the confidence of our athletes in this organisation and its ability to provide them with a level playing field at every WDSF competition they enter.

Signed "Lukas Hinder, WDSF President" on 13 April 2016

ENDS