

Presidential Task Force to Combat Competition Manipulation

Enclosure 1 | An interim report of 20 May 2017 on the results of the hearings held on 20 November 2016 in Vienna, Austria, and on 18 and 19 March 2017 in Helsinki, Finland.

Introduction

Members of the Presidential Task Force to Combat Competition Manipulation (CCM TF) held interviews in Vienna in autumn last year and in Helsinki in early spring this year. They addressed the problem of Competition Manipulation and spoke with Athletes, Coaches, Adjudicators and Competition Organisers in order to take the full range of views into account. Let me be very clear: the TF came to the conclusion that the situation of DanceSport today appears much worse than it had anticipated. However, with this interim report, the TF wants to share the findings of our study up to now with the DanceSport community.

Key Message in the Task Force Interviews

One message outweighed all others: Athletes observe an unprecedented division inside the sport and its governing body due to the emergence of “associations” of Dancers and Coaches. Many talented Couples are concerned and feel that they lost titles because of reasons not connected with their dancing. As Athletes and Adjudicators seem to know where the fracture lines are, they mutually refuse to go to certain competitions or other events, something which only aggravates the problem further.

Realities in DanceSport

It is a fact that Athletes and Coaches come together to create synergies. WDSF supports such associations, as they provide services to Athletes that a single Coach could not provide, they made WDSF events become more professional, they help to make our sport less expensive for the Athletes, and they create a new sort of team spirit involving more than just two individuals.

As another fact, the Members of the TF learned that Athletes prefer to be judged by active Coaches and not by professional Adjudicators, some of whom may not have seen a training room from inside for years. This means that Athletes are inevitably coached by Adjudicators or judged by Coaches.

Eventually, commercial interests are a reality in every sport. It would therefore be naïve to believe that DanceSport Coaches sacrificed all of their energy just for the good of our sport.

Threats

The facts outlined above become a problem when commercial power or the privileges of a WDSF licence are used for the benefit of the members of an association only. In modern economies, such development is referred to as a “cartel,” and it is undisputed that any Government would be called upon to prevent it and to restore competition. Applied to WDSF, it is absolutely clear that an international sports federation must fight as hard as possible to preserve equal opportunities among all Athletes. WDSF will therefore intervene much more rigorously in the numerous cases of Coaches distorting competition because they cannot make a distinction between their business and their role as an impartial Adjudicator – and a WDSF Official bound by a Code of Ethics.

To put it plainly: going to top-tier competitions, the Athletes no longer have to speculate which group will account for a majority on the panel of Adjudicators, they know full well that not even outstanding performance can lead them to victory. If Athletes cannot rely on their talent and hard work, coupled with the expertise and inspiration of a gifted Coach, to be the only elements of success, we all have failed.

The Answer of the Federation

WDSF is fully aware of the fact that it is not only the umbrella organisation of our Athletes, but also of all Coaches and Competition Organisers contributing their talent and dedication to our sport every day. DanceSport as we experience it every week of the year would not be possible without the efforts of these cornerstones of our federation. WDSF must therefore assume the responsibility to reward their contributions to our sport, too, as long as they do not promote inequality. WDSF could, as an example, try to reduce the financial risks of the organisers, which would make them less dependent on the goodwill of large groups of Athletes. On the other hand, WDSF must put its emphasis on improving quality in adjudicating, on ensuring that it is state-of-the-art everywhere. The unquestionable experts with the highest ethical standards, those who would have couples to train even if they were not licensed WDSF Adjudicators, are still the best guarantee for fair results.

Indeed, WDSF itself is not excluded from the obligation to regularly put its governance and administration in question. WDSF must lead through examples and live up to the basic concepts transparency, comprehensibility and impartiality, just as it expects all the other stakeholders in DanceSport to do. No dancer will accept to play by the rules, if he or she should get the impression that federation officials do not abide by them either.

The Message of the Task Force

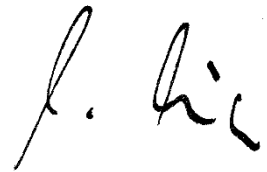
The TF collected a lot of information regarding the situation described above and an array of other problems that must all be solved. Developing measures and policies to confront the current trend, which threatens the future of DanceSport more than anything before, will take

time, as the TF will need to get advice from experts in a number of fields.

For the moment, the members of the TF ask the DanceSport community – and in particular our devotedly hard working Athletes – to preserve their conviction that change is possible.

We may still have a long way ahead of us before the health of DanceSport is restored. But it should be comforting to know that no group – no team, stable, cartel, whatever – will ever be bigger in number, or in influence, for that matter, than that of dancers and officials who do believe in fair sport. In this spirit, I invite the Athletes, Coaches, Adjudicators and all others within WDSF to take the publication of this interim report as a milestone and to openly commit to fair play in DanceSport. We need to hear your voice! Stand up and be counted.

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Lukas Hinder

WDSF President