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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Dear Member,

I am pleased to give this report for 2017-18 to the Membership of Karate Canada. At the outset, I can clearly say that this has been an amazing year. It is very satisfying to see the various Karate Canada committees continuing to strengthen and achieve stated objectives, our officials used more and more often in international events, our athletes and coaches continuing to achieve, and our community continuing to remain united and strong. Our sport partners continue to place greater faith in our direction and achievements and the Pan American and World Federations have taken notice of Karate Canada's success and direction. Of course, nothing is possible without an independently minded and effective board of directors, a professional administrative staff, a competency based approach to paid and volunteer positions, and many dedicated volunteers and parents. However, what has continued to be the most important ingredient for the success of Karate Canada is the continued commitment of the Members to continue to work with Karate Canada to achieve even greater success for our athletes and our shared memberships/registrants. If our Members do not work in concert with the national federation we will not be able to achieve our potential.

This year's National Championship was, once again, our largest ever, featuring almost 500 athletes. I want to thank Karate Nova Scotia, President Gary Walsh, and the local organizing committee for being such excellent partners to work with in bringing what was truly an all-around excellent event. As previously announced, 2019 will feature separate championships for senior and junior events with the senior event in Quebec and the junior event in Alberta. Plans are underway for the final details on the events and these will be forthcoming soon. The 2020 Junior Championships will be in Mississauga while the 2020 Senior Championship is tentatively scheduled for Calgary. We are looking for interested parties for 2021.



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Our new brand and website are finally here! After a great deal of work by our outside consultants, and thanks to the countless feedback and contributions of many athletes, coaches and members of the Karate Canada community, Karate Canada has finally gone live, fulfilling the commitment made at the National Championships. The Junior team in Rio De Janeiro was the first group of athletes to receive the new team wear and by all accounts they loved the look. We have also received many positive compliments on the new brand and attire. This will be expanded to eventually have officials-wear and supporters-wear as well as a dedicated order portal. With the new website, KC staff now has the ability to make updates easily and on-the-fly, without the need for an external consultant. This is both a productivity boost and a cost-saving. It will take some time to migrate over past information and other items to the web site and this will continue to be a work in progress for the next year. It is important to note that this project was made possible through a \$25k grant from the Canadian Olympic Committee through their NSF enhancement 2.0 funding initiative.

International competitions continue to bode well for Karate Canada. While we just missed medals at the Junior Worlds in Tenerife, Spain, the Senior team did very well at the Senior Pan American Championships capturing several individual medals, including gold, and for the first time in the history of the Senior PKF, capturing a team kumite gold medal in men's team. The Para athletes also continued their dominance in the intellectually impaired category. The overall results placed Canada in third place at the event. The Junior team, recently in Brazil, improved their overall placement and had many individual medals. I believe that the teams continue to become more unified and cohesive, the coaches more able and the athletes more focused on what it takes to win at these high level events. Importantly, especially at the junior level, the parents and the athletes continue to enjoy the event and I would like to thank Mr. Danny Morin for stepping forward to organize some extracurricular tours that many took advantage of.

The quest for the 2020 Olympics is underway. We have a number of athletes who have a legitimate chance to qualify for Tokyo 2020. This year we have been provided our first ever enhanced excellence funding from Sport Canada through a positive funding recommendation from Own the Podium. This, in addition to our own targeted program, has allowed an extensive focus on our top targeted athletes while still allowing us the ability to provide coaching and support to all members of



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the Senior Team. I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of Mr. Olivier Pineau and Mr. Kraig Devlin in preparing the submission and the presentation to Own The Podium.

Currently, besides being the President of Karate Canada, I also hold the position of Assistant Treasurer at the Pan American Karate Federation, Second Vice President at the Commonwealth Karate Federation, and the COC combative sport representative to the Federal Provincial Territorial (FPT) committee on Safety in Combative Sports. As a member of the North American Karate Federation, along with the USA and Mexico, I am automatically on that three-member committee. I also enjoy a strong relationship with World Karate Federation members including the President, Mr. Espinos, with whom I communicate regularly. I also regularly communicate with the President of the PKF, Mr. Maañón, the Canadian Olympic Committee Board and Operational leadership, and Sport Canada through our program representative. The building of these relationships, both domestically and particularly internationally, takes time. The WKF currently has 203 member countries, up from 191 last year. There are a very limited number of positions for continental federations and the world federation. I am very pleased to say that Nassim Varasteh is a member of the WKF Entourage Committee and has also been selected as one of two Athlete Ambassadors for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, a very high honour. Other KC members hold high standing with Mr. Yaro Tarana having been placed on the appeals panels of the 2017 World Championships in Tenerife, Spain, and used in tatami management in both K1 and PKF events. Ms. Heather Fidyk has been used as a resource person for Para karate committees and her extensive knowledge has been an asset to KC, the PKF and the WKF. Canadian coaches continue to be well respected. Several other country representatives mentioned that Mr. Denis Beaudoin was doing an excellent job for our Junior team. Ms. Katarina Vadovicova continues a very disciplined and well-respected kata program. It has been mentioned to me on several occasions this year that KC is an organization that has its act together and this is noticed on the continental and world stage.

The first ever World Karate Federation event in Canada is coming to Montreal next June 21-23. This is an excellent accomplishment for Karate Canada and raises the profile of our federation on the world stage. The Karate 1, Series A event will be an open event for members of any WKF recognized National Federation and will be



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part of the point race for qualification to the 2020 Olympic Games. Work is already well under way with the initial organizing committee being chaired by Mr. Stéphane Rivest. We are already working with Hosting Canada, Montreal Tourism, our regular event consultant and other partners to ensure the organizational and economic success of this event. I would encourage all provinces to send their senior teams to this event as the ability to compete in a World Karate Federation event on home soil will not come along very often. The awarding of this event to Canada also shows that the WKF has faith in KC to successfully organize and host this event. This, in turn, is a testament to the hard work of both KC and its member federations in continuing to work together with a common goal to improve Karate in Canada.

This year Karate Canada has formally submitted a request for a rule change to the WKF regarding the use of 'Head Coverings'. Essentially the request is to remove the word 'Female' from the rules and to simply say that athletes may wear a head covering. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Jai Sanghera for bringing this item to the attention of KC and his parents for being very supportive of Jai and of my personal efforts. As you can imagine, for the affected athletes, this is a very sensitive issue. I would also acknowledge the support of the Minister of Sport for Canada, the World Sikh Organization, many individual letters of support from MPs, sport leaders and members of the Karate community. Collectively, I feel the submission is very strong and we will receive a final result at the Congress at the upcoming World Championships in Madrid, Spain. I would also thank Mr. Espinos and the WKF Rules commission for their consideration of the submission.

This year has marked the end of the formal relationship between Mr. Peter Davis, our High Performance consultant and Karate Canada. I want to thank Peter for providing excellent service to Karate Canada over the last few years. Peter's work has been instrumental in bringing us to the point where we now have the expertise to manage our own HP program. Mr. Kraig Devlin has been temporarily appointed as the HP Manager to help fill much needed support for our HP program. This position will be posted openly by the end of 2018. I would like to take a moment and specifically thank and congratulate the members of the HP committee for their excellent work this year. It remains very important that the HP committee remain an operational committee that reports to the Executive Director, not to the Board. This, more than anything else, is key to the success of our HP programs. At the national level it must be very clearly spelled out what are operational vs.



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governance committees and the lines of authority carefully maintained. Our history as a federation contains many examples of why this must always be the case.

The Canadian Sport system has taken a firm stance to address many difficult aspects in the sports world. Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, discrimination, discrimination based on sexual orientation, discrimination based on gender identification, and finally, and most heart-breaking, learning from the many high-profile cases of the sexual exploitation of young athletes by those in positions of power and trust. This year the KC board publicly endorsed the 'You Can Play' and 'Responsible Coaching Movement' as well as endorsing Minister Duncan's statement on this item:

**** STRONGER MEASURES TO ELIMINATE HARASSMENT, ABUSE AND DISCRIMINATION IN SPORT ****

All Canadians deserve to participate and compete in a sport environment, free from harassment, abuse or discrimination, regardless of gender, race, religion, language, age and ability.

On June 19th, the Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, announced stronger measures to eliminate harassment in the Canadian sport system.

Mr. Craig Vokey, President of Karate Canada, supports this important step forward for the Canadian Sport Community. Karate Canada is proud to be part of the Responsible Coaching Movement led by the Coaching Association of Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2018/06/minister-duncan-announces-stronger-measures-to-eliminate-harassment-abuse-and-discrimination-in-sport.html>

I cannot stress enough how important this is to all of us. The protection of our athletes and shared registrants is our first and foremost priority. The Canadian Olympic Committee has created a working group that is looking at a unified education component and best practice guidelines to help National Federations manage these items to the best of our abilities. Once this is received we will disseminate all information to all Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations.



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Overall, the Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations - the Members that make up Karate Canada, have continued to strengthen and improve. The Ontario Karate Federation has significantly increased its 2018 membership with Karate Quebec being the largest federation overall by membership. There are some current governance issues surrounding the Prairie Karate Association and we are attempting to work with the PKA to address these and move forward with a stronger federation in 2019. The Northwest Territories Federation has been largely inactive and we are looking at ways to engage the registrants and volunteer leaders in 2019. Overall we continue to collectively struggle with the issues of misinformation and misunderstanding with what is legitimate, government recognized amateur sport, however I think we are slowly making headway in educating both outside groups and the general population what is true amateur sport and the opportunities presented.

Karate Canada has overcome its previous deficit and brings a strong balance sheet forward for 2018-19 and in preparation for the Series A event which will require considerable outlay before recovery. It is my hope that KC will build a base balance and that after that amount is reached the budgets will be close to a zero balance each year. Officials support and athlete support increased in 2017-18 and athletes also benefitted from two additional Canada Cards.

As always, Karate Canada is moving to improve its governance, policies and by-laws. Several by-law changes are being proposed for the Members consideration, which better clarify some items, fix some clerical errors and improve other areas. At the direction of the SDRCC arbitrator the Appeals policy was adjusted slightly in terminology from 'Grossly Unreasonable', to 'Unreasonable'. All PTSOs should have robust policies of Conflict of Interest, team selection, harassment, discipline and complaints, and code of conduct. It is worth remembering that PTSO Boards are, by their very nature, far more operational in nature than the Karate Canada Board. This being the case, at any meeting of a PTSO Board, the subject of Conflict of Interest should be an item on the agenda shortly after calling the meeting to order, roll call and approval of the agenda.

The 2017-18 year has been an extremely busy and successful year for Karate Canada. I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their thoughtfulness, independence, positive contributions, and support. The Board President should



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always be thought of as 'being the first among equals'. No one should even seek to 'control' a board. The saying goes that if you have two members on a board that always have the same opinion then one of them is not needed. The strength of a good board is through diversity in thought, opinion and approach. I have been blessed these past two years with an excellent Board of Directors.

I would like to thank the Executive Director, Mr. Olivier Pineau, for his continued dedication and leadership in Karate Canada at the operational level. I would also like to thank our staff, consultants, our dedicated coaches, our event coaches, the committee chairs, the officials, and the many volunteers for their time and commitment to Karate Canada. Karate Canada is an athlete centered federation based on volunteerism where our people come first, where we use a competency based approach to fulfill positions both paid and volunteer, where we adhere to a published set of standards, and where all are welcome. I am both proud and honoured to be the President of Karate Canada.

Sincerely,

Craig Vokey