

KARATE CANADA

2019-2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



OCTOBER 2020



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2019-2020

Dear Friends in karate,

I am pleased to provide this report for the 2019-20 year for Karate Canada. The year that was, and then was not. While I have had the privilege of serving on the board of the Ontario Federation from 2007 to 2013 and on the Karate Canada board starting in 2011, I have never experienced a year quite like this one. The challenges that have faced all of us over the past several months have been unprecedented to our collective experience. I believe it is a mark of the maturity and the strength of Karate Canada and its Provincial and Territorial Associations that we have been able to come together to weather the current storm.



The last quarter of 2019 started on an extremely high note for Karate Canada. Despite the WKF Junior, Cadet and under 21 Championship occurring during a period of civil unrest in Santiago, Chile, the Canadian team performed well, and we were able to mint our second World Champion – Mr. Ethan Small, in the Cadet +70kg kumite. Ethan sailed through his elimination matches allowing his opponents to score only 2 points against him. In the gold medal match Ethan faced Ibrahim Shamoun from Jordan for the gold, winning by a score of 1-0 to become the World Champion in his division. Perhaps we should have more events in Santiago as it was in the same stadium the year before that the men's kumite team won gold against the USA for Canada's first ever Pan American Karate Federation (PKF) gold medal in that event. As a small thankyou to the team that attended, and in recognition of their excellent conduct, cohesiveness, understanding and mutual support, Karate Canada acted on an idea that was brought forth by several parents for an event t-shirt





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featuring the athletes' names on the back and the Santiago Logo on the front which was provided to us with the kind permission of the Chilean Federation. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Stéphane Rivest and Danny Morin who worked extensively on-site to support the team with various logistics. Truly, everyone who attended this event went above and beyond for the safety and success of our team.

The year continued with good success for Canada's top athletes as both Haya Jumaa and Rita Ngo continued to impress upon the world stage. Haya moved within striking distance of an outright qualification for Tokyo 2020, then COVID 19 appeared, and everything changed. Not only was the change impressive in its scope, but also in its celerity. Karate Canada was all set to host its Senior Championship in Calgary at the end of March. Within a 48 hour period we went from 'everything is a go' to 'everything should be ok and with an audience' to 'the event can go ahead but with no audience' to 'the event cannot go ahead, period'.



What followed was a constant stream of cancellations from all levels including the World, Pan American and Commonwealth Karate Federations, culminating in the postponement of Tokyo 2020 to 2021. As of the writing of this report we still do not have absolute clarity for when domestic and/or international events will resume.

With the inability to hold a Senior National Championship in 2020 Karate Canada must still choose a team for the PKF Senior Championships in Curacao in May 2021, the 18 – 20 division of the Pan American Junior Games in September 2021, as well as the remaining positions for the Tokyo 2021 qualifier event. To this end Karate Canada is hoping to hold a selection event in late March or early April in Calgary. Contingencies for selection are being explored if this event cannot take place.

The 2021 Karate Canada National Championship will be held in St. John's NL (my hometown) over the Canada Day weekend. This will be a combined event that will bring the separate championships back together. This Championship will help finalise the team to go to the 2021



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World Karate Federation (WKF) Senior World Championship. The last time a Championship was held in Newfoundland was 2006, which, coincidentally, was my first event as a national official. There really is no place like 'The Rock' and I know that those who attend will have a fantastic event. The temperature in St. John's in early July ranges from plus 30 to plus 5. Happily, snow is uncommon. So, come prepared!

Covid has of course affected all our international partners. The WKF President has hosted two meetings with NF presidents over the past few months to update us on where we may be headed. Presently, we all remain optimistic that Tokyo 2020(21) will take place, though in what format and with what restrictions we do not know at this time. The WKF has rescheduled its qualifier events and is committed to moving forward with Premier League events as well as some Youth League events in 2021. There are currently no plans for Series A events next year. As the Senior World Championship was unable to be held this year, it will instead be held in late 2021 with the next Junior, Cadet and Under 21 Championship scheduled for 2022. I believe the WKF has acted in the best interest of its members and the athletes with the various decisions it has made over the past few months and I continue to have full confidence in the WKF leadership and of President Espinos.

The Pan American Karate Federation, of which I am the assistant treasurer, has also been quite flexible in its decision-making and has worked with the Pan American Sports Organisation (PASO) with a second rescheduling of qualification events for the Junior Pan American Games. The Games themselves are now scheduled for September 2021. The division for these Games is 18-20 with the discipline being kumite. It is now the intention to have the selection event for these Games done in conjunction with the Senior PKF championships in Curacao next May. The gold medalists of the Pan American Junior Games will also receive an invitation to the next Pan American Games and PASO has granted Karate an extra sport per division to accommodate this additional athlete. This is a great achievement for the PKF and for President Maanon. Sadly, earlier this year we lost Mr. William Millerson, a gentleman who had achieved much in the WKF and PKF as an athlete and later as a WKF Executive Committee member and was a past president of the PKF. This loss is keenly felt by those of us who had the honour to know and work with him.

The Commonwealth Karate Federation (CKF) has rescheduled the 2020 Championship for September of 2021. The exact dates and time will come forward soon. Normally, the Championship is held every two years, but as we have missed 2020 there are plans to hold the following Championship in Botswana in 2022. The CKF has not been idle, however, and a Zoom based outreach pilot project was recently completed that aims to provide extra information and instruction on various areas of sport such as coaching, officiating, kata and kumite. The initial pilot involved 5 countries and was very well received. I have the honour of being the General Secretary for the CKF and sit on the pilot project committee.



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Safe Sport continues to be a priority of the Canadian Sport System and Karate Canada. Currently, a 'Universal Code of Conduct' is being developed for use across all sports and a new suite of updated policies are awaiting some final reviews before being implemented over the next several months. I remain immensely proud that Karate Canada was an early adopter of the 'Responsible Coaching Movement' as well as the 'You Can Play' initiative. Karate Canada has also employed the services of a third party who is independent and can also receive and assess complaints. One concern that I have expressed to our sport partners is that the Canadian Sport System would be better served by having one entity to hear complaints concerning the profoundly serious issues of harassment and abuse. While it is extremely important that any complaint is addressed professionally, expediently, and seriously, the ability of Karate Canada to do this, and to fund such a process, is severely limited. A National Sport Organisation made up of volunteers and mostly lay people should not be expected to shoulder this burden. It is my hope that the Canadian Sport System will implement a process such as the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada to hear complaints of this nature.

Canadian athletes have benefitted again this year from various programs for both direct and indirect athletic support provided by Sport Canada. This support is achieved through various programs such as Own the Podium, Canada Carding, and core funding to protected High Performance areas. Karate Canada has also benefitted from grants from the Canadian Olympic Committee. We continue to owe a great debt of gratitude to our funding partners and to our registrant membership for the continued support of Karate Canada.

I would like to take a quote from our soon to be Athlete Director, Toshi Uchiage "Every National Team Athlete, whether they are Junior, Senior, or Para, should feel like they belong in this organization and that they are proud to represent the Maple Leaf." This closely mirrors statements that I have made many times in the past regarding national team programs. To this end, Karate Canada will embark on its first independent High-Performance Pathway Review through a Steering Committee that has been appointed by the Board, that will guide the overall process and choose a consultant to look at the overall HP program(s) of Karate Canada. It should be noted that such a review is not uncommon in the Canadian Sport System and is often used by federations both large and small to take a critical assessment of where they are, and perhaps where they should be aiming to go. Coupled with this will be a governance review which will look at how Karate Canada's governance, board, and committees function and to make sure we are employing best practices. It is hoped that we will have a report sometime in the second quarter of 2021.

In closing, I would like to take thank the Board members, PTSO Presidents, Athletes, Officials, Coaches, Staff and the many Volunteers for their continued support and dedication not only to Karate Canada, but to Karate in Canada. Karate Canada continues to be a volunteer driven entity, and this is unlikely to change anytime in the future; without volunteers we simply would not be able to function. I would also thank our partners at Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee, and Own The Podium for their continued support of Karate Canada and its athletes.



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I would like to acknowledge President Espinos of the WKF, President Maanon of the PKF and President Pillay of the CKF for their collective wisdom and leadership. Last, and not least, if it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a national community of parents, supporters, dojo instructors, well wishers and karate-ka of all stripes to make Karate Canada successful. It is a great privilege and honour to be the president of this federation. This is something I never forget.

Sincerely,

Craig Vokey



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