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Dear friends,

We have now moved from 2023 into 2024 and I would like to take this moment to wish everyone a Happy New Year and all the best for 2024.

2023 was a very good year for Karate Canada. Many athletes excelled on the continental and world stage. Canada had its best placing ever at the Junior, Cadet and Under 21 Pan American Championship. Canada sent the most athletes ever to the Pan American Games (outside of an event hosted in Canada). Referees continued to upgrade their licenses. Karate Canada hosted a successful WKF Series A event in Richmond BC. The National Championships in Laval, Quebec was the largest ever. The High Performance Programs have continued to positively evolve based on the decisions made by the Karate Canada Board during the Pandemic era and after the conclusion of the previous Olympic cycle. Governance, transparency, and fiscal accountability have continued to improve. In all ways Karate Canada moved forward in 2023, finally shaking off the shackles of the pandemic and all that entailed for us here in Canada.

The New Year brings changes to the structure of the Senior World Championships (Cairo, Egypt 2025). WKF member National Federations will no longer be able to send a full team to this event, instead, athletes must qualify either on ranking, or at Pan American Senior Championship events. As only Canadian citizens can represent Canada at Pan American or World Championships, the National Championship, which is the main selection event for placement on the national team(s), will require that participants must be Canadian citizens for 2024 and beyond. Note that the Commonwealth Karate Federation Championship, to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, at the end of September, will allow Permanent Residents to represent Canada in the club event. The 'club' event is open to any resident of a Commonwealth Country.

In 2023, once again, more Canadians competed, coached, and officiated in more places in the world than ever before. There are more opportunities than ever before to compete, at home and abroad, with the level of competition ever increasing. The requirements of the various programs and categories of athletes requires Karate



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Canada to reconsider the timing of its National Championship as well as its structure for 2025 and beyond. For 2024 the National Championship will still be a combined event in Laval, Quebec in early July.

The National Karate Association was incorporated on September 5, 1963. During this time, Karate in Canada was run entirely by volunteers. In later years there was funding for a Head Coach, however, as Sport Canada sought greater accountability from supported National Federations, it became clear that the NKA did not fit the Sport Funding Accountability Frameworks that were being implemented. It was also clear that what had once been a storied federation had fallen into an endless cycle of proxy battles and interpersonal drama that became the hallmark of its AGMs in the mid 2000's. Fortunately, in 2009, and thanks in great part to the vision of past president Rebecca Khoury, the NKA was able to reinvent itself into Karate Canada, with a new set of by-laws and the hiring of its first ever Executive Director. In 2014, the next President, Dragan Kljenak, helped usher in a vision of dedicated coaches for the various programs. This was an important and visionary change. This system served us well for several years and has now evolved along with Karate Canada as a whole, into a competent and professional sport federation which holds accountability, transparency, and professionalism as key tenets for its success.

It is important to note that Karate Canada is, and continues to be, led, supported, governed, and championed by volunteers. Without volunteers at the organizational level, at the competitive level, at the support level, as coaches, as referees, minor officials, marshalls, etc., we would not be able to be successful. Volunteers have been the key and will continue to be the key to Karate Canada's success in 2024 and beyond. Therefore, at the close of 2023 I would like to thank everyone who contributed to Karate in Canada this past year. From the local organizers and supporters of local tournaments and the nice person who helped the 6 year old novice tie their belt before their first ever competition, to the dedicated organizers, coaches and referees who expend vast amounts of their own time and resources to support our high performance athletes.

In closing, 2024 will again be an exciting year for Karate Canada. I am fond of saying that Karate is an individual journey, but there is no need to travel alone. I am



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very happy that so many of us will again enjoy a shared journey in 2024. As long as we continue to support each other, the tenets of 'Safe Sport', and remain true to our principles as Canadians, we will continue to enjoy success for all involved.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Vokey", with a small red mark above it.

Craig Vokey
President