

You have asked me to write an editorial on the latest events. I will try to do this as a response from the USAKF to the membership and I appreciate you offering me this forum to present some important considerations.

The first thing to understand is that when the IOC suspended WUKO from membership in July of 1992, the USAKF became ineligible for United States Olympic Committee (USOC) membership according to the constitution of the USOC. This is because there had to be an international recognition for the USOC to recognize a governing body. When the IOC suspended WUKO, we persuaded the USOC to place us under suspension until 12/31/93 with automatic reinstatement if WUKO was re-recognized before 12/31/93. This did not happen so the ability to be reinstated automatically expired. The loss of USOC membership, as you can see, is not a recent occurrence, nor was it something we could control. On 2/27/94 the IOC issued a letter of provisional recognition for the WKF. This letter was not considered clear enough by the USOC for the USOC to agree that actual recognition or "full" recognition has taken place under a new name and structure of the World Karate Federation/Federation Mondiale de Karatedo (WKF/FMK). The letter remarks that the recognition is conditional and lists one or two conditions depending on the way you want to read the letter. If membership is conditioned on certain things, then unless those certain things are accomplished, no recognition has taken place - - at least this is how I understand the USOC position. Thus, recognition by the IOC is still a main hurdle to recognition by the USOC. At the May membership committee of the USOC, both the AAU and the ITKF were present arguing that the IOC letter was a mistake and would be withdrawn. They stated that the new WKF was to be a merger of the IAKF and WUKO and he (Mr. Nishiyama) would know if a merger took place or not. In general, the argument was since he (Mr. Nishiyama) is not aware of any merger, how could the IOC recognize the WKF without such a merger. The AAU helped Mr. Nishiyama in his presentation that no recognition had taken place.

The USOC also stated in a letter five other areas that the USAKF must improve if we are to comply for membership. These areas generally quote from the USOC constitution and are not specific. We met the USOC in Boston in June to further clarify what was needed in these five areas. At this meeting we found that other NGB's do not comply with all USOC requirements. The USOC is doing an NGB review process to correct deficiencies where found. It was stated that any new NGB would be held to completely be in compliance. This means that new members would be held to a higher standard than current members. As you read the letter, you will note that the letter states, "The USAKF has not established that" (If you haven't yet seen a copy of that letter, contact me and I will see you get a copy). What we believe what this letter is saying, is not that the USAKF is "run wrong," but it may be just that we did not provide enough evidence to prove that we do what is required. Some of the areas were admitted to be merely paperwork, while other areas will require changes -- changes that should make us better.

Also at the May membership committee meeting, in addition to the strong attack on the international recognition issue, we were attacked on other issues by the AAU people in attendance. Many of these issues were things that happened back in the 1980's. To give you an idea of what it was like, at one point in the meeting, the USOC said that it was not interested in who did what to whom when and wanted those in attendance to stick with factual matters -- not personalities. In any event, the USAKF and its many dedicated karateka are dutifully working on substantive measures that will bring us into full compliance with the USOC requirements. In this regard we have hired experienced legal counsel in Colorado Springs to represent the USAKF membership and we have invited a number of organizations and people to task force meetings on these issues. On the other side, other karate-ka have chosen to sound a death knell, to feed false rumors, to stretch the truth. The USAKF in the true respect of budo and martial arts leadership will not do that. We simply caution you to closely examine the record and the facts, to be careful of the doom sayers, to analyze motives, and make an informed judgment.

Unless there is integrity and values in what we are doing, should what we are doing be done?

I also want to take this opportunity to answer a few criticisms of the USAKF. The USAKF has only so much money and this money is almost entirely from the membership. Almost our whole support is through memberships and national events. The USAKF agreed upon and financed a course of action to put karate into the Pan American Games. The USAKF was successful at this, spending your money to accomplish this goal and in spending the time of many dedicated individuals towards the same effort. The USAKF expected this to clinch USOC membership and we expected funding for the team to follow as we would be a Pan-American Sports member of the USOC. Unfortunately it appears the USOC is not interested or does not care about what it took to get karate into the Pan American Games. Everyone sacrificed to get karate into the Pan-American Games. The athlete sacrificed for this goal. Had we not reached this goal, we would not be where we are today and not able to be subject to the attack that is being made on the USAKF today. The question really is this, should the USAKF have spent its resources to raise the level of karate competition for the athlete -- that is, the Pan American Games, or should the USAKF have allocated those resources differently, in which case karate may not have made the Pan American Games. Which will ultimately be more beneficial?

Since our international goal of getting karate into the games has been reached, we can restructure the budget for and lend our resources to the domestic effort. In some sense, our problems stem from being successful. We could not be considered for USOC Pan-American membership unless we were in the Pan American Games but to get in the games we had to allocate finite resources of the USAKF to do this. There could be no attack on the USAKF if we were not successful in our stated goal. Some of those who are attacking us now were part of this decision making process and were not only in support of the steps taken but put forth some of them.

The second thing I would like to mention is that Mr. Jim Cottrell specifically put the question to the USOC in Boston if it was necessary to change officers of the USAKF and the USOC said no. Further, there is nothing I am aware of from the USOC that says there was any financial mis-management. This is incorrectly inferred from the USOC letter. One of our problems, a loan from George Anderson to the USAKF has been paid back. Another problem is that most fundraising for USAKF athletes does not go through the USAKF books, but through the books of our member organizations or in some instances, in trusts that have been set up locally. Because we do not have this revenue recognized in the national books, the paperwork does not reflect everything that has been going on in athlete support.

Before I close, I want to mention that the USAKF normally puts on a \$150 administrative charge on trip expenses over and above the plane ticket and the ground package. This extra money has been used by travel in many ways -- to pay the coach, to send certain of our officials and referee personnel on South American to help build the strength of the Pan American Union of Karatedo Organizations. Fed-ex charges, unpaid ticket cancellations, holding tickets for late payers to guaranty that they get the lowest airfare, unexpected trip expenses overseas, extra-ordinary phone expenses and many other things can come up including extra entertainment or special meals, etc., for those who are on the trip. This charge has not been put on every trip and has varied from trip to trip. Some trips were not taken if, for example, we could not get a coach to go unless his costs were covered. If the administrative charge could not pay for this, the trip was not taken. The USOC has been well informed of what this is about, and we have laid the matter to them that we will discontinue this method of operation if they find it offensive. This may limit our ability to help or provide certain things on trips, but it should not be a stumbling block to recognition. This charge was debated at the conventions and had the approval of the USAKF board of directors as a true trip cost. One thing I do want to say is that no USAKF elected officer to my knowledge ever conducted personal or private business while traveling on behalf of and at the expense of the USAKF.

Finally, there are unfounded rumors that I will not deal with here because I believe the truth of these matters will be obvious to the open-minded. I ask you only to think, ponder the questions, and wait for the truth to come out.

I cannot discuss every matter here as there is not enough space, but I am willing to discuss any matter or questions any member of the USAKF has and I again thank this magazine for the opportunity to respond to what is going on in the United States today. No matter what finally occurs, the USAKF will continue to provide the highest quality karate in the United States. In this, because of our members, we have no peers.

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