



Paris, August 23, 2012

Dear Mr President, Dear Friend,

The recent ISU Congress in Kuala Lumpur saw the adoption of a proposal to remove the Qualifying events from future ISU championships, a decision that surprised many people.

I must admit that, as organizer of the recent 2012 Nice Championships, it would have been an extremely unpleasant experience to learn that the projected budget, just one year prior to the event, had been considerably underestimated and that I would have been compelled to seek new financial support and at the same time to go begging to the ISU, an organization that is known for being careful with money, in order to reduce the impact of the financial shortfall.

The ISU was also surprised by this decision that came from countries for which involvement of their participants in World & European Championships, Four Continent Championships or World Junior Championships is of considerable importance, especially for their own national Olympic Committee. This non-inclusion of participants from all countries will have a knock-on effect within each ISU member-country in terms of recognition of their representativeness and indeed of their financial status.

The ISU is however right to loudly state that these Championships must be intended for the elite competitors of our sport and that not all skaters around the world can expect to compete at a World Championships where the universal nature of our practices is constantly evolving and the number of member-countries is constantly rising.

In response to this collective decision by the member-federations, and the highly understandable reaction of our Canadian friends given the perspective of the upcoming World Championships in London (Ontario), the ISU took the decision, shortly after Kuala Lumpur, by way of a proposal from its Sports Director, to increase the Minimum Total Technical Score requirements for competition entry.



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In doing so, the ISU went against the spirit of the decision that had been democratically arrived at during the Congress, reducing the number of competitors in order to ensure a higher level of sporting quality while maintaining a manageable TV schedule.

However, in my opinion, this is not necessarily the best possible solution to the impossible issue of satisfying each and everyone.

Although, as proposed by the Israel Ice Skating Federation, decreasing the competitors current scores to enter could quite probably provide a minor solution to certain participation issues at short term, such an initiative would do very little to come back to the essential spirit and nature of the decision voted in Kuala Lumpur.

Our proposal extremely simple is the following:

- To delete the New Minimum Technical Scores and stay with the previous scores in principle because small changes are made anyway every year and are subject to ISU Communication informations.
- To change the name of the Qualifying rounds to Semi-Finals
- To hold the Semi-Finals the same way as the Qualifying rounds were held the last seasons (one event based on the free skating and the free dance)
- To keep the Semi-Finals at each of the 4 major ISU Championships when the number or participants is sufficiently high, on the basis of the rules currently in force.
- To consider single & pair & dance competitors who do not proceed to the final stages as having been an integral part of the Championships and classify them according to the scores obtained.
- To keep the sum of the short program and long program as the Final of the event
- To classify the skaters who reached the Final of the event on top of the ones who did not.

This would make it possible to:

- Preserve and indeed consolidate the universal nature of our sports.
- Increase the prestige of ISU member-federations, all of whom would find themselves in a stronger position with regard to their national authorities (Olympic Committee, Sports Ministry, etc...)
- Increase the contribution of these same authorities to the member countries' respective budgets by way of identifying a national elite sport that is more highly recognized by the ISU. In these times of international financial uncertainty which are affecting the world of sport in general, this is clearly a very sensible measure.
- Totally respect the athletes and the training and the participation programs of their coaches.
- The best participants would still reach the final rounds, thus guaranteeing high quality entertainment





- The TV channels would have no cause for complaint given that there would be no changes to their program format
- There would be no different financial impact on the Championship budget than now.

Our proposal is rapidly implementable and only needs a smart appreciation of the General Regulations in the best interest of the sport.

In short, I can see only positive outcomes of showing greater recognition for the work performed by all of the different member-countries, including the more modest of these, all by way of an extremely simple decision that I believe could be one of the major amendments emanating from the next ISU Congress, unless a legal means could be found to process this decision more quickly.

It remains nevertheless important that this humble proposal, the fruit of a number of letters and comments that have been directly addressed to me, be seen as being consensual so as to be granted full consideration, from both a sporting and a legal point of view, by the ISU Council.

I am therefore sending this e-mail to you in order to get your opinion on a somewhat complex and delicate situation that in my opinion requires special consideration.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a pleasant vacation, and I look forward to hearing from you soon,

Kind regards.



**Didier GAILHAGUET**



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