



March 8th, 2012

Re: USANKF Officials at the 2012 National Championships

Dear Karate Canada Members,

An obviously misinformed and misguided attempt at stirring up controversy has alas recently been circulated by email to our various Provincial and Territorial Karate Associations, regarding the recent invitation of two PKF/WKF -licensed and seasoned USANKF Referees to take part in our upcoming 2012 National Championships. Given the deliberately divisive and unnecessarily alarming tone of this anonymous email, some of our members have expressed concern about the issues alleged in this email, quite understandably. Consequently, we are hereby issuing the present statement in order to address these questions and to clarify this matter.

1. Following recommendations emerging from its LTAD, Competition Review and High Performance Committees, Karate Canada has decided to adopt and implement a double elimination format for all individual kumite divisions at the upcoming 2012 National Championships. As Karate Canada's pool of National Referees is already somewhat limited in numbers, and given the increased number of matches which this double elimination engenders, our National Referees pool may be stretched rather thin in order to officiate and judge in all contests at the upcoming National Championships. Furthermore, the new 2012 WKF Kumite Competition Rules require one more referee per ring/ tatami than before.
2. Given these facts, and in order to lessen the pressure on National Referees and to allow them to work under the best possible conditions while ensuring a smooth management of the event and minimizing delays for all participants, Karate Canada has taken the decision to invite some PKF/WKF-licensed officials from the USA and to request their assistance in officiating at our 2012 National Championships. Two such referees have graciously accepted our recent invitation, and have agreed to volunteer their time and expertise in order to assist a neighbor National Association with its key national event.

3. The decision to invite PKF/WKF-licensed referees from the USA to officiate at our 2012 National Championships has been fully approved and endorsed by the following groups or individuals:
 - a. Karate Canada's High Performance Committee
 - b. Karate Canada's Officials Committee Chair
 - c. Karate Canada's 2012 National Championships Tournament Director
 - d. Karate Canada's Executive Director
 - e. Karate Canada's Executive Committee
4. As pointed out by our Officials Committee Chair Ms Norma Foster, this invitation was received by USANKF Officials as "*a privilege and an honor*", thus helping strengthen relations with an important neighbor National Association. We further consider that the presence of such experienced and high-level international referees can only be beneficial to the Canadian Referees who will work with and alongside them, and will enrich the overall quality of the competitive experience for participating athletes, who will thus gain further exposure to international-level judging and officiating.
5. The author of the anonymous email mentioned above makes several unfounded allegations, one being that the presence of these guest USA Officials at our National Championships will result in "*conflict of interest*", by having "*American Officials decide Canada's future National Team*". While this allegation clearly reflects the author's rather inadequate grasp of the very notion of conflict of interest, we also hereby confirm that the possibility of this supposed risk has already been thoroughly considered by all Committee, Board of Directors and staff members listed above when deciding whether to approve such an invitation, and it has been deemed insignificant and therefore dismissed. In the words of our Officials Committee Chair: "*Since they will be completely surrounded by our own OC members and other internationally qualified and experienced referees, I cannot imagine that bias in favor of an ultimate USANKF outcome is realistic.*" Furthermore, the insinuation that such reputable PKF/WKF-licensed referees would make inappropriate use of their authority at this event, and the implied questioning of their integrity and impartiality, is inappropriate to say the least. On the other hand, Karate Canada does have a publicly available Conflict of Interest Policy. Should "John Doe" or any other member feel the need to complain about what he/she perceives as being an undisclosed conflict of interest, we invite him/her to do so through the proper channels and process.
6. The author of the anonymous email mentioned above further insinuates that this invitation of USA Referees to the upcoming 2012 National Championships is "*an insult to our Canadian officials and provinces who appear to be paying for it.*" While the costs of meals, lodging and transportation linked to the participation of these guest international referees (who obviously do not benefit from provincial funding

to support their participation) will indeed be covered by Karate Canada, in no shape is this being invoiced or charged to Provincial Associations nor to Canadian Referees, who are therefore in no way “*paying for it*”. Additionally, as stated earlier, the two guest referees from the USA who have accepted our invitation have indicated that they perceived this as “a privilege and an honor”. Why “John Doe” considers this to be “*insulting*” to anyone is indeed somewhat of a mystery.

7. As an executive decision (and in light of the fact that it does not conflict with any Board-approved policy), the choice to invite such PKF/WKF-licensed referees and to allow them to officiate at our National Championships supersedes any guideline to the contrary which may be contained or stated in operational guides or manuals previously published by Karate Canada. While amendments to such guidelines may eventually be considered, if necessary, this executive decision is valid and has been in full effect from the very moment of its approval and endorsement by Karate Canada’s Executive Committee.

Finally, while we obviously support the freedom of expression and respect the right to differences of opinions of our different members, we would also like to continue to encourage and entertain open and transparent dialogue with our entire membership, and invite all of our members to contact us directly to express their views and any concerns they may have.

We hope that you will all join us in greeting our guest international referees in a manner which befits their degree of experience and their generosity, and look forward to seeing all of you again soon in Richmond, BC.

Best regards,



Olivier Pineau
Executive Director