

## **A Message from the USASF Board of Directors**

The Board appreciates the recommendations recently made by the Rules Committee and, as always, gave them serious consideration before issuing the revised rules that we feel are in the best interest of our sport and its athletes. Given the feedback we received, it seems appropriate to now address the developments that led the Board to initially issue these rules.

The Board has a deep respect for the technical qualifications of the members of the Rules Committee and sincerely appreciates the hard work of every member. The Board believes that much focus has been given to important detailed technical points; however, there are broader issues involving the rules that deserve immediate attention. Because of this, the Board felt compelled to address what it believes are critical and urgent issues. Addressing these issues is consistent with the mission of the USASF, which is to create a safe and positive environment for All Star athletes and to grow the sport.

An inordinate number of injuries in tumbling appears not to have been adequately addressed by the rules. All technical areas (stunts, pyramids and basket tosses) have restrictions to enhance safety. When particular skills are deemed to be unsafe for the vast number of athletes involved in our sport, rules and restrictions need to be created. If there are skills that appear to be creating injuries, then it is the responsibility of the USASF to address these skills for the overall benefit of our athletes and our sport.

In recent days, some have advocated leaving decisions on what specific skills can be performed by an athlete strictly to the coaches and athletes themselves, thereby eliminating any restrictions. The result would be allowing virtually any skill to be attempted. The Board believes that this approach would have a devastating effect on our sport (envision four high pyramids, basket tosses from shoulder stands, and double or triple backs with multiple twists on the floor and in baskets).

The Board is also concerned about the continued lack of serious competition in many of the divisions that have been created. While the concept of level play has been positive for our sport, the very large number of divisions inherently creates a lack of serious competition in many circumstances. There are now more than 140 divisions. This is counter to creating what is an essential element of any legitimate sport, which is competition. The Board believes that decisions must be made over the coming months to create a more balanced and robust competitive environment.

The image and appearance policy addresses the increasing criticism about the general appearance of our athletes during competition and the unflattering media stories that have focused on how our sport is presenting its athletes, particularly those in the younger age groups.

Regarding process, the Board appreciates the procedure whereby the NACCC recommends rules to the Rules Committee, and the Committee then considers these recommendations, as well as those the Committee develops itself. The Rules Committee then recommends

specific rules to the Board, the vast majority of which have historically been passed. However, the Board has always reserved the right to pass certain rules it develops itself if such rules are deemed to address issues of important and immediate concern. Going forward, in an effort to advance the USASF's mission in a more substantial and timely way, the Board will give as clear a direction as possible to the Rules Committee as it relates to the development of rules.

While fully respecting and appreciating each individual's right to freely express themselves, it is imperative that those who are involved with the USASF on an official basis or project conduct themselves constructively and professionally with respect for their peers working within the organization. Based on the developments that have recently transpired regarding these rules, the USASF will soon be issuing its own standards of conduct relative to official work being done on behalf of the USASF. To hold an official position, including a USASF committee position, the USASF will require that members discuss and address these issues within the organization's official structure.

Finally, the Board, which is composed of both event producers and coaches, believes that it is imperative to put the overall good of the sport before personal or company interests. This includes event companies and gym companies. The Board believes everyone should keep this principle at the forefront of our future efforts in furthering the USASF's mission to create a safe and positive environment for All Star athletes and to grow the sport.

### **Board of Directors**

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\*Consultants to the Board