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SkateFAIR Calls for Extraordinary Congress

On the heels of a formal protest filed by the Japanese Skating Federation, an official expression of opposition to the interim judging system by the United States Figure Skating Association, and a recommendation for more public display of marks from Skate Canada, SkateFAIR – Skating Fans for Accountability and ISU Reform – calls for an Extraordinary ISU Congress to be held following the World Figure Skating Championships.

The present anonymous “interim” scoring system, enacted at last year’s biennial ISU Congress, is in effect through the 2003-04 season. Although ISU President Ottavio Cinquanta claims in today’s release that “Urgent Proposal 4 clearly indicated that if approved by the Congress as proposed, it would become paragraph 3 of Rule 121 of the ISU General Regulations,” SkateFAIR has obtained a transcription of the following exchange that took place at the 49th Ordinary Congress in June 2002:

ISU Congress attendee:

“If we vote in support of this proposal, are we voting in support of this proposal as written, or are we voting in support of the general proposal to investigate a much more detailed and comprehensive judging system?”

Cinquanta:

“You are not voting for the proposal word by word. You are voting in favor of the concept, the criteria of the project. [...] It is an itinerary, nothing else; this I said many times. This is not a rule, this is not a rule; it is a project.”

In light of this transcription, SkateFAIR challenges President Cinquanta’s contention that anything about “Urgent Proposal #4” was “clearly indicated.” In today’s news release President Cinquanta stated that “no proposals to modify the principle of random and secret draw of the judges in the interim system can be considered before the next Congress.”

However, Article 9, Paragraph 1, subparagraph (d) of the ISU constitution states: “[a]n Extraordinary Congress is held whenever the Council considers it necessary or upon written demand, giving reasons, by a one-fifth majority of the Members.”

SkateFAIR believes that the formal objections outlined by the USFSA, Skate Canada, and the Japanese Skating Federation, the justifiable confusion about what was actually voted on last June, and the number of athletes, coaches and officials expressing dissatisfaction with the interim system have reached a critical mass. The ISU Council must call an Extraordinary Congress to be convened in June following the World Championships. Furthermore, SkateFAIR encourages all member ISU federations to petition for an Extraordinary Congress to resolve the issues of secret judging and lack of accountability.

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