



## APRIL 2020 NEWSLETTER

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

NZIFSA are very aware of the challenges brought about by COVID-19 and the concern our skating community have around the inability for athletes to train and prepare for tests and competitions. These concerns are very much at the forefront of our minds. There may well be a need to look at competition qualification requirements and the Board will be considering this very carefully. However, it is still too early to make any decisions regarding this. Once we have some clear understanding of when rinks are likely to re-open and skaters are able to be training on the ice again, we will be in a better position to consider what changes might, or might not, be required.

In the meantime, keep healthy, keep fit, and be kind.

### VIRTUAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

We know most of our skaters are busy trying to keep up their training in preparation for getting back on the ice. Some coaches are running regular virtual training programmes for their skaters or have prepared training programmes for their skaters to follow. But not everyone has this.

Below are two virtual training programmes available to keep skaters involved while they wait to get back on the ice.

ISU Centre of Excellence “Keep Training!” online sessions <https://www.isu.org/isu-news/news/145-news/13141-isu-centers-of-excellence-offer-the-keep-training-series?templateParam=15&fbclid=IwAR0tNrRVsFOBb7waNX7xHoQfaj66AaP8fNKnIW4ZE5BeHw-EUBZYm95I9u0>. These sessions have only just been announced in the last couple of days and start on Sunday 19 April and run through until the 24 April. So don't delay. The sessions offer something different each day.

OneTeamMVMT virtual camp <https://www.oneteammvmt.org/pages/insynchathome-onlinecamp>.

Both of these offerings claim to be suitable for any level of skater (or even non-skaters). Also, while OneTeamMVMT usually focusses on Synchronized Skating, their camp is relevant for all disciplines.

Both programmes are free to participate in, although, as a not-for-profit, OneTeamMVMT would appreciate donations.

## SKATER SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2020

The NZIFSA has two scholarships of NZ\$4000 to help support skaters to train overseas for a period in 2020. There were a total of fifteen skater scholarship applications. These were comprised of six for the Basic Novice/Intermediate Novice scholarship and nine for Advanced Novice to Senior scholarship. The Scholarship Committee, comprising of Jeanette King (CEO), Sandra Williamson-Leadley (Skater Development), and Clarence Ong (ISU Tech Specialist and ISA High Performance Director) recommended, and the Board confirmed, that the following skaters be awarded the 2020 Skater Scholarships:

- Basic Novice / Intermediate Novice - Gemma and Benjamin Pickering
- Advanced Novice to Senior - Douglas Gerber



Congratulations to Gemma & Benjamin and Douglas.

Given the disruption to planned training activities posed by COVID-19, the NZIFSA recognises that the training plans are likely to need to be revised significantly. It is still very unclear how long the disruption is likely to last, but once skating activities have resumed the scholarship recipients will be required to submit an updated training plan to NZIFSA for approval.

## NZIFSA AGM, 4 APRIL 2020 VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the NZIFSA AGM was held via video conference this year. Each year, at the AGM, elections are held for approximately half the positions that make up the NZIFSA. Which positions are elected each year is spelled out in the Constitution (which you can find at the top of the Rules & Regulations section of the NZIFSA website). Those that were elected at the 2020 AGM are indicated by an \*.

<b>Board</b>
Responsible for strategic planning, policy review and the prudent financial management of the Association.
President – Anita Tamepo Vice-President – Grant Howie* Board members – Sue Hoseit, Laura Thompson*, Rochelle Stansfield
<b>Operations Group</b>
Responsible for the day to day operation of the Association. In addition to the more visible roles like the Secretary responding to communications, and the Treasurer keeping track of the finances, there are all sorts of other activities that take place in the background that make the organisation function. For example the police checking of all our coaches, the oversight of the test results, and the grant applications to mention just a few.
CEO – Jeanette King* General Secretary – Fiona Marsh* Treasurer – Vanessa Anderson Test & Competition Secretary – Ina Paul Anti-Doping Officer – Preeya Laud Marketing & Promotions Officer – to be appointed Child Protection Officer – Sheryl Squier

Grants Officer – Sam Snoad Honorary Solicitor – Julian Airey*
<b>Development Group</b>
Responsible for coordinating the development of officials, skaters, coaches and the Rules and Regulations.
Skater Development Director – Sandra Williamson-Leadley Technical Director – Connor McIver* Officials Director – Melissa Cummings* Coaching Director – Simone Thornett* (1 year appointment) High Performance Director – this position is currently vacant, and the Board is not intending to appoint anyone to this role at the moment.

In addition to the elected positions, the Board are responsible for the appointment of a small number of Operations Group roles. The appointment of a Marketing & Promotions Officer is to be made at the next Board meeting.

The AGM is an opportunity to recognise the significant ongoing voluntary contribution of those that keep the Association running. A special thank you to all our NZIFSA Office Bearers for their time and effort they put in. The AGM is also a chance to acknowledge the contribution of those that are stepping back from their roles.

We would like to extend a very special thank you to **Bridget Danbrook**. Our Constitution specifies that the General Secretary can't be elected to the same position if they have held the position for the previous six years, so unfortunately Bridget was unable to seek re-election this year. Bridget was appointed to her role by the Board on 13 May 2013 when we didn't have any nominations for the General Secretary role. The General Secretary role is a huge job that Bridget has managed incredibly over the past seven years. Always going above and beyond what was required to ensure that everyone was fully supported. Bridget has built up such an incredible wealth of knowledge that will be sorely missed.

We would also like to acknowledge **Caitlyn Paul's** contribution to NZIFSA as Coaching Director since her initial appointment by the Board on 10 March 2015. A big thank you for the effort and time you have contributed during this time. It's not any easy role to take on.

Thank you also to **Peter Woods** who has been our Honorary Solicitor since he was appointed to the role 10 April 2016, when the role was vacant. Peter has provided invaluable support and guidance to NZIFSA during the past four years for which we are very grateful.

## **NZIFSA MEMBER FORUMS**

The AGM was preceded by member forums. Again these were held via video conference and attended by 31 people. Many thanks to those who participated in these forums. The following includes the brief outline of the forum topic and some bullet points that attempt to capture the discussion at those forums.

## **Clarification around the new competition grades – led by the Technical Director, Connor McIver**

The big change for this season is that for all singles grades other than Senior and Adult, there will be separate titles for Under 12, Men and Ladies (e.g. Juvenile Under 12, Juvenile Ladies, Juvenile Men). Senior and Adult grades shall have separate titles for Ladies and Men. What this means for KiwiSkate through to Junior grade is that there will be a grade for any skaters under twelve that will have both males and females. Any skaters twelve and over will compete in separate Ladies and Men's grades. Grades cannot be combined.

Note: this forum was not the place to question any decision relating to the changes in grades. The time to discuss that is when the Rules & Regulations are up for review later in the year. Instead it was the opportunity to ensure that any questions around what this means for you or your club are answered.

- Explanation of grades. All grades (except for Senior and Adults) will have three divisions U12, Ladies, and Men. These must be separate
- *Q. Is this a direction from ISU or strictly NZ? A. This is just NZ*
- *Q. If they enter in one competition as an under and the next competition they are classed as an over – how does this work? A. They have to compete in the one they are qualified for.*
- *Q. What happens to selection for nationals if they skate for U12 and then are ladies or men when they get to nationals? A. This hasn't been clarified as yet and for this year possibly won't be an issue as the competitions will happen after 1 July.*
- *Q. Is there any chance of this being reviewed before the next season ie at the end of the year? A. This will come up in this year's review of the Rules and Regs. if people request it.*
- *Q. Will this cause a drop off in male skaters? A. NZIFSA doesn't believe it will. Male skaters have already competed with girls at KiwiSkate level and it didn't put them off at this point. They are already getting a lot of outside pressure to get put off. If they are keen on the sport it won't put them off. The Board did consider this. The cultural stigma of males doing the sport which is genuinely seen by NZ as a female sport. The other disincentive is that they are usually the only ones in their grade which would be addressed by having combined U12 grades.*
- *Q. Did the Board have any discussions around the perception of male skaters – this could impact pairs skaters by reducing the number of males we have skating. A. This has been the case in the past too that we have had difficulty fielding enough males to meet pairs.dance needs.*
- *Q. Can people choose to skate in U12 or the Ladies / Mens grade? A. No they are separate age grades.*
- *It was noted that is a huge thing to shift the societal level of males taking part in a female dominant sport – it is not just figure skating. At skate school there is a good mix – almost 50:50 in Auckland. It was also noted the attitude in Auckland is more open to males skating than elsewhere, potentially reflecting the different ethnicities present.*

## **A Discussion on Sport NZ's Strategic Priorities for Investment – led by the CEO, Jeanette King**

On Friday 27 March Sport NZ advised that, in response to COVID-19, they have made some significant changes to the proposed Partnership Investment that they had been planning to announce on Monday 24 March.

The existing 2016-2020 Partnership Investment funding levels will remain as they are through until 30 June 2021. The investment targeted to support the KiwiSkate programme was due to end this year and NZIFSA were to develop an initiative that was aligned with the 2020-2024 Sport NZ Strategy. However, Sport NZ have also deferred the 2020-2024 Sport NZ Strategy that was due to come into effect 1 July 2020, putting on hold all forms of initiative development until further notice. Sport NZ have flagged that we will be expected to use the investment funding we receive to rebuild and support critical roles and functions post COVID-19. It's not yet clear what this might mean for us and we would be interested in what members see as priorities for this investment (i.e. what are the critical roles and functions that the investment funding could target).

- The Sport NZ Strategy is about getting people more active – with a focus on the 12-18 years of age – which is where most sports lose their participants. We had been looking at developing an investment strategy aligned with this
- With Covid-19 SportNZ have put a hold on this for now. We will still get the \$6,000 as we ordinarily would. But they want us to focus on rebuilding and supporting critical roles. We don't know yet how this will look for us, as we don't employ anyone. SportNZ will be providing a template that should help us understand what they are looking for.
- *Q. Will you be working with the same manager? Stability in relationships seem to do much better than where this is change.* A. Yes we will. SportNZ have been fantastic.
- *Q. Do you have a feel for where NZIFSA could most benefit?* A. This is something that will be worked with our whole community on as to what the priorities are.

**What are the things you most want from NZIFSA to be able to grow as skaters, coaches and/or officials? Led by the President, Anita Tamepo and the CEO, Jeanette King**

Given the impact COVID-19 is having on sport the priorities even 4 weeks ago are likely to be very different today and this forum took quite a different form than was previously envisaged.

Hearing from our members is probably even more important now than it was four weeks ago as we begin to understand what the immediate issues created by COVID-19 are as well as longer term.

Members were asked to email prior to the forums answers to the following two questions

- 1) What are the immediate priorities for skaters, coaches, officials and clubs to help get back on our feet when the COVID-19 lockdown is lifted?
- 2) What are the longer term priorities (i.e a year or two out) to support and grow our sport as a whole and specifically for our skaters, coaches, officials and clubs.

We also wanted to hear from you about what behaviours / values are important to you and that you believe should be fundamental to how NZIFSA goes about achieving our purpose “To promote, foster, regulate and develop Ice Figure Skating in all its disciplines in New Zealand”.

- There is definitely going to be an impact on our sport.

- Skaters who are concerned they cannot get to their test or to competitions, what the opportunities are for training as everything is on hold. There is an impact on coaches and officials. Also there is impact on the clubs and our wider communities.
- Tier 4 funders – Sport NZ are already talking to these funders. They will be asking them to prioritise funding for regional roles. Funding for ice time for events, the funding that helps subsidise ice time – this funding probably will not be available. This could have some quite serious implications. Some people will lose their jobs which may mean that children stop skating. There is possibility of losing some coaches. We need to be prepared on a drop of skaters. Unfortunately this is the reality of the significant impact that Covid-19 may have. The discretionary impact for clubs from public sessions and kiwiskate has been significantly impacted.
- How can we be proactive and what are the most important things for our skaters to get back on the front foot.
- *We need to look at how we can rebuild the sport – a lot of what Jeanette says is reality.*
- *Publicity around public skating, Friday discos, all form of skating is fun. The more visible we can make this activity the more young people are going to want to do it. Use Instagram and Snapchat.*
- *Q. Does the federation have a forum/means of having one template ie Facebook, Instagram that everyone can go to. A. One of the challenges has been having someone put time into managing this.*
- *Q. Is there anyway of using a marketing intern? A. This is something that could be looked at*
- *The ISU skating chanel is showing lots of sporting competitions that have already happened previous to Covid-19.*
- *Skaters keeping in touch with the rinks – they will want us as much as we want them.*
- *Coaching staff coming from overseas are now not coming. This has a serious impact for the likes of Alexandra. Suggested that rinks may need to work together with co-coaching.*
- *Two issues – retain skaters that we have and also encourage new skaters in.*
- *Maintaining levels of connectedness within clubs – maybe skaters could have some off ice online sessions. When things are idle this is when people decide if they love it or hate it.*
- *Coaches are currently working individually doing this anyway.*
- *Clubs need to also keep in touch with all of their members – not just competitive skaters.*

### **Immediate Priorities**

- *Kiwiskate is still your grass roots.*
- *Championship dates will need to be looked at it. Will the competition season be pushed out further - there will be some conversations with NZIFSA, clubs, and officials. Can competitions be combined to fit into a smaller window? Do the qualifying scores need to be taken into consideration? Dates for competitions could be pre-empted depending on dates – a lot of time and energy could be wasted with no outcome. Would it be prudent this year not to have to qualify for nationals? Maybe some different qualifying options? We could look at championships as being reasons to come together ie more life memberships. Loss of jobs is going to impact a huge amount.*
- *Q. Is it viable to look at pushing nationals out further? A. Definitely. All competition dates need to be looked at once we are back on the ice.*
- *Can we use this time to educate people with understanding of grading and qualifying etc.*
- *If we can get some skating development online, parents what do you think? This would be a great idea. It would be great for skaters to have a session with the technical judges. Skaters can do programmes out on the lawn or somewhere else. Any development that we can utilize would be very useful.*
- *It is important not have duplication and that we have the same information going out across the country – particularly as it relates to technical requirements or programme components. If clubs have coaches organizing things please send some notes through to the secretary so we can get an understanding of what is happening.*
- *Should coaches be getting some form of contribution towards this as the majority of them aren't in work at the moment? These are professional people who have to have their time valued.*
- *Is the competition calendar a good place for this information to go?*

- *Q. Is the two month requirement around the announcement likely to stay?* A. this would be a decision for the board. However, clubs were encouraged to be proactive in getting their announcements approved and then revisit them as needed.

**What are the values, the behaviours that are important to NZIFSA?**

- Community, support, inclusiveness, keeping friendships links free for everybody, communication, caring about others, be kind, respectful.
- Good sportsmanship, integrity, fun, togetherness, promotion of the sport, pride, excellence

The President thanked everyone for their involvement and positivity. Working together we can make this as positive as we possibly can.

All the best in skating

Anita Tamepo and Jeanette King

President and CEO

NZIFSA