

Reinstatement of Professional to Amateur Competitor Status

Background

There have been a number of occasions where Branch Boards have considered applications from Athletes, requesting reinstatement back to competitor status for the Amateur Division of competition.

There are no guidelines or standards, which apply in these cases; it is very much a case-by-case basis judged on the merits of the application. The issue is a sensitive one, and without guidelines it is difficult for any Branch Board to make a decision that has the openness and transparency desirable. There is also the issue of consistency in the decision-making process across all Branches of DanceSport Australia. It is further likely that a decision in favour of a practising, (teaching and or competing) Professional athlete returning to an Amateur competitive status could have a negative impact on other athletes competing in the Amateur Division. There is also a potential for the Professional athlete seeking reinstatement to Amateur Division status to be disadvantaged by their former Professional athlete peers.

To provide the openness and transparency needed for these decisions this Policy Procedure sets out the considerations necessary for a Branch Board to arrive at an equitable decision when determining whether or not a Professional athlete should be reinstated as an athlete in the Amateur Division of competition.

It is essential that all Branch Boards apply a consistent application of this policy

Detail

1. Any Professional athlete seeking to regain, or obtain, Amateur Division competitor status must apply in writing to the Executive Officer of their State Board. In the case of the Australian Capital Territory the appropriate State Board is New South Wales.
2. The State Board will decide whether reinstatement to Amateur Division competitor status should be granted, and if so under what terms and conditions.
3. When considering applications for reinstatement made by Professional athletes, a State Board shall consider the following issues before arriving at a decision.
 - a) Professional training and professional exams undertaken, and the results thereof;
 - b) Professional competitions entered and the results;

- c) Current or past membership of any recognised Professional Association or Society, length of membership therein, offices held therein, and classification granted or maintained therein;
- d) Any statements or submissions in support and or against the application for reinstatement.
- e) Impact of the decision on the overall well being and best interests of DanceSport

Notes:

1. If a Professional athlete has at any time gained qualifications as an Adjudicator then reinstatement as an athlete competing in the Amateur Division of competition will not be granted.
2. When considering an application for reinstatement, the following guidelines apply:-
 - a) As a general rule, if the applicant has competed in the Professional Division of competition over more than a six month period within the last two years, then such application will not be considered.
 - b) If the applicant has competed in the Professional Division of competition for a period of less than six months within the past two years, and has not won a National Championship in the Professional Division of competition, then as a general rule, the application will be considered.
3. It is incumbent upon the applicant to show good reason why these general rules should not be applied.
4. Any reinstatement to the amateur division of competition will be to the grading of Level 5 within the appropriate Age Division.

All unsuccessful applicants may exercise their right of appeal as defined and published in "the Rules of DanceSport"

Comment

For most cases, the decision for an amateur athlete to take up Professional athlete status is a considered business decision and not lightly taken. Professional athletes by the very nature of their status have a decided advantage over Amateur athletes. Many will have advanced coaching, or competitive experience, which places them in a much stronger position than a competing Amateur athlete. For these reasons any decision to reinstate a Professional athlete back to an Amateur athlete status to compete in the Amateur Division of competition should not be taken lightly.

The advance notification of the application may appear to be provocative. It is essential that there is a full openness and transparency to these decisions. Any reinstatement of a Professional athlete back to an Amateur competitive status could be controversial. Unless there is a standard policy approach Amateur athletes are more likely to become disenchanted with the Administration, particularly if their competitive standing is likely to be severely affected.

Any decision of a State Board must take account of the impact of any such reinstatement on the overall well being of the DanceSport's competitive environment.