



# INTERNATIONAL CHEER UNION

## 2019 ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

*ICU President Jeff Webb's address to the ICU Annual General Assembly  
23 April 2019 Orlando\**

### **I. Overview of ICU Strategic Objectives**

- A. To continue ICU's ongoing position as a strong International Federation
- B. To assist National Federations to build the sport within the respective countries, as well as supporting them in their efforts to be recognized by their NOC's and sport ministries
- C. To continue to pursue IOC full recognition- critical objective. Two years of IOC provisional status completed, 3<sup>rd</sup> year underway. Full status possible at upcoming IOC meetings, with no guarantee, important to remain focused on focusing on what is best for the Athletes and our Sport
- D. To conduct a large, high profile, high quality World Championship to promote our National Federations and our sports
- E. To ensure a sound financial platform for the future

### **II. Review of the Past 12 Months**

- A. IOC Provisional Recognition: Nearing the end of required IOC 3-year provisional recognition status. This achievement has contributed to National Federations gaining more assistance, recognition and acknowledgments by their local government and respective sport authorities and validates daily the achievements of our athletes around the world
- B. Education: In 2018, ICU provided training in over 90 countries, an additional 1,000 coaches and officials in 10 new countries this past year. Training is and continues to be a major focus of the ICU, and is essential to guarantee quality experiences for the athletes
- C. Progress for athletes with and without disabilities: Adaptive Abilities (previously called "ParaCheer") and Special Olympics training and development greatly advanced in the past year. Notable is the growth of these divisions at the World Championships. First launched in 2017 with 5 teams from 4 countries, the 2019 World Championships will host 25 teams from 9 countries in the Adaptive Abilities and Special Olympics Divisions specifically. Great progress
- D. International Paralympic Committee (IPC): Discussions have been underway with the IPC for the past few years for potential recognition in the future, and very important with the tremendous growth underway- Classification. ICU is in discussions to create a Classification system compliant with the experts at the IPC, expect this at the 2020 World Championships- another significant milestone coming soon on the very important project
- E. Special Olympics International (SOI)

1. At the 2018 ICU AGM, ICU and SOI signed a memorandum of understanding- a new important relationship was launched, progressing on development for rules and policies specifically for Special Olympic Cheer expansion globally
  2. In July 2018, 1<sup>st</sup> ever competition demonstration in Chicago at the Special Olympics 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration at Soldier Field
  3. In March 2019, the 1<sup>st</sup> ever competition demonstration at the Special Olympics Abu Dhabi World Games 2019 in the UAE
  4. A few days prior to Abu Dhabi 2019, Competitive Cheer became a recognized sport by the Special Olympics- a truly historical milestone (*video - SOI CEO Tim Shriver providing appreciation and congratulating the ICU on its tremendous progress within the Special Olympics Family; highlights the significance of the milestone of Competitive Cheer becoming an SOI recognized sport*)
- F. Major Events – past 12 months:
1. European Championships in Helsinki, Finland (June/July 2018)
  2. European Doubles Championships in Athens, Greece (December 2018)
  3. Asian Championships in Bali, Indonesia (October 2018)
  4. The 1<sup>st</sup> Ever FISU World University Championships – for University National teams held in Lodz, Poland (October 2018). This was a tremendously high-profile event- and very important to the ICU and our Sport of Cheer globally. Special appreciation to the WUC local organizing committee (LOC), our good friends at Lodz University of Technology: Przemyslaw Jagielski and his team. New to Cheer- but obviously very experienced in hosting FISU Championships - Przemyslaw and his team exceeded all expectations in this historical event. It was tremendously successful – and gratitude to all of the ICU Federations who participated as well
  5. Al Za'tari Refugee Camp in Jordan (April 2019): Only a few weeks ago, following IOC's Agenda 2020 for Sports to provide opportunities for displaced peoples of the World, the ICU partnered with Peace & Sport from Monaco, under the Patronage of Prince Albert of Monaco and Peace & Sport President Joël Bouzou, together we launched a test to introduce our sport to the people of the Al Za'tari refugee camp on the border of Jordan and Syria. The session was very well received and a big success. ICU looks forward to more collaboration with Peace & Sport going forward- together we really are making a difference around the world!

### **III. Looking forward: Major Events Planning Update- Next 12 months**

- A. 2019 SportAccord Convention in Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia (May 2019), with excellent preparations underway by ICU's National Federation for Australia; preparing to showcase our sport in front of the international sport community and leadership via an event called the SportAccord/GAISF United Through Sport Youth Festival\* organised by Stephan Fox, the President of AIMS and GAISF. ICU looks forward to a great event there next week. Other 2019 events include:
- B. European Championships Saint Petersburg, Russia (June 2019)\*
- C. 1<sup>st</sup> African Cup to be conducted at a Game Reserve near Cape Town, South Africa (June 2019)\*
- D. Pan-American Championships in San Jose, Costa Rica (October 2019)\*
- E. Asian Championships in Shenzhen, China (November 2019)\*
- F. CSIT World Sport Games, Tortosia, Spain (July 2019)\*

- G. Looking forward to 2020- ICU looks forward to a very successful 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the FISU World University Championships to be held in Wonju City, Korea (September 2020)\*
- H. ICU's Flagship event: the 2019 ICU World & Junior World Championships, Orlando, USA (April 2019)\*

**IV. 2019 ICU World & Junior World Championships Report**

- A. 24-26 April 2019 Orlando, Florida, USA
- B. Incredible coverage and viewership from around the world
- C. Participation from 70 nations, more than 3,000 national team athletes
- D. Coverage of the Championships live streamed with added coverage by the Olympic Channel, and accessible on the ICU app, website and all ICU social media platforms\*
- E. New in 2019: Opening Ceremony song- explanation provided. Played as everyone entered the ICU General Assembly. Look forward to an amazing 2019 Opening Ceremony and showcase of our Sport's top athletes

**V. World Dance Sport Federation (WDSF) Update**

- A. Regarding a long-standing dispute with WDSF for many years- we have great news!
- B. Following meetings with WDSF, the IOC and GAISF/SportAccord in March 2018, and directives that were provided to both WDSF and ICU, on 31 January 2019, WDSF has officially dropped all claims to Cheer as their discipline
- C. ICU understands that there is still some work to do in countries negatively affected by the WDSF claims over Cheer; however, the separation is official, and ICU will work with our affected federations to attempt to correct any damage that has been done- but again, this is a significant milestone for all of us
- D. Now, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time ever, there are no other sports claiming cheer to be one of their disciplines

**VI. National Federation Recognition Initiative**

- A. 70 National Federation Members have National Sports Authority recognition
- B. Nearly 20 National Federation Members with National Olympic Committee recognition
- C. Recognition is very important for ICU's acceptance into the Multi-Sport Games
- D. Workshops have been provided to assist in recognition, ICU is always available to assist in all ways on this very important initiative\*

**VII. Overview of Important Initiatives of the ICU**

- A. Prevention of Sport Betting
  - 1. The ICU is committed to protecting the integrity of our sport – positioning itself to be ahead of the dangers of Sport betting
  - 2. Sport integrity and dangers of corruption of sport betting is an important initiative of the world sports community
  - 3. No current indication of existing problems with Cheerleading at the moment; however, it is important to be forever vigilant and proactive
  - 4. ICU has committed to work closely with the IOC and GAISF to implement best practices in education and prevention to ensure our sport is protected as best as possible by this significant danger in sport
- B. Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse
  - 1. ICU is committed to the Safeguarding initiatives launched by the IOC
  - 2. Meetings have been held with both internal and external parties to seek best practices, programme & protocol development for Cheerleading

3. An ongoing and very important initiative to the ICU
  4. As a step, image guidelines have been established by the ICU, with discussions on image and all aspects of Safeguarding, policies and procedures, included in all committee meetings
  5. ICU has already taken a leadership role in addressing this important issue with icons and leaders in the commercial side of the Sport, for further policy development and will remain forever vigilant on this critical topic for all Sports
  6. A very important ongoing project, ICU members will be updated on developments
- C. Membership:
1. 116 National Cheer Federations
  2. The ICU Governing Council recommends 2 proposed membership adjustments for a vote at the General Assembly: Estonia & Hong Kong
  3. Excellent news: National Federation rivalry issues are far less than ever before- mostly domestic matters at this point. Resolving the WDSF matter has been very helpful. A few problems still exist due to the previous Dance Sport problem; and the ICU is committed to solve any that currently exist. However, ICU remains in a strong position to further promote stability, unity and inclusion for the benefit of our Athletes
- D. World Anti-Doping Agency
1. ICU continues to be a signatory in very good standing with WADA, and is committed to protect clean athletes in our Sport
  2. As a result of the WADA questionnaire that has been completed by more than 600 of WADA's signatories, ICU is 1 of 92 signatories in the highest class of compliance. Congratulations to Anti-Doping Committee Chairperson Mike Jacki for his leadership in this important matter in Sport, and also to Brad Guye of Clearidium for his guidance and assistance
  3. In June 2018, through the assistance of ICU's member for Canada, Cheer Canada, ICU sent a National team athlete to the WADA Athletes Forum held in Calgary. Great progress was gained through athlete feedback and contributions in the development of WADA Anti-Doping Charter of Athlete Rights. ICU is also committed to this and looks forward to promoting clean sport with the great involvement of our athletes – through their eyes, providing their important perspective to assure the best practices are in place to protect clean athletes
- E. Athlete 365
1. A major initiative of the IOC, and also of the ICU, is the IOC programme Athlete365, placing a focus of all IFs, NOCs and all sport stakeholders – on our Athletes
  2. Earlier in the month, IOC held its IOC International Athletes' Forum in Lausanne and ICU sent a representative from the ICU Switzerland National Cheer Federation, receiving great information to be provided to our Athlete Commission, to be dispersed to our Athletes globally. The feedback on all presentations and discussions was excellent – it was thrilling for a Cheer Athlete to be part of this experience with Athletes from other sports
  3. Including in a few of the important items, is the development of the IOC Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration" to increase awareness to our Athletes and hold accountable all of stakeholders to put the well-being of our Athletes first

4. Additionally, the Athlete Career Programme is another important Athlete365 initiative to provide valuable information, support, resources and opportunities to our Athletes at all levels - to assist their efforts to be successful in life beyond athletic competition

F. E-Sports

1. A new issue and a major topic of discussion with the IOC, GAISF and the world of Sports
2. E-Sports is big, and it isn't going away; however, resources (time and money) are required to develop these programmes for any sport
3. Following advice of other International Sport Federations (IF), it is important to look forward to developing an E-Sport programme for an IFs respective sport
4. The first step in this process is to approve an ICU General Assembly proclamation – stating our intent in this regard, with the idea of adding language into the ICU statutes in 2020. This language will reflect that ICU is the world governing body and takes responsibility for all things in Cheer, including E-Sport

**VIII. Main Goals and Objectives for the next 12 months**

- A. An incredible World and Junior World Championships: This continues to be a memorable life experience for our athletes. Over 70 countries represented; 3,000 athletes; 6,000 spectators, 55 judges. The energy and atmosphere of the Opening Ceremonies through the final awards is a reflection of the great work you do for our Sport in your countries- and the meaning this has to the athletes\*
- B. National Federation recognition: Always at the forefront of the ICU objectives, to assist our National Cheer Federations achieve National Sport Authority (NSA) and National Olympic Committee (NOC) recognition- so ICU's members can gain access to better government support, access to facilities- and potentially funding, so we can all better support the efforts of our coaches and athletes. Previously mentioned, over 70 ICU members have NSA recognition, over 20 with NOC recognition; however, more are needed. Seminars have been provided to assist on this very important initiative and the ICU remains at everyone's disposal to assist on in any way possible\*
- C. Participation in Multi-Sport Games: The ICU remains in contact with all of the organizers of the Multi-Sport Games, and ICU has slowly been adding a number of Multi-Sport Games to the world schedule; however, one very important criteria for admission to these Games, where ICU also needs help from ICU's members, is the requirement of more NOC recognized ICU National Federations. Traditionally, there is a threshold of a number of NOC recognitions specifically that are required for Cheer to be admitted to specific Games, and ICU asks that all ICU members strive for NOC recognition in each respective country. ICU remains at all ICU members' disposal to assist in all ways possible\*

**VIII. Conclusion**

ICU President Webb concludes the President's Report and expresses appreciation of the support of the General Assembly and looks forward to an exciting future together

*\*Denotes further detail provided later in the General Assembly via the ICU Secretary General's address*

Respectfully submitted,

Karl Olson  
Secretary General  
April 2019