

Mirco Gozzoli: FIDS is right!!!

Dear FIDS President,

to all the Italian friends and athletes.

I am not that kind of person who speaks a lot and gives opinions, because I like more acting than speaking. Notwithstanding, this time I have decided to write the following letter because in these days lots of colleagues, athletes and teachers asked me and keep on asking me what to do with regards to FIDS denial to participate at Blackpool.

I need to be clear.

In the past, I made decisions egoistically thinking only on my carrier. As a consequence, several times my behaviour led me against FIDS rules, mainly because I ignored and did not understand what was happening to the dancesport world and because confrontation and dialogue I have reached today were missing at that time.

I was too much focused on my technical, artistic and athletic expression. With reference to the problem of Blackpool, I and Edita are thinking what to do, but I want to say something to all the Italian athletes, regardless of the way in which we will decide to act. By means of this release, I would like to express and transmit my values and my devotion to our country; therefore, I invite FIDS athletes to listen to and follow the decisions made by the federation, my federation and its president.

I have carefully read the reasons of the denial to participate at Blackpool and I can confirm that they are true, even if I experienced the same situation on the other side and, maybe, I was also against FIDS.

What has been said is true and therefore I totally support FIDS strong reaction. FIDS decided not to take part in Blackpool with its athletes, because the federation is searching for those renewal and respect we, Italian athletes, deserve. The decision should not be understood as a lack of respect for such a historical and important competition as Blackpool.

A few athletes asked me: "What are you going to do? Do you dance?". In this moment what I will do is not so important. You have to feel part of a team, who is working to create the future champions. The decisions I and Edita will make with regards to Blackpool are only guided by my sense of coherence. Twenty-five years ago I choose what I wanted to achieve and now I have to follow my project. My life as athlete has almost come to an end; as a consequence, my decisions are based on values and choices which are far from the path every Italian athlete should follow from now on.

I am an athlete born in the "old system" with IDSF for amateurs and WDC for professionals. I had been already dancing in the professional division, when FIDS was attacked by WDC with the slogan "Leave FIDS" in December 2005. The current situation is the consequence of wrong decisions made by WDC, who did not accept the same agreement Germany reached with good results.

Notwithstanding, none in name of FIDS has ever pressed me to dance for IPDSC.

FIDS has never asked me to deny what I have done and a year ago I decided to cooperate with Ferruccio Galvagno and the whole federation. I made this decision mainly because of a loyal attitude towards my athletes, who always danced for FIDS and required my strong support. They needed to know that I too supported the federation they danced for and that I did not leave them alone.

On the part of FIDS and its president I immediately found the will to understand my problems and to support my choices.

When I decided to start again dancing with Edita, we planned along with FIDS a course, which could give me the possibility to win again first place in the most important world competitions, among them the English ones I love because they have always represented our dimension as dancers all our carrier long.

So, we decided together not to dance in the Italian championship or IPDSC circuit (I have had my opportunities, lots of successes and therefore I accepted to give other great champions the same possibilities I had in the new FIDS-IPDSC system).

I did not mean to be disrespectful to anyone, but I thought it was time to pass the baton on Paolo Bosco and Silvia Pitton. They will represent for the new system, what we were for the old one, that is to say great testimonials able to transmit the passion for standards to lots of athletes.

To dance in Blackpool was a fundamental moment in the path planned with FIDS.

If we do it, we will agree with the federal board and will dance only because we love competing with the best world athletes respecting the English competitions. We confirm to the organizers of those competitions that our aim is to solve the current problems. We are born and grown up in that world and in the same world we would like to demonstrate that champions are able to start and win again being loyal and respecting rules.

We want to say all the athletes with force: we have to follow our federation.

Athletes should always comply with rules, remain in Italy and train at their best in order to be ready as soon as our country needs them.

If the federal council and FIDS president made a decision so painful as the denial to its athletes to take part in Blackpool, it was the consequence of a careful analysis of the current situation and, in my opinion, they were absolutely right.

Blackpool organizers must recognise that Italy and FIDS have to be respected because they represent the only official dancesport reality recognised by CONI and because they represent the great majority of athletes.

I do not deny anything I did in the past because it helped me to gain that maturity which today allows me to be liable of my decisions, as that one to keep on dancing for my country. If I had wanted to avoid problems, it would have been easy. In fact, I could have chosen the simplest way, that is to say to dance for another country. With Edita I could have danced for Lithuania without any further problems and today I should have not chosen to dance in Blackpool or not. To those ones who would have asked me something about Italy, I could have said that I did not dance for Italy and therefore I did not know anything. As some Italians dancing for other countries do, I could have said: "Fortunately, I have left the Italian nightmare".

On the contrary, I am here to express my point of view hoping that this could be useful for my Italian athletes and friends.

I love Italy and I will keep on hardly working for the Italian system. In the past, for many reasons, I had ferocious arguments with FIDS president. Notwithstanding, we have never borne a grudge against each other. We respect our positions, even if different. But today he is right and I completely agree with him. His point of view, his work to develop the Italian dancesport are undeniable and everyone could confirm his commitment.

We should support him to create an important sports system where the future athletes will not be obliged anymore to accept most of the things we had to accept. At the same time, we should act in order that FIDS does not forget the history and importance of the English competitions.

I know that Ferruccio Galvagno wants the Italian couples to participate at Blackpool and all the other competitions they would like to.

I am with FIDS, I will work along with the federation to create a system made in Italy.

As athlete, lots of times I accepted decisions (in my opinion, wrong ones) I did not agree with. Notwithstanding, it was also due to those choices, if I have won the world championship six times.

Today you could also disagree with FIDS, but the decision is right, wise, in favour of the dancesport, the respect for athletes and federations who represent them.

I will give all my support in order that FIDS and Blackpool organizers could solve the problems, thus allowing the athletes to feel the emotion we experienced along with those new emotions FIDS, IDSF and IPDSC will offer us with the new sports system.

I could have said nothing, I could have pretended nothing happened. But I am convinced that we should fight with courage for what we love in order to improve the world we live in, to make our FIDS better.

As athlete, I think I have made lots of mistakes, but I am also convinced that I have set good examples. I have always complied with the rules of the system I was working for, because I think that a good athlete should behave like that and work, if necessary, to change for the better what does not work in his opinion.

I would like to thank the federal council, FIDS president for the work you do for us. I am with the athletes who are part of the project the federation has presented us. I hope that this project will soon realize the harmony with all, with the English teachers too and the beautiful competitions we have loved so much and got a lot of satisfaction out of. I hope to have been helpful, or at least to have explained my point of view.

Best regards,
Mirko Gozzoli