

MISSION

**From the Dignity of Champions, the Future of Couple
Dancesport**



FONDAZIONE HERITAGE

FREEDOM. LEADERSHIP. MERIT. HERITAGE. IDENTITY.

Specialisation must be a value, not a limitation.

INTRODUCTION

Following the MANIFESTO and THE CHARTER OF EXCELLENCE, this document completes the journey of IDSF Fondazione Heritage and presents its MISSION through five fundamental principles: freedom, leadership, merit, heritage and identity.

It raises essential questions about the future of Couple Dancesport: how to protect its distinctive nature, recognise the competence and experience of those who built it, and ensure that teachers, athletes and professionals remain free to develop it according to the values that have shaped its history.

WHY IDSF WAS FOUNDED

IDSF Fondazione Heritage was born from the experience and the choice of more than 30 World Champions, together with leading Teachers, Athletes and Professionals in Dancesport, who decided to embark on a new path, putting their certainties, careers and professional futures on the line.

A choice made to affirm a vision for the future of Dancesport founded on values considered essential: **freedom, competence, experience, merit and identity.**

The Foundation was created to give continuity to that choice, preserve its meaning and transform that experience into a heritage for future generations.

THE PROFESSIONAL DIGNITY OF THE SPECIALIST TEACHER

We believe that a Teacher specialising in Couple Dancing, at any level, must be able to continue earning a living from their profession, making full use of the experience, education and skills acquired throughout their career.

This objective depends directly on the organisation that governs and represents the discipline, which has the responsibility to create the conditions in which the Teacher's work, professionalism and role are properly recognised, protected and valued.

The evolution of Dancesport should not compel those who have chosen to dedicate themselves to Couple Dancing to undertake new teaching paths or specialise in different disciplines—such as solo, duo, recreational musical

movement or other forms of dance—in order to continue practising their profession.

Those who wish to broaden their skills must be free to do so.

But those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to Couple Dancing must be able to continue doing so.

Specialisation must be a value, not a limitation.

THE QUESTIONS

A choice of such significance inevitably raises certain questions.

Why did such a significant number of World Champions and leading professionals decide to resign and embark on a different path?

What experiences, convictions and circumstances accompanied such an important choice?

These questions belong to the history of Dancesport and deserve to be known and explored.

IDSF Fondazione Heritage seeks to help answer these questions through memory, documentation, the experience of those directly involved and the values that guided their choices.

*Memory must not divide.
It must become heritage.*

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES

01 — FREEDOM

The freedom to choose one's own path

Every athlete and every professional must be free to choose where to compete, teach, judge and develop their own path.

The choice to belong to an organisation or to follow a particular path **should not prevent participation in other sporting contexts.**

We believe in a Dancesport in which freedom of choice and the possibility of participation can coexist with respect for the rules, the autonomy of organisations and sporting integrity.

Freedom also applies to one's professional path.

A Teacher who has chosen to specialise in Couple Dancing must be able to continue practising and developing their profession within their own

specialisation, without being required to obtain new qualifications or undertake teaching programmes relating to different disciplines in order to continue working.

The possibility of broadening one's skills must be a choice.

Not an obligation.

Freedom to choose.

Freedom to participate.

Freedom to compete.

Freedom to continue earning a living from one's profession.

02 — LEADERSHIP

Experience and excellence at the service of the discipline

Dancesport must value the experience, competence and knowledge developed at the highest levels.

Champions, Teachers and professionals of proven experience must be able to contribute to the growth and **direction** of the discipline.

Those who have achieved excellence through years of study, sacrifice and competition carry with them knowledge that is a resource for the future.

Leadership should not be merely administration.

It must be knowledge, responsibility and vision.

Competence and experience to lead.

03 — MERIT

Value must determine the result

We believe in competition in which the result is determined by merit.

Preparation, quality of performance, competence, technique and sporting value must be the fundamental points of reference for evaluation.

The credibility of competition arises from the trust that every athlete must be able to place in the system in which they compete.

For this reason, we uphold the principles of transparency, impartiality, independence and integrity.

The value of competence must also be recognised in the professional sphere.

Years of study, experience, results, teaching and specialisation constitute a heritage that must be valued.

The result must belong to those who earn it on the competition floor.

Merit must not merely be declared.

It must be recognised.

04 — HERITAGE

Preserving the heritage, building the future

Couple Dancesport is the result of generations of Champions, Teachers, judges and professionals who have dedicated their lives to the discipline.

Their work has built a technical, artistic, cultural and human heritage that deserves to be known, preserved and passed on.

IDSF Fondazione Heritage seeks to collaborate with **the great Legends of Dancesport**, gathering their experience, knowledge and testimony and creating opportunities to pass this heritage on to new generations.

Heritage is not only memory.

It is also the protection of the skills that this memory has produced.

A Teacher who has dedicated their life to Couple Dancing represents a living part of this heritage.

Their experience, method, technical knowledge and ability to transmit the discipline constitute a value that must not be lost.

For this reason, we believe that new generations must have the opportunity to meet and learn from those who built the history of Couple Dancesport.

Heritage also means building bridges.

The Foundation intends to develop collaborative relationships with other organisations, institutions and international bodies that share the desire to enhance Dancesport, promote its culture and foster its development.

Know our roots.

Share experience.

Pass on knowledge.

Build the future together.

05 — IDENTITY

The distinctive nature of Couple Dancesport

Couple Dancesport originates in the tradition of **English Ballroom Dancing** and possesses a history, culture, technique and competitive structure developed over more than a century through generations of Champions, Teachers and professionals.

When the great organisations responsible for governing and developing these disciplines were founded many decades ago, **they were naturally led by the foremost experts in that specific world: people with a profound knowledge of the technique, methodology, culture, competition and evolution of couple dancing.**

It was a logical consequence:

a discipline had to be governed by those who truly knew that discipline.

Over recent decades, however, some organisations in the world of Dancesport have progressively expanded their scope, bringing together within the same organisational systems an ever-increasing number of disciplines, even though they differ greatly in origin, structure, methodology, athletes' needs and sporting prospects.

The expansion of activities and disciplines can certainly represent a form of growth.

But when **quantitative growth and an increase in the number of registered members** become the principal criterion for development, there is a risk that the distinctive nature of the individual disciplines will become secondary.

And this is precisely where a fundamental question arises:

how can a system in which disciplines with such profoundly different characteristics, needs and approaches coexist be governed effectively?

It is not possible!

We do not believe that one discipline is better than another.

We do, however, believe that different disciplines need to be understood, represented and developed according to their own distinctive characteristics.

Couple Dancesport has unique characteristics: the relationship between two athletes, the construction of a shared performance, communication within the couple, technique, musical interpretation, the artistic dimension,

training methodology and a competitive culture built over more than a century of history.

This complexity requires specific expertise and an organisational vision capable of understanding it.

The problem arises when profoundly different disciplines are reduced to a single organisational logic, as though they could be governed and developed through the same tools, the same criteria and the same priorities.

For us, the answer cannot be to reduce everything to a single logic.

Couple Dancesport is not better than other disciplines.

But neither is it the same as the others.

It is different.

And precisely because it is different, it must be understood and developed according to what it truly is.

For this reason, we believe that the growth of Couple Dancesport must be able to take place within its own **habitat**, where its distinctive qualities can be enhanced without necessarily being subjected to the logic of different disciplines.

This does not mean separating in order to oppose.

It means distinguishing in order to enhance.

It means recognising that the diversity of dance is a source of richness and that every discipline can contribute to the overall heritage of sporting culture precisely when it is able to develop according to its own nature.

Some disciplines have characteristics that are particularly well suited to certain models of Olympic sport, as demonstrated by the choices made by the Olympic movement in recent years.

Couple Dancesport, by contrast, has its own historical and competitive identity, built through more than a century of evolution, which deserves to be understood and developed according to principles consistent with its nature.

There is therefore no hierarchy among disciplines.

There is a diversity of identities, needs and perspectives.

And it is precisely this diversity that must be respected.

For this reason, IDSF Fondazione Heritage supports the principle of **organisational specificity**: the possibility for Couple Dancesport to have structures, expertise and development pathways capable of truly responding to its needs.

This also means recognising the professional specificity of those who work within the discipline.

A Teacher specialising in Couple Dancing must be able to continue practising their profession (teaching and judging) exclusively within their field of competence, without being required to undertake training in different disciplines in order to continue working.

Specialisation must be a value, not a limitation.

When profoundly different disciplines are governed according to a single logic, there is a risk that the needs of one will end up conditioning those of another, ultimately impoverishing each other.

The major crisis that Couple Dancing has experienced worldwide over the last decade is a sign that deserves to be analysed seriously and without prejudice.

It is not necessarily the sign of a discipline that has lost its value.

It may also be the sign of an organisational model that is no longer able to respond fully to its specific needs.

For this reason, we believe it is necessary to open a discussion about the future.

Not to divide the world of dance, but to allow each of its components to find its own space, its own identity and its own path of growth.

Not one form of dance against another.

Not one discipline against the others.

But every discipline valued for what it truly is.

Couple Dancesport needs to rediscover its natural space in order to grow again, innovate and build its future.

Recognise its own identity.

Protect its own distinctive nature.

Value its own expertise.

Build its own future.

OUR COMMITMENT

Through these five principles, IDSF Fondazione Heritage seeks to contribute to a **Couple Dancesport that is freer, more competent, more meritocratic, more aware of its history and able to develop according to its own identity.**

We want to transform the experience and sacrifice of a generation of Champions into an opportunity for future generations.

We also want to help create the conditions in which those who have dedicated their professional lives to Couple Dancing can continue to do so with dignity, freedom and recognition of their specialisation.

Because the growth of the discipline cannot be separated from valuing the people who built it.

A Champion must be able to pass on what they have learned.

A Teacher must be able to continue teaching the field in which they have specialised.

A professional must be able to build their future on the expertise they have acquired.

Not to set one history against another, not to diminish other disciplines and not to divide the world of dance.

The future of Dancesport does not necessarily depend on bringing everything together.

It may instead depend on the ability to recognise what is different, value it and create the conditions in which it can excel.

Our ambition is to transform a crisis into an opportunity for renewal.

And on recognising the dignity of those who, throughout their lives, have chosen to dedicate themselves to Couple Dancesport.

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