



## Collaboration and support with the Pole Sports France association

Following the recent creation of the Pole Sports France association, the Swiss Pole Sports Federation (SPSF) would like to provide strategic and administrative support to the development of pole sport<sup>1</sup> in France.

For the past two years, many French athletes have participated in the Swiss national championships in OPEN competition (OPEN competition = athletes who do not have a national IPSF<sup>2</sup> competition in their country) in order to obtain their selection for the world pole sport championships.

SPSF President Thomas Ruegger is happy to see so many French talents around the Swiss poles. However, he deplores that only high-level athletes (Elite) can participate. In fact, when a country does not have an organization representing pole sport in its country, with its own national competition, only athletes from the Elite division have the opportunity to compete in the OPEN competition.

If we rely on the participation statistics of Swiss athletes (2018 and 2019), the elites represent only 30% of the totality of the participants. Thus, the remaining two thirds concern amateur and professional athletes who do not have the opportunity to represent their country at the IPSF pole sport championships. The establishment and development of the Pole Sports France association is becoming essential so that all French pole sport athletes (amateurs, professionals and elites) can set foot on a national competition in their country.

The International Pole Sports Federation (IPSF) is the only international pole sport organization recognized by the Global Association of International Sports Federation<sup>3</sup> (GAISF) as an Observer member, since October 2017. This affiliation indicates that GAISF recognizes that the pole sport respects the Olympic Charter which sets out the fundamental principles and essential values of Olympism. This status gives the IPSF and its members, associations and national federations the privilege of being the only authorities competent to represent the disciplines of pole sport in their respective countries<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> By pole sport, we mean a set of disciplines standardized by different strict regulations which confer one of the essential aspects to the recognition of a discipline as a sport. Pole sport brings together Pole Sports, Artistic Pole, Para-Pole and Ultra Pole disciplines, as defined by the International Pole Sport Federation (IPSF).

<sup>2</sup> International Pole Sports Federation (IPSF) is the international federation which represents the organization of national federations and associations. <http://www.polesports.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://gaisf.sport/>

<sup>4</sup> Other international bodies organize competitions in Europe and in the world but do not benefit from recognition



Thomas Ruegger insists on the importance of differentiating between practices that are naturally apparent but considerably distinct in their execution and use. He talks about the difference between what is called "pole sport" and "pole dance". The term pole sport indicates that its practice has several levels which notably determine the figures authorized in competition<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, in pole dance

and out of IPSF competition, the allowed figures have no restrictions. In addition, pole sport is recognized as a sport in its own right for the reason mentioned in the previous paragraph while the practice of pole dance has no structure of international federation enjoying such a degree of recognition.

The SPSF therefore commits to bring to the Pole Sports France association support in the organization of its first national competition by sharing documents and administrative management<sup>6</sup>.

Lausanne le 16 décembre 2019

Thomas Ruegger  
President of the SPSF

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Ruegger".

<sup>5</sup> Each pole sport discipline has a code of points or strict regulations that allow the establishment of championships.

<sup>6</sup> All the terms used in this document refer to Swiss terminology. Different terms may apply in other countries.