



European Same Sex Dance Association

Annual report August 2019 – August 2020

ESSDA AGM 29th August 2020

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1 ESSDA board and elections

At the 2019 AGM in Rome were

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| - In ongoing position : | - standing for re-election : | - standing for election : |
| ○ Peter Meager (UK) | ○ Patrice Naudier (FR) | ○ Patrick Sharkey (UK) |
| ○ Piia Korpi (FIN) | ○ Davy Brocatus (BE) | |
| ○ PJ (Trix) Macleod (UK) | ○ Kai André Lillebø (NO) | |
| | ○ Michal Vanicek (CZ) | |

Board Election Results: 38 votes in total

	<u>Votes</u>		<u>Votes</u>
Davy Brocatus	35	Michael Vanicek	23
Patrice Naudier	25	Kai Andre Lillebo	22
Patrick Sharkey	24		

The following roles and positions were divided between the board members for 2019-2020 as follows:

1. Female co-president	Piia Korpi	5. Male co-president	Patrice Naudier
2. Secretary	PJ MacLeod	6. Treasurer	Davy Brocatus
3. Outreach	Michal Vanicek	7. Communication	Peter Meager
4. Membership Officer	Patrick Sharkey	8. Board Member	Kai Andre Lillebo

The Board decided to co-opt a ninth Board Member: Mark Hebell (GER).

2 ESSDA board activities: annual report of the Secretary

This year the board had mostly conference call meetings,

04 August 2019	23 February 2020	21 June 2020
15 September 2019	12 April 2020	26 July 2020
30 December 2019	24 May 2020	22 August 2020

Three committees have been set up to cover the following issues.

- Competition calendar: Davy Brocatus (Peter, Patrice, Thorsten)
- Showdance Rules: Patrick Sharkey + GE and DK
- Communication and PR: Peter Meager

The board activities mostly focused on the following items, described hereafter:

- 1 PJ (Trix) Macleod's research project on Trans inclusion;
- 2 The committees activities concerning ESSDA "showdance couple, Formation Team and Showdance team" rules, Competitions and communication;
- 3 Outreach activities;
- 4 The definition of IFSSDA Competition rules and model of partnership agreement.

2.1 Trans inclusion research project: A PJ (Trix) Macleod's study



This project aims to explore what ESSDA can do to improve trans and non-binary participation in - and experiences of - same-sex competitive dance. It will also explore what assistance ESSDA can provide to competition organisers in this regard.

At the point of publishing these papers, no update has been received.

2.2 Working Groups' reports



Following the 2019 AGM in Rome it was decided that to improve on community communication we would create some small member-based working groups. They were as follows:

1. Competition Working Group
2. Rules Working Group (one off group)
3. Public Relations (PR) Working Group

Competition Working Group

No members offered to join the Competition Working Group and it is currently led by Davy Brocatus and Pete Meager. Fundamentally the working group exists to support international competitions (ESSDA and IFSSDA) and provide guidance and advice where necessary as well as be a point of reference for organisations looking to schedule competitions, to structure the calendar to avoid date clashes and maximise participation at all events. During 2019/20 Davy and Pete have also supported the EGLSF EuroGames where necessary (Copenhagen, Nijmegen & Bern). Sadly due to COVID-19 most of the competitions have been cancelled for 2020, but we were delighted to all be together for the annual Pink Jukebox Trophy in London in February before the pandemic took over - Well done Jacky & Ralf, fabulous as ever!

We saw two brand new competitions in the Autumn of 2019, and a huge congratulations to the UK Equality Open (UKEO) and the Equality Dance Competition, Frankfurt as part of the FVV Frankfurt Xmas Tournament. Both competitions were hugely successful and great additions to the competition calendar. We will be working with competition organisers to advertise 2021 competitions as and when they are ready to be scheduled and of course work with Team Copenhagen for EuroGames 2021 in the summer. Fingers crossed we get a European Championship at last!

Rules Working Group

Members of the UKEDC (Tom Dane and Ralf Schiller) and DVET (Thorsten Reulen, Kerstin Kalmann) joined Pat Sharkey (Board Member) in the new Rules Working Group to re design and revise the Showdance Couple and Showdance Team rules as requested at the last AGM (no other individual members were interested in joining the working group). It was a difficult task to redo the existing rules with better clarification so that everyone could understand them. Additional amendments were introduced for the benefit of all dancers. A restructure of the marking system was agreed so that all competitors would receive marking in all three categories of the judging criteria from the first round. This was particularly beneficial to the couples events. The Teams events (Show Dance and Formation) would also be judged in this method. IFSSDA has also agreed with ESSDA on this marking system. There will always improvements to be made for the benefit of our competitors but for the time being these changes are hopefully acceptable.



New Showdance Rules have now been scripted which will need to be ratified at the 2020 AGM by the membership. The rules are available to view on the ESSDA website. The consultation period for these new rules has now closed.

Public Relations (PR) Working Group

No members offered to join the PR Working Group. The aim of this group was to be more joined up in European communication, working closely with individuals and National Organisations to ensure efficient and effective communication was shared amongst the community and to improve on positive relationships around the wider sporting community. This working group is currently led by Pete Meager. The ESSDA partnership with EuroGames 2020 Dusseldorf was hugely successful and we agreed a positive way forward for the European Championships, sadly all our efforts came to a halt due to COVID-19. We are saddened that 2020 is yet another year without a European Championship, but eagerly look forward to hopefully a European Championship as part of Copenhagen 2021. Pete is also a Dancesport Expert for the FGG and is currently assisting them with all things Hong Kong for the Gay Games in 2022.

We urge all members to continue to use social media to share information with the community, to abide by our social media guidelines and continue to grow positive and productive channels of communication around Europe and further afield.



2.4 IFSSDA's Competition rules and model partnership agreement



IFSSDA's Competition Rules Committee (comprised of Patrice Naudier for ESSDA, Lee Fox for IAGLCWDC, Benjamin Soenksen for NASSPDA) has worked over the past year to consolidate the existing Competition Rules of each founding association of IFSSDA into one set of rules that shall be applied to Dancesport at the quadrennial held Gay Games, which are sanctioned as IFSSDA's World Championships or IFSSDA sanctioned events such as the World Pride Cup to be held annually in Orlando, Florida (USA).

Though many aspects of each set of rules match, there are also distinct differences. In most cases, rules were just expanded to include all aspects of each set of rules. But some required a compromise, considering regional customs, local experiences and style differences. The following highlights some of the compromises and its basis:

1. Formation Team & Showdance

ESSDA's Competition Rules used to separate couples and teams routines under one heading of 'Showdance' and refers to a separate set of rules to be found in a separate document. This has caused some confusion with members of IAGLCWDC and NASSPDA, since 'Showdance' has a long tradition of being a couples-category. On the other hand, 'Formation team' competitions have a long standing tradition in Europe and crystallized into a very distinct form of competition. Considering all that as well as that Line Dancing is an intricate part of Country Western dancing, which often gets presented in a formation like routine, the committee felt that a distinction between 'Showdance (couple)', 'Formation Team' and 'showdance team' is needed. This distinction is now in line with the last update of our showdance/formation team rules.

2. Senior Categories

There are two differing calculations that restrict a senior category of 45+. One is based on the age of both partners being required to be at least 45 and the other requires a combined age of at least 90. In Europe and mainstream, 35+ is already accepted as a senior level, referred to as Senior I. However, in the USA and mainstream that's not the case, though there are many age group levels for Pro/Am competitions and it is not unusual for a 20 year old teacher (Pro) to dance with a 70 year old student (Am), which typically does give that couple an advantage over one where both partners are 45 years old. Based on these considerations, the committee decided to make a 45+ mandatory, but also allow the option of adding 35+ and 55+, and define these categories as restricted to couples of partners that are at least of that age.

3. Exclusion from Judging

ESSDA requires that a "6 months break must be observed between adjudicating and participating as a competitor," which isn't duplicated by any rules from NASSPDA or IAGLCWDC. The latter associations still feel that we're at a very grassroots level and don't have quite the numbers to enforce such a rule. However, since our community doesn't recognize mainstream definitions of a dancer, such as professional and amateur, it makes sense to delineate between those that compete and those that judge for a world event. Once decided, crossing over from one side to the other can cause 'bad blood,' if not in some way controlled. The committee therefore agreed to require that an adjudicator at an IFSSDA sanctioned event may not be a competitor at that time at any of IFSSDA or its members' sanctioned events, but may request reinstatement as a competitor from any of its member organizations, which than individually may decide on any restriction.

Model partnership agreement

IFSSDA was requested to award the World Pride Cup 2020 Orlando (FL). For this purpose, but also in the prospect of the GayGames 11, IFSSDA members elaborated a model partnership agreement.

3 Upcoming competitions

3.1 Feedback of EuroGames 2019 Rome



During the last ESSDA AGM, a first feedback about the planning and delivery of Rome 2019, including communication issues, took place:

- DVET congratulated for organising a successful competition.
- ESSDA and DVET both stated having the interests of dancers as a priority. All parties look forward to positive collaboration in future.
- The requirements for organizing a European Championships should be discussed by the working group on competitions.

EGLSF's AGA papers report the following:

“At the point of publishing these papers: • The final report from the organisers has not been received. • Other contractual obligations such as sharing information with EGLSF has not been honoured • The final payment to EGLSF remains outstanding • We have been contacted by third parties regarding the non- payment of bills. This includes partners ESSDA & IGLFA. • Promised reimbursements to many individual athletes from transport failures and some competitions remain outstanding”.

3.2 ESSDA European Championships and EuroGames 2020 Düsseldorf



On June 16th, registered participants received a communication from EuroGames 2020 Dusseldorf organisers that officially cancelled the EuroGames 2020 in Dusseldorf because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The reimbursement policy was also laid out in this communication.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in organising 2020 EuroGames to Dusseldorf, acknowledge all the hard work of the organisers, their volunteers and partners, and offer our sincere

regrets that this 2020 edition of EuroGames could not take place because we remain convinced that it would have been a wonderful sports tournament.

3.3 ESSDA European Championships and EuroGames 2021 Copenhagen



The dance sport competition will be organized by Pandans which organizes the Nordic Open.

3.4 ESSDA European Championships and EuroGames 2022 Nijmegen



A first contact has been taken with the Eurogames Team and should be confirmed with a conference call. Note that should there be a European Championships in Nijmegen in 2022 this will be the same year as the GayGames 11 Hong-Kong 2022.

3.5 ESSDA European Championships and EuroGames 2023 Bern

EuroGames Bern 2023



EuroGames 2023 Bern bid presentation took place on 6th June. Following, ESSDA took a first contact with the organizers' team in order to organize a European championships alongside the EuroGame dancesport competition.

The organizers showed interest and are willing to assess ESSDA's requirements for a European Championship.

The competition is to be organized by «Rainbow Dancers», Bern's number one club for same-sex dancing. The competition should include Standard, Latin and 10 dance events for same sex or non-binary/ gender non-conforming couples.

Possible location for the competition is Tanzlounge in Bern with a 300 m2 dancefloor and an adjoining bar and lounge area.

3.6 IFSSDA World Championships and GayGames 2022 Hong-Kong



Contact has been taken between GayGames organizers and IFSSDA (Benjamin Soecken – NASSPDA and Patrice Naudier - ESSDA) in order to provide feedback from previous GayGames and clarify all issues concerning the requirements for a successful World Championships. Extensive documentation was exchanged.

The model Partnership agreement will be used to frame the cooperation between the organizers and IFSSDA



4 Motions

4.1 Change of rule 3.4.b.ii. concerning the age requirements for Senior group

Patrick Sharkey proposes the existing rule be amended to read that both partners minimum age be 45 years and classed as Senior 1. The argument for this is that the majority of existing couples competing are all ready approaching 35+. A person with age 40 is a lot more agile generally than someone in their early 50s. Example a couple 40 and 50 respectively competing against a couple both aged 55 is unfair. First couple has 10 years of youth in the partnership. That equates to 15 years against the couple aged 55.

4.2 Addition of a rule 3.4.b.iii. creating a Senior 2 age group

Patrick Sharkey proposes a rule 3.4.b.iii be added to create a classification Senior 2 for dance couples in which both partners are aged at least 55 years. This rule would be very helpful particularly for the major competitions. It would allow many of our passed competitors a chance to compete. It would also demonstrate considerable appreciation and recognition to the senior competitors. This would ensure we are including not excluding our most senior dancers. These dancers were the foundation stone of our organisation who still support us at our competitions.

4.3 Possible name change and redefine our mission. (European Equality Dance Association)

Peter Meager proposes the following motion:

As we move into a new era of 'equality dancing' around Europe, encouraging dancers of any/non gender to dance with each other, it seems an appropriate time to review our mission and what we are now trying to achieve in 2020.

With many more competitions having 'mixed' and 'open gender' categories and encouraging the mainstream to accept couples as just lead and follower I propose that it's now time for us to push equality a little bit further.

My proposal is that we move away from our first aim (of promoting same sex dancing alone) and head towards two couples dancing together of any form. This doesn't necessarily mean we have to lose the identity of same sex competition/championships categories, it could mean we just increase the opportunities for a much wider group of dancers and potentially have more competitors feel welcomed in our events. It can feel quite uncomfortable for dancing who identify as non binary to have conform to a standard so this really could be the beginning of becoming more "open and accepting" within our community.

I'm not here to confirm the ins and outs of exactly how our competition rules would work, but merely putting out there the need to review and redirect focus to a more equal/ everything is possible kind of dance partnership.

It has been reviewed by both the UK and US national organisations in the OST twelve months, which led to a change in the UK from UKSSDC to UKEDC earlier this year, and of course the German organisation already defines itself as 'equality' rather than just same sex.

Food for thought and I'd invite the membership to discuss in more detail at the forthcoming AGM.



5 Plans for the upcoming years

For next year and beyond, topics such as the ones below have been proposed (some from the previous AGM and some new ones proposed by board members):

- Name change of ESSDA into EEDA and redefinition of our missions, rules and constitution with regard to gender issues.
- Community building through
 - o exploring ways and possible partnerships to have more countries organizing competitions
 - o developing an ESSDA offer with clear benefits and value added for the membership
- Strengthening of the links with NASSPDA and IAGLCWDC based on the success of a first cooperation project (IFSSDA rules), leading to the settling of IFSSDA as an operational organization.
- Developing a support tool for competition organisers to compose a diverse and balanced panel of qualified adjudicators, e.g. in terms of background, country, gender, experience, number of big competitions judged in a particular timeframe
- Grand Slam (Yes or no to be retried ?) and European Championships/EuroGames (yes or no these 2 events kept together ? If not, define rules)
- Evaluation Age Category
- Champions Gallery and Ranking tool on ESSDA website
- Outreach support for competition organisers, e.g. ways and means of funding outreach
- Payment system that makes money transfers from non-euro countries less expensive

