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March 11, 2012

Dear Members of the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame Nominating Committee:

I assume that Mr. Mondschein has been keeping all of you informed on messages he has been receiving about the issues raised in my Open Letter to the Members of the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame and the messages he has been sending in response to them. Quite a few of those messages have been forwarded to me, but I imagine that is less than all as they are not coming to me from Mr. Mondschein.

From the messages I have seen, it appears that Mr. Mondschein is using relatively standard text in responding to those message. As it happens, his responses raise more questions than they resolve. For example:

*"Each year the Nominating Committee thoroughly reviews and discusses the credentials of all nominees against a published criteria contained within the Nominating Packet and available online. The Nominating Committee does not publish the process whereby nominees are included on the ballot."*

I have reviewed the Nominating Packet for this year and do not see any such standards in it. What is particularly relevant here is that he acknowledges there are procedures followed by the Committee in determining whether a candidate's name is included on a ballot. Moreover, his message acknowledges that those procedures are set forth in writing as they could be "published" only in that form.

That is fully consistent with what I have come to learn from bits and pieces of information provided to me by electors of the Hall of Fame. First, a person or team that receives a nomination one year will automatically be considered by the Committee without need for another nomination in a subsequent year. The "consideration" done by the Committee is review of whether the accomplishments of the candidate would qualify them for membership in the Hall of Fame if the electors voted that way.

Second, a person or team placed on the ballot by the Committee will automatically be included on the ballot for 3 consecutive years if not elected sooner, subject only to certain limited exceptions: (1) the candidate receives a very low number of votes in the first year or shows a substantial decline in votes over two consecutive years; and (2) facts come to the attention of the Committee that were not publicly known the year the candidate was first put on the ballot, establishing that the candidate was not actually qualified for consideration in a vote by the electors of the Hall of Fame in the prior year.

While I can see why application of those procedures to any particular candidate might not be published without that candidate's consent, there is no justifiable reason why the procedures themselves should be hidden. Doing so undermines the credibility of the Hall of Fame by undermining the legitimacy of procedures followed for determining who is or is not elected to it.

Another example is the justification for why a candidate who was on the ballot one year would be left off the ballot in the following year:

*“This year, a number of very qualified individuals who were on prior ballots (three of whom were on the ballot for the first time last year), are not on the 2012 WHOF ballot.”*

As a matter of precision, the three candidates who were on the ballot for the first time in 2011 and not on the 2012 ballot were the following (listed in order of the ballot): (1) Valova / Vassiliev, (2) Grishuk / Platov, and (3) myself. I am aware from what Mr. Collins said at the US National Championship in public that I received 48% of the vote in 2011. I have reason to believe from statements made to me by electors of the Hall of Fame that both of the other candidates may have received only limited support. In that context, perhaps Mr. Mondschein could clarify why he is making public statements that could only be interpreted to mean those other candidates received far more votes than they did. If they did not fall into one of the specified exceptions, it was unfair to them to be left off the ballot and unfair to the electors to be deprived of their voting role. The question is whether established procedures were followed, not whether the failure to do so impacted more than one candidate.

As to other candidates who were on the 2011 ballot and not included on the 2012 ballot, I note that the two who were in Category B with me had already also been on the ballot in 2010. I also note that one of the candidates on this year’s ballot appears for the 4th time in a row and (I understand) had also appeared on the ballot several years earlier. Quite apart from how the selection process applies in this case, it is difficult to review both the actual changes to the ballot this year and the way they are characterized by Mr. Mondschein as being based on existing rules and faithful application of them.

The quoted statement by Mr. Mondschein also invites scrutiny as to the relationship between “qualifications” and inclusion on the ballot. If the Committee concluded that such persons actually were qualified, why are the electors of the Hall of Fame deprived of their right to vote on them? This is another example of how publication of the “procedures” followed by the Committee would help preserve the integrity of the process.

Finally, Mr. Mondschein has given numerous assurances (ostensibly on behalf of the Committee) as to actions that will occur next year.

*“As with all individuals nominated, they [the 3 candidates appearing for the first time on the 2011 ballot but not on the 2012 ballot] will once again be under consideration for the following year.”*

Putting it charitably, this is misleading and possibly consciously so. The only “consideration” relevant at that point is by the electors of the Hall of Fame. And that would have been the natural way to understand Mr. Mondschein’s assurances in his letter of March 4, 2011: *“Your nomination will be kept in our active file and considered next year.”* The responses from Mr. Mondschein imply that will occur. We know from this year’s experience that is not the case.

As I was finishing this letter, I received a copy of an email message Dick Button sent to the “Members and Electors of the World Hall of Fame” and others, including you. I hope all of the

recipients (including you) take it upon themselves to address his points. And I hope I will ultimately receive copies of communications doing so. Hopefully, the way in which my candidacy to the Hall of Fame has been handled this year can play some useful role in changes that make the election process more transparent and result in a rules-based system that will do credit to the Hall of Fame and to all current and future members of it. If so, I will take comfort in knowing that the unfortunate situation this year has nonetheless had value, both to the sport and to the Hall of Fame, regardless of my own candidacy.

Regards,



Sonia Bianchetti Garbato