

# world DanceSport magazine

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## Ten Dance

**Valentin Lusin – Renata Busheeva, GER**  
**Twice the Passion or Double Effort**

Heidi Götz, the editor of World DanceSport Magazine (WDSM), interviews Valentin Lusin and Renata Busheeva. After the specialists have already had their say in this section of the IDSF periodical, the all-rounder's view reveals another angle on what it takes to reach the top in DanceSport.

WDSM: Renate and Valentin, thank you for meeting with me. I know you as Ten Dance couple from many competitions and I would like to present you as such to our readers. I assume that 2009 has been a very special and important year in your career. But before we get to that, tell us about the beginning of your career! How did the two of you find each other and – to go back further – how did you get started in DanceSport?

Valentin : As far as I can remember, it all began when I was seven. It started in St. Petersburg, where I originally come from. I got my initiation with Russian folkdance and Polka. Then my parents moved to Germany. For a number of years I danced in a dance school. I tried with a few partners prior to Renata, before the two of us decided to practice more seriously and professionally. I did a few competitions with a previous partner – even the German Open. But then I teamed up with Renata – six years ago.

I had just split with my partner and, of course, wanted to find a new one right away. I knew the field at that time and thought it might be good to look for a partner from an eastern country. The German trainers agreed: I turned to Internet. I was lucky to find Renata. She had finished school; it was possible for her to come immediately to Germany for a try-out. From the first moment we both had good feelings; our trainers were satisfied too and approved of the partnership. We immediately got the green light for the start of our career.



WDSM: Valentin, you came to Germany together with your family and live here for several years by now. From your command of the German language one would never guess that you are from another country.

Valentin: I always used to speak two languages: German and Russian. My grandparents and many others in my family are German. That is why we all returned to the country. I came here 15 years ago. My memories of Russia are slowly starting to fade.

**“But when my parents told me that I had to dance with a boy, I was terribly upset and refused to do so.”**

Renata: I was born in Kazan, 840 km east of Moscow. I got in contact with dancing when I was five. We didn't have any dance schools. I started to practice in a club. But when my parents told me that I had to dance with a boy, I was terribly upset and refused to do so. The trainers realised that I was talented and had good musicality, already at the age of five. But I did not want to hear of it. The reluctance lasted until I was eleven. My grandfather – who was an excellent dancer himself – kept at it and, through gentle persuasion, he finally convinced me. My first try was successful; I suddenly seemed to like everything about it. But maybe it was that I had simply grown up and matured a little by then.

In Kazan my possibilities were rather limited, so my grandfather decided to move us to Moscow. There I started practicing again until I split with my partner. My mother put a partner search on the Internet ... Valentin answered it. When I came to Germany I was 16. I arrived on my birthday. And I had travelled on my own, without my parents. Valentin's family took me in, welcoming me like a daughter.

WDSM: Was it not a difficult decision and a big step to leave your family and your country?

Renata: For me it was much more difficult when my grandfather and I moved from Kazan to Moscow. I was thirteen and very homesick at the time. But my parents convinced me that it would be much better for my future. I lived in Moscow with my grandfather, without my parents. And it took me a while to get used to the situation.

In order to live in Germany I had to have a visa. At first I had visa which entitled me to learn the language here. Now I have another one as a university student.

WDSM: What are the short-term plans for your careers? Until very recently Germany had a successful couple in Ten Dance. This couple split – you became national champions, very young ones at that. What do think the future holds in store for you?

“Sometimes we try to imagine how it could be to do just one discipline. But that is done jokingly and more as an exercise in motivation.”

Valentin: We are both very enthusiastic and committed to Ten Dance. Sometimes we try to imagine how it could be to do just one discipline. But that is done jokingly and more as an exercise in motivation.

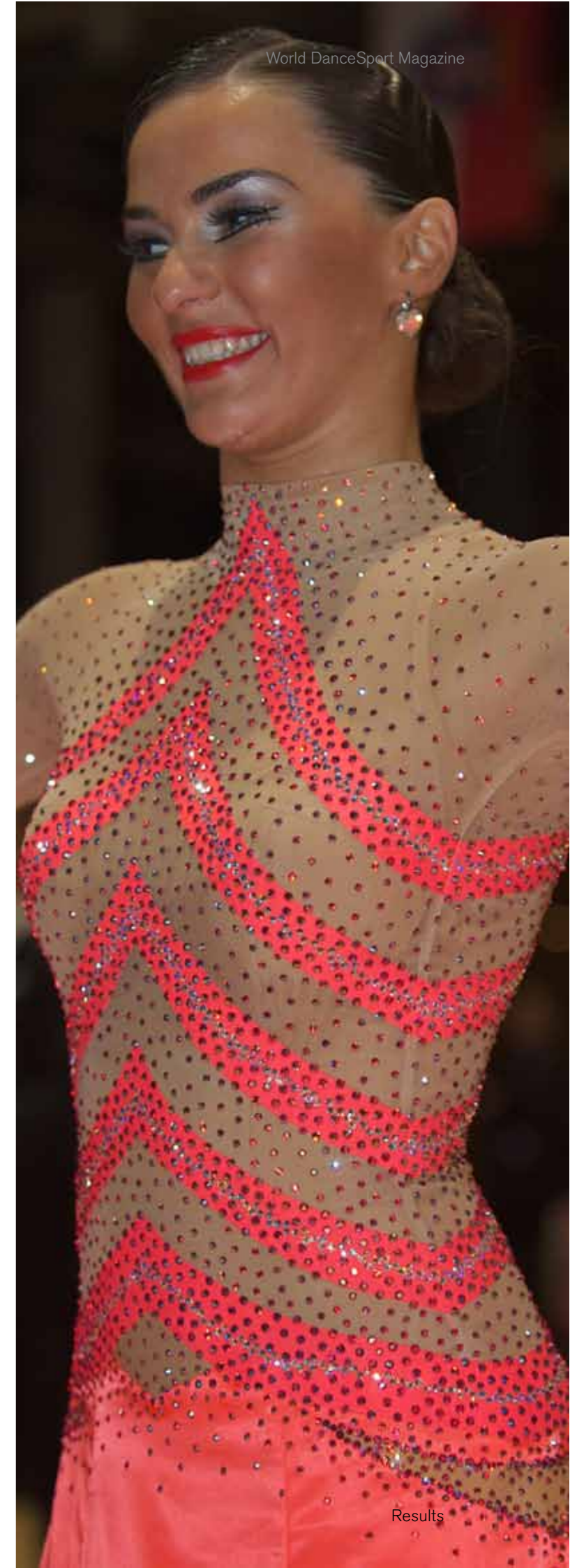
True, the previous Ten Dance champions retired and we got a chance to claim the title. We hoped to be able to seize the opportunity by working very hard.

Only two months prior to the 2009 Championship we learned that Christoph Kies and Blanca Ribas would retire. From that moment on we felt much more pressure, but we also intensified our practicing and the preparations. The 2009 Championship itself was very exciting. We did end up winning the title and, as you can imagine, we were very happy about that.

WDSM: Germany – a successful nation in DanceSport – had grown accustomed to fielding perennial World Champions in Ten Dance. Ever since last year, the same expectations could apply to you. Does this bring about more pressure; does it affect you in any way – good or bad?

Valentin: What can we say: it's not all that long that we have actually won our first national title! We cannot feel the pressure yet. Sure, we have to do more high-calibre competitions, something which also implies more travelling and more preparation. The World Cups, the World Championships: we also get to enjoy the bigger challenges. The situation is not completely new for us. We had been runners-up in German Championships for a few years. The German Federation had nominated us for World and European Cups in the past. So we knew most of the other couples and their level of dancing. We had also been successful in winning the European Union Championship earlier.

WDSM: IDSF has established a new category for its competition calendar and World Ranking Tournaments – IDSF Ten Dance competitions. That means there is a lot more to consider when you do your planning. What are your priorities when you plan at the beginning of a season?



Valentin: The Ten Dance category is rather new; I must admit that Renata and I did not really consider it until now. We still go to important IDSF Ranking Tournaments in Standard and Latin as we did in the past: Vienna, the Austrian Open; Stuttgart, the German Open; Blackpool is still on our schedule. Aside from that we have to participate in the German Championship, in several regional championships as well as in trainings camps together with other couples on the National Team. We are nominated to represent Germany in all major IDSF Championships. That has us travelling nearly every weekend.

WDSM: IDSF started to coordinate the dates for Championships and Cups last year. European Championships for all disciplines as well as age grades are scheduled in the first half of the year, the Worlds in the second. For a specialist in one of the disciplines it should have become easier to plan the various periods for training, certainly when one



is changing the choreography.

Valentin: Yes, this is positive! In 2009, the World Cup Ten Dance and the World Championship Ten Dance were close together.

Renata: June and Christmas are the best time for us to relax.

WDSM: Looking back at your dancing career, which triumph was the most meaningful until now?

"It was also the first time that we had been nominated to represent Germany in a major competition."

Renata: I definitely remember the World Championship in Youth: we finished sixth in the final. This was emotional. It was also the first time that we had been nominated to represent Germany in a major competition. And the last success for Germany in Youth Standard dated quite far back.

Valentin: Of course, we were both very proud to become German Champions in Ten Dance for the first time last year. But I also like to remember the European Union in the Czech Republic. We were able to beat local favourites there.

WDSM: What do you think about the opinion held by many trainers that it is important for the development of a couple to be present at determined competitions, at the so called "prestige events."

Valentin: I believe it to be absolutely necessary to always compete against the top couples; it is the most challenging way to go about it. But we don't want to hide at small competitions to get points for the World Ranking. We try to be present at the main events. And we dance competitions nearly every week. We learned early on that dancing in competition is the best way to practice. You can monitor and compare your dancing, your current level and the development in your work.

WDSM: Both of you started dancing in Russia. Did you notice much of a difference when you came to Germany?

Renata: Although the conditions for Russian couples are sometimes far from perfect – sometimes they practice on very small floors, together with 20 or more couples – they are always eager to improve, and they are prepared to work very hard. When first I came to Germany I was surprised when I came to my club. I was given my own keys and therefore able to practice whenever I wanted. We do have the best conditions here; I would even say they are luxurious. But there are not as many young dancers here as in Russia, I don't really know why. In Russia the government puts much emphasis on the artistic sports. We see it in the Olympic Games, for instance. Virtually in every school you are given the opportunity to take up DanceSport. I don't even know whether the pupils wanting to get started in football have the same opportunities. The priorities seem somewhat different in Russia.

Valentin: I took my dancing classes in school; it was part of



my school curriculum. A similar system starts to be implemented in Germany too. DanceSport becomes more and more popular here as well. And that makes for a promising future. It is not yet to the extent as in the eastern countries. There the numbers for couples in Juvenile and Junior are simply astounding. When they get older and develop their independent ways of thinking, it often happens that they don't always agree with everything they are told to do. Not surprisingly, the number of couples in Adult starts to decline. There are not as many as you would expect.

WDSM: Let's get back to your career. How often do you usually practice? Who is your trainer, or are you working in a group? Is there one mentor or coach to be singled out? "Renata has to study; her visa is dependent on her academic progress."

Valentin: We try to practice daily, three to four hours every day. But we have to coordinate that well with our other lives. Renata has to study; her visa is dependent on her academic progress.

We try to do Standard and Latin in every practice session. We are German Champions: I think it is necessary to have a team of trainers. The trainer who is most important and very close to us is Sven Traut. We can rely on him; he is also our best friend. He is always around us, no matter whether the result in a competition is good or bad. He mainly works on Standard with us. That is why we feel somewhat safer in Standard. He is also our coach; he works on our mental preparation as well as on our physical

fitness. We also have another team of trainers working with us: William Pino and Alessandra from Italy. We go and train with them nearly every month. We also work with the German National Team coach Oliver Wessel-Therhorn in Standard as well as Latin. We are very lucky that all our trainers collaborate, one with another, and that they look at it as a team effort, always ensuring that everything develops in one and the same direction.

WDSM: This sounds very good! But I am sure it must also cost a lot of money. How do you manage to cover all of this, do you have any sponsors?

Valentin: If I look back five years, everything got started with our parents. They were our main sponsors. We would like thank them for supporting us as much as they could. Now we receive support from the German DanceSport Federation, DTV. We have sponsors for our dresses and we receive money for doing shows.

We are also on the German "Challenge Team." If your talent and attitude are considered to be promising enough for a top-level competitive future, you get selected for this Challenge Team. You can be part of it for three years, let's say. During this time, you receive financial support to enter five important competitions throughout the year. The DTV office organises the travelling and does the hotel bookings for these competitions. At this point, five couples belong to the Challenge Team. It is of great help to us.

WDSM: You are very young; your career has just started. But do you ever think that there is a life after dancing. Do you plan to eventually venture into something else or do you want to stay in DanceSport.

Valentin: We both attend university. I am studying sport and biology in Cologne, Renata is studying economics. We try to manage both: our sport as well as our academics. But, of course, dancing is our priority.

WDSM: If I ask you to describe your respective partner to the readers? What it is you appreciate most about her or him ...

Valentin: Ever since we started competing together, for all of six years by now, we are also a couple off the floor. I love Renata because she is a very emotional person. I am the complete opposite: I am logical and sometimes too much of realist. This goes together perfectly. I hope it will last for a long time too.

Renata: True, Valentin is the organiser in our partnership. I can rely on him, always, and I really need that. He is also a born to teacher: in DanceSport he is able to explain everything to me.

WDSM: Do you appreciate your partner being your trainer too?

"If you do explain something to your partner, you also take on a certain responsibility, in a way."

Valentin: Normally not, no, but it depends on the way it is done. We accept each other, we respect our personal

opinions. If you do explain something to your partner, you also take on a certain responsibility, in a way.

WDSM: Most of your time is spent on practicing, travelling and competing. Is there any left for friends and hobbies?

Valentin: That is true. We lose contact to our friends from school; we do not have enough time to meet with them. But we find new friends in DanceSport. We don't miss going to the disco with our friends. We are too committed to our sport. Sometimes, when we go to competitions abroad, we plan to arrive a few days earlier or stay longer. Then we have time for sightseeing and making new friends.

WDSM: Did your career develop as you had both expected it would?

Valentin: We are very pleased and satisfied with what we have achieved so far. We seem to have improved every year; we have become German Champions for the first time in 2009. At the international level we are doing better and better too, starting to establish ourselves further. You always have to have ambitious goals – goals worthy to go all out in order to reach them. We hope that we can continue in our pursuit for many years to come.

WDSM: What are your goals for 2010?

Valentin: First of all, we do want to defend our national title in Ten Dance. (Editor's note: They did that successfully – and narrowly – on 1 May in Brokdorf.) We will stay with Ten Dance and definitely not specialise any time soon. And we hope to be near to or among the top three in the Worlds.

WDSM: You present yourselves very positively on the floor; you are charismatic, congenial, and successful. Do your friends and fellow athletes take well to that – or does it affect friendships sometimes?

Valentin: Everybody wants to be successful and goes through a lot of effort to get to the top. It is natural that people are jealous. Sometimes we can sense a little bit of jealousy when we all sit together after a competition. But friendship is also something different for both of us. Renata and I each have what we call our „best friend.“ They are not involved in DanceSport. We try to be in contact with them as often as possible. These are my guiding principles and I would like to pass them on to my colleagues in DanceSport: try to be as natural as possible, be realistic and honest. Everybody must be able to see and feel that you enjoy what you are presenting on the floor.



# International DanceSport Federation NEW JUDGING SYSTEM

## Why? How?

By Natasa Ambroz, IDSF Vice-President and Education Commission Chair

The existing judging system that we have been using for years is working well and it is practical, but there are certain areas that could be improved on.



- Better transparency
- Higher level of objectivity
- Improved comprehensibility benefitting public and media
- Greater accountability for adjudicators
- Constructive feedback for athletes and trainers

The proposal for the new IDSF Judging System is based on the concept and the rules developed by the Japan DanceSport Federation. The latter were first presented to the IDSF Presidium in 2008.

The proposed system is also an adaptation of the judging system which has been used by the International Skating Union (ISU) since 2004.



The ISU Judging System differentiates between two types of scores initially; these are then combined for the final score of the performances.

- Programme Components Score – PCS
- Technical Elements Score – TES

In ice skating, the PCS is based on the evaluation of up to five programme components. Each of these components is marked on an absolute scale of points. In the system used by ISU prior to 2004, much of the same criteria – which now became components – were evaluated too, although under a different name: the so called “artistic impression.”

### Programme Components – Ice Dancing

(Compulsory Dances)

- Skating Skills
- Performance
- Interpretation
- Timing

### Programme Components – Ice Dancing

(Original and Free Dance)

- Skating Skills
- Transitions/Linking Footwork and Movements
- Performance/Execution
- Composition/ Choreography
- Interpretation/Timing

The TES, on the other hand, is based on the evaluation of specific standardised elements (steps, spins, lifts, jumps). Each element has a “Base Value” assigned to it – in points – by a “Technical Panel,” the judges then mark the “Grade of Execution” – GOE. Remember the “technical value score” under the old ISU system? Well, it evolved into the TES!

A synopsis of other key points making the ISU Judging System the reference and inspiration for IDSF can only help the readers of World DanceSport Magazine to appreciate the underlying philosophy – and to understand the mechanics.





## ON ICE!

The ISU Judging System is constructed as follows:

**The Technical Panel** is composed of three officials from different ISU Members, namely the Technical Controller, the Technical Specialist and the Assistant Technical Specialist, monitors the competition and determines the elements performed by the skaters, assisted by a Data Operator for recording purposes ...

**The Technical Specialist, assisted by the Assistant Technical Specialist** identifies and calls the performed elements;

- identifies and calls correct Levels of Difficulty of certain performed elements (eg. spins, footwork);
- identifies illegal elements, additional elements; falls and also new, innovative elements ...

**The Technical Controller** authorizes or corrects the deletion of elements; supervises the Technical Specialists and Data Operator and proposes corrections, if necessary, respecting any performed element and Level of Difficulty identified by the acting Technical Specialist and Assistant Technical Specialist. However, if both Technical Specialists disagree with a correction asked for by the Technical Controller, the initial decision of the Technical Specialist and Assistant Technical Specialist stands ...

**Judges** are to focus entirely on scoring the quality of each element and the quality of the Programme Components. Their scores will be based on specific quality criteria for each element and will provide a comprehensive assessment of each skater's skills and performance. A Judge is not required to compare and score each skater directly in relation to all other skaters. This permits each

Judge to focus on the quality of one, each performed element, and two, the Program Components, and to enter his/her scores through a touch screen. At ISU Events, Judges may review in real time certain sequences of the skaters' performances thanks to an instantaneous video replay system.

There will be a panel of nine Judges, of whom seven are drawn at random. The scores of these seven Judges will form the result. Out of these seven scores, the highest and lowest score of each element or performance are ignored and the average will be taken from the remainder, generating the trimmed mean (average score).

The ISU Membership strongly supports that Judges should



not be named and identifiable so as to significantly reduce the risk of outside influence on Judges as well as enabling the evaluation of the Judges performances anonymously leaving no room for favouritism by the evaluating bodies ...

### **Programme Components Score – PCS Technical Elements Score – TES**

**Final Score** are calculated by adding the total Technical Elements Score and the Programme Component Score and subtracting any Programme deductions (for example 1.0 for a fall) ....

### **Officials Accountability**

All of the scores are recorded and analysed by computer software program that checks and identifies possible anomalies. The skaters' performances are furthermore recorded by video and can be reviewed on DVD.

Officials have to follow strict criteria in awarding scores – making it very difficult to manipulate results. Nevertheless, for an utmost accountability, the Officials' Assessment Commission (consisting of ISU Referees or ISU Judges) and ISU Technical Committees jointly investigate the identified anomalies. They can review video evidence if necessary and take action if there is evidence of significant error ...

### **Availability of Data and Statistics**

At the end of each segment, a so called "Judges Detailed List," which includes all relevant scoring data for skaters, is published. This data is analysed by National Federations, athletes and coaches to help improve the performances. The media, skating fans and general public can find statistics and detailed data on the ISU website ...



## AND ON THE PARQUET!

After long and informed discussions within IDSF, we reached the conclusion that we need to build our new judging system around an existing system in one of the other artistic sports. And, logically, the discipline Ice Dancing was considered to be closest to our sport. Other arguments in favour of the ISU system: it has been tested over an extended period of time. It has even been scrutinised and approved by those sceptics who seriously questioned whether an unbiased and fair process could ever be applied to judging an artistic sport.



At the same time, we all realised that DanceSport is sufficiently different from Ice Dance – that certain traits make it truly unique – and that modifications to the ISU system would need to be made. Furthermore, a decision was taken to propose the introduction of the new judging system for DanceSport in two phases. The first phase would call for the introduction of the Programme Components Score only, since that can be implemented quickly after a general approval is obtained.

The second phase – the Technical Elements Score – presents additional difficulties at this point in time. In the Standard dances we have technical definitions for all syllabus figures as well as for a large number of variations and lines. The situation is different for the Latin American dances: there we only have technical definitions of the basic figures.

Names and precise technical definitions for every figure are required before a Base Value can be assigned. This is all the more crucial, since the Base Value then reflects the degree of difficulty for the figure. We will have to involve our top Latin experts to give us technical definitions for all the Latin variations.

Use of the TES is being tested in Japan – for basic figures only – with couples having to include a specified number of compulsory figures in their choreography.

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Since we propose the new IDSF Judging System to be used in top-level competition only (World Championships, multi-sport games under IOC patronage), it seems inappropriate to limit the world's best couples to basic figures.

The ISU Programme Components are what we know as Judging Criteria in DanceSport. Consequently, we propose that five IDSF Programme Components be considered by the panels, each to be marked separately on a scale of 1 – 10, with a possibility of awarding half points (.5) too.

The five Components which we proposed at this moment are:

- Posture, Balance and Coordination – PB
- Quality of Movement – QM
- Movement to Music – MM
- Partnering – PA
- Choreography and Presentation – CP

They are to be marked on the following scale – each couple separately:

- 10 Outstanding
- 9 Superior
- 8 Very good
- 7 Good
- 6 Above average
- 5 Average
- 4 Fair
- 3 Weak
- 2 Poor
- 1 Very poor

The points a couple are awarded by the Judges will be added up for each dance and converted into places (highest number of points – 1st place, lowest number – last). The final result will be calculated by using the Skating System.

To be able to implement this new way of marking we need to change the format of the final. While the semi-final round is judged in the traditional way, the finalists have to perform every one of the five dances solo.

The IDSF Judging System and the modified competition format were tested at the Final of the 2009 IDSF Grand Slam Final.

As was the case last year too, the system will again be presented in Stuttgart, GER, at the IDSF Adjudicators Congress. The ensuing discussions with IDSF Adjudicators, representatives of the IDSF National Member Bodies and DanceSport experts will likely lead to further modifications and refinements being made to our proposal.



## 2009 IDSF Grand Slam Final

The new Judging System was field tested at one of the most important and prestigious competitions on the IDSF calendar: the 2009 Grand Slam Final in Shanghai, CHN. 13 couples in Standard and another 13 in Latin – the absolute elite by definition – agreed to have their performances evaluated by Adjudicators sitting behind computer terminals with touch-screen monitors, their judgment being backed up by an array of even more hardware – instant video replay included. The IDSF Adjudicators underwent extensive training on all aspects of the new system – administered by Chairman Marco Sietas and Japanese software developers – before they were able to take their floor side seats and start their work. All wearing the same attire!

A day prior to the competition the athletes, too, were given a thorough briefing about what to expect. Some appeared a little apprehensive, but the majority agreed that this will certainly contribute to emphasise the sporting nature of DanceSport further.

If you are to score the absolute best in the IDSF Ranking List, you will find it very difficult to use the full range of an absolute point scale. No surprise, therefore, that the 12 couples in the final received marks between 7.0 and 10.0 for each of the Programme Components in all dances.

### 2009 IDSF Grand Slam Final – Standard

1. Benedetto Ferruggia/Claudia Köhler, GER, 244,39
2. Andrea Ghigiarelli/Sara Andracchio, ITA, 240,72
3. Emanuel Valeri/Tania Kehlet, DEN, 232,56
4. Simone Segatori/Annette Sudol, GER, 225,67
5. Marat Gimaev/Alina Basiuk, RUS, 219,28
6. Federico Di Toro/Genny Favero, ITA, 218,39



### 2009 IDSF Grand Slam Final – Latin

1. Alexey Silde/Anna Firstova, RUS, 240,11
2. Zoran Plohl/Tatsiana Lahvinovich, CRO 238,44
3. Jurij Batagelj/Jagoda Štrukelj, Slowenien 226,56
4. Martino Zanibellato/Michelle Abildtrup, DEN, 218,72
5. Vladimir Karpov/Mariya Tzaptashvili, RUS, 212,72
6. Gabriele Goffredo/Antoanella Goffredo, ITA, 203,06

## Debriefing

Immediately after the competitions in Standard and Latin, the Adjudicators as well as the athletes sat down for separate round-table discussions of their respective experiences with the new IDSF Judging System. Some of the opinions voiced then – or transmitted in e-mail exchanges later – are published here. **Anonymously!**

### A ... as in "Adjudicator"

The Grand Slam Final in Shanghai must be considered a successful launch for the new IDSF Judging System. For me it was very interesting to be part of this premiere. I found the training of the Adjudicators' prior to the competition a necessity and its quality excellent. The intensive and ongoing training of the Adjudicators is a prerequisite to the system's implementation.



That a judge is able to concentrate on one single couple is positive, even more so since he or she is now forced to evaluate their performance objectively against a set of well defined criteria. In addition to the criteria in the traditional system, the couple's choreography and presentation are now also being evaluated by the panels. Surprisingly enough, some of the couples in the Grand Slam seemed particularly well prepared – most likely through focused training – in these areas.

The spectators' reaction to the immediate posting of results and standings after every dance was most enthusiastic.

All in all, the new IDSF Judging System allows for a more objective grading of the couples – individually – than the one which is currently in use.

An in-depth discussion between the Adjudicators and the Presidium Members responsible for the introduction of the system had both parties agree that further optimisation in various points will be required. The duration of the final, for instance, is with one hour too long for the spectators on site as well as for television.

The calibration of the point scale needs to be addressed as well: explicit indications are required as to what constitutes a 10.0, a 9.0, etc. The Adjudicators need to have

clear references.

Some of the Programme Components could be differentiated further:

- Posture, Balance and Coordination
- Quality of Movement
- Movement to Music

The three components above seem to be fairly close one to another. Maybe even too close for good distinctions to be made?

#### **Another A ... as in "Athlete"**

We very much liked the idea of doing something new and trying to improve the judging system. We also enjoyed the solo dances and think it is a good idea. But to do all five dances solo is – maybe – over the top! It just takes too long, long for the spectators, long for us dancers! Plus: awarding points for five different criteria in each dance could well be a suicide mission for the Adjudicators. We watched them whenever we weren't dancing – and we had plenty of time between one dance and another: they were in a mess! They hardly had the time to look at the dancing, being too busy with entering points into the system. And about the components ... None includes artistic expression, characterisation or atmosphere. That is wrong, because what is DanceSport if not all that?



#### **B ... as in "But ..."**

I thought that our sport was all about comparing couples on the floor. This should prove to be very difficult with this system!

#### **C ... as in "Constructive Criticism"**

We support the idea of solo dances, but it has to be much shorter! The judges should mark not only for the technical merits but also for the artistic. So we suggest the following: up to the final we should have five dances as we did until now. For the final, IDFS should determine three dances and the basic technical figures – selected from Laird, for instance – which each of the three dances must include. Then the couples should be given a free choice of music to combine the three dances and the basic figures into a "segue," with judges also marking the artistic side of the dance. The routine should not be longer than 3 minutes. Everybody will be happy: audiences, television, couples and – we are certain – the judges too! The routine

is done for one season and the couples can thus improve it continually. Very similar to how it's done in ice skating, actually!

#### **M ... as in "More Constructive Criticism"**

We thought it was not as bad as we had expected. The idea of specifying the different elements of dancing in the judging process is a good thing. This way the judges were forced to LOOK and evaluate different aspects which they might not have noticed under normal circumstances. We think this is positive!



Generally, the idea of trying to develop the judging system is good. But we think that IDSF has to go back to the drawing board, find a way to keep the final a lot shorter, maintain the stamina factor and put all couples on the floor together. Only this way one can make out differences in areas such as partnering!

We were told that the primary benefits of the new Judging System were for the dancers. That we would be able to see in which departments we were weak and in which we were strong! But when the results were posted, they reflected only a total score! What's the point then?

