



# POLE FITNESS ASSOCIATION

The Recognized Authority For Pole Fitness Professionals and Enthusiasts Worldwide

# Pole Sports

## A Roadmap to the Olympics

August 1, 2009

**Pole Fitness Association  
IPSF Olympic Committee**

POLE  
FITNESS  
ASSOCIATION



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## Introduction

The roots of just about any sport can be found in the originality of a few individuals who spread their sport to others. In turn, a grassroots driven sport would grow into an entity in need of organizing which fostered competition among its athletes. At a certain maturity point within a sport, a movement begins to take the legitimacy of the sport to the ultimate level – the Olympics. While pole sports have not reached Olympic level, it is poised to create the founding organizations necessary to achieve this goal. The sport has coalesced into groups and competitions on local, national and international levels. Now is the time to leverage the pole fitness movement to inspire pole athletes and their supporters to not only pursue Olympic recognition but to come together in a common dream of being recognized as the professional athletes we are. This paper provides a practical and realistic roadmap for achieving just such a goal.

## Pole Fitness Today

Anybody who has been involved in our industry over the last few years has seen a tremendous growth in the popularity of pole dancing as a form of exercise called pole fitness. We have all heard that it is just another exercise fad but where fads have faded, our industry continues to grow consistently year after year as witnessed by the popularity it commands, community awards, and civic recognition. Where once there were a few studios teaching pole fitness, hundreds have sprang from every corner of the world. As a result, the legitimacy of pole exercise has grown too. Additionally, men have come to embrace it as well for its core strengthening properties. While the practical physical results can be measured in terms of weight control, strength, and flexibility, the true measure of a sport is in the love and passion it receives from its participants. Furthermore, pole exercises have the unique side effect of empowering its practitioners of young and old to new levels of self-esteem, aspirations, and confidence.

Pole fitness has reached a critical junction in its growth – unity of knowledge. The foundation of any endeavor is a common language. To this end, an effort is being led by the Pole Fitness Association (PFA) to standardize the terminology, training, certification, and facilities used in the sport. Our industry has been craving this level of cooperation and has seen fits and starts here and there but out of a sense of pride in our sport, the finest athletes and providers of our sport have banded together to standardize the industry.

Today, Pole Sports is represented by athletes in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela and many, many more.

## Our Vision

When it comes to competitions, the industry is already showcasing some of the best athletes and constantly discovering new ones as the ranks grow. There are numerous competitions on the regional level as well as national. And in more recent years, legitimate



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international competition at the World Pole Sport & Fitness Championships (WPSFC). Thus the groundwork has been laid for the next step in professional competition – standardized rules and regulations.

Beyond pole fitness exercise is the sport of pole sports. It has been a long road to acceptance as a legitimate form of sport. You can do your part by participating on any level. Spread the word and be an ambassador of pole fitness and pole sports. Share your thoughts and ideas with your peers on what you want, how you can contribute, and fight the stigma that detracts from our fine profession. If you have it in you, get out and compete. Competition drives interest, competition brings out the best in people and competition dispels the myths and falsehoods within the industry while reinforcing our message of legitimacy. It takes true athletes who work hard, who sacrifice and strive for excellence to rock the pole. Anybody who has seen one of our competitions knows that beyond the glitz and glamour of the lights lies the heart of a true athlete.

The yellow brick road to the Olympics is a very long and winding road. But if you stay the course, exercise patience, overcome obstacles and persevere, it can be done. First, set your expectations. Realistically, the soonest pole sports could get into the Olympic summer games is the 2020 Olympics. It will take a *minimum* of three years of Olympic standard international competition before you can apply to be an official “Recognized Sport” by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The shortest a sport has ever taken to achieve recognition has been 6 years and that was more an exception to the rule than the standard. And once you are recognized, there is no guarantee you will *ever* get into the summer games due to IOC restrictions on the size of the Olympic games. Basically, they have to drop an existing sport to make room for a new sport. Thus, getting into the games takes a lot of lobbying and dedication. An Olympic host country has to nominate - essentially sponsor - your sport into the Olympic summer games. Among contributing factors are popularity, fostering Olympic ideals, and unwavering support of the nations participating. It will take a dedicated marketing machine to overcome objections and stereotyping that we will inevitably be faced with. Start by signaling your support by signing one of the online Olympic petitions available through the PFA web site.

To begin, being recognized starts with a sport’s “International Federation” (IF) - an international governing body for the sport. Right now, no such IF organization exists within the pole community. Well that is about to change with the establishment of the International Pole Sports Federation (IPSF). The IPSF will be an Olympic standardized organization, which conducts and oversees competitions on the international level while fostering organizations and competition on the national level.

The IPSF will be based out of Salt Lake City, Utah in the United States (US) - home of the 2002 Winter Olympics. It will be recognized under Utah state and US federal laws as a non-profit corporation in compliance with the US Internal Revenue Service’s 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization code. This status allows it to accept tax-deductible donations which will be necessary to create a self-sustaining organization. The IPSF will be run by a dedicated all volunteer board and committees who will set about to create an Olympic worthy organization.

The IPSF will be charged with governance and application of the Olympic charter to pole sports including the standardization and definition of events, conduct, rules, regulations, anti-



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doping controls in accordance with the World Anti Doping Agency, equipment, athlete eligibility, and national organization recognition just to name a few. There are many tasks but the committees of the PFA are already laying the groundwork. Look for the IPSF to take flight in the summer of 2009 at [www.polesports.org](http://www.polesports.org) and contribute to your future.

While some will be busy working on an international level, others will be needed to play a more personal role of setting up their own organizations on a national level. National organizations will be needed to generate national athletes who in turn are sent to the international competition. As a general rule for branding and in keeping with common Olympic naming conventions, use the name Pole Sports within your organization's name such as USA Pole Sports Federation ([www.usapolesports.org](http://www.usapolesports.org)), Australia Pole Sports Federation, or UK Pole Sports Federation. And keep in mind, the IPSF will be there to assist and support you.

## What's To Come

The immediate effort seeks to enhance the 2010 WPSFC to meet the standards of the Olympic Charter. These athletes, as representatives of their country, participate in the WPSFC to declare who among those in the world will hold the titles of Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medalists. Additionally, the IPSF will help establish and certify national pole sports federations, and create a pool of professional athletes dedicated to the Olympic ideal. The competitive events will be expanded to include men's events, freestyle and compulsory elements, single and multiple poles either static or spinning, individual and pairs performances, and perhaps events yet to be invented.

Having learned important lessons from the 2010 WPSFC, the 2011 competition will bring together national pole sports federations from several continents with each federation sending their best athletes. This will also mark the beginning of IPSF's journey to seek approval from the IOC and membership in the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). The GAISF is an Olympic related group of federations dedicated to helping IFs.

Once the IPSF is recognized by the IOC or becomes a member of the GAISF, whichever occurs first, the IPSF will seek to become a member of the International World Games Association (IWGA) out of Colorado Springs, Colorado in the United States. This will allow the IPSF to participate in the IWGA World Games, which is an Olympics style competition for recognized sports.

## Conclusion

Nobody said it would be easy but anything worth doing is worth doing right no matter how long it takes. When future generations look back, they will be able to see that a small cadre of professionals inspired masses to overcome differences and stereotyping to demonstrate that the hearts and minds of true and proud athletes - pole athletes - from every corner of the world can come together in celebration and performance of Olympic style competition.



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## Terminology

Pole Dance – The entertainment art of dancing around, with, and on a vertical pole.

Pole Fitness – The exercise form of pole dancing.

Pole Sports – The competitive form of pole fitness.

## Abbreviations

GAISF - General Association of International Sports Federations (<http://www.agfisonline.com/>)

IF – International Federation

IOC – International Olympic Committee (<http://www.olympic.org>)

IPSF – International Pole Sports Federation (<http://www.polesports.org>)

IWGA – International World Games Association (<http://www.worldgames-iwga.org>)

PFA – Pole Fitness Association (<http://www.polefitnessassociation.com>)

WPSFC – World Pole Sport & Fitness Championship (<http://www.worldpoledance.com>)

A large, semi-transparent watermark of the Pole Fitness Association logo is centered on the page. It features the letters 'PFA' in a large, outlined font at the top, and the words 'POLE FITNESS ASSOCIATION' in a smaller, solid font below it, all contained within a rectangular border.