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MALE COMPETITORS MAY NOW WEAR RELIGIOUSLY MANDATED HEADWEAR

For Immediate Release
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Montréal, QC – Karate Canada is pleased to announce that, following its recommendation, the World Karate Federation (WKF) has approved a new version of the rules which will allow all athletes to wear a head covering during competition for religious reasons. Prior to this change, only female athletes were permitted to wear a head covering. This decision, which underscores the WKF value of inclusion, will come into effect on January 1, 2019.

In 2016, Mr Jai Sanghera, a Sikh member of Karate British Columbia, notified Karate Canada that the current iteration of the rules were a barrier to participation in international competition. Karate Canada agreed that this was the case and begin to work on a submission with the support of the Honorable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Sport, Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee President Tricia Smith, members of the Canadian Sikh Community, Karate British Columbia, and many individual members of the Karate Canada Community who wrote letters of support on behalf of Jai.

“I commend Karate Canada for the leadership role it played with the World Karate Federation, which resulted in new rules that will allow all athletes to wear a head covering during competition for religious reasons. This leadership helps strengthen Canada's position on inclusion and equality in sport.”

- The Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science and Sport

“We felt this was a very 'Canadian' issue and we were only too pleased to champion this item with the world governing body. I would especially like to thank Mr Jai Sanghera and his parents for their unwavering support and dedication as well as the many members of the Canadian Karate and Sikh Community that rallied around this cause. I also wish to thank Minister Duncan for her support on this issue, I feel the support of the Minister of Science and Sport was a key factor in our shared success. ”



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- Craig Vokey, President of Karate Canada

About Karate Canada:

Karate Canada is a not-for-profit corporation constituted under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act, with the objective of describing and incorporating all activities related to the promotion, organization, regulation and popularization of the sport of karate all over Canada, of protecting the physical and emotional health of athletes, and of promoting the interests of karate throughout Canada. Karate Canada and its 11 members. Provincial and Territorial Associations assemble roughly 16,000 participants nationwide. Furthermore, Karate Canada is a proud member of the Canadian Olympic Committee, the World Karate Federation and the Pan American Karate Federation. See more at www.karatecanada.org.

Media Inquiries

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