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**Re – Nomination of Garrett Lucash for the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee Doc Counsilman Coach of the Year award**

I am writing to support the nomination of Garrett Lucash for the above-mentioned award.

I have been an applied scientific research investigator into processes of motor learning, skill acquisition, practice design and talent development in sport for over 30 years, holding positions in the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Norway and Finland. A particular interest of mine concerns how coaches, sport scientists and teachers can use the key ideas from applied scientific research to enhance their professional work, improve athletes and enrich the experiences of participants in their programmes.

I first came into contact with Garrett Lucash in 2014, becoming aware of his work as a coach, and his devotion to encouraging evidence-based practice in figure skating in the USA. There is no doubt that the ongoing dialogue that we struck up since then has benefitted my academic work, helping me to become aware of practical challenges and issues concerned with the social, cultural and historical constraints that shape professional practice in different sports.

Garrett impressed me with his enthusiasm for bringing applied scientific research findings to the figure skating community, challenging some long-held beliefs and traditions on the way. He is determined to use contemporary findings in applied scientific research to continually improve and refine his practice to ensure that his athletes gain the best support possible from him and his team.

Our exchanges and discussions in the past 6 years have been invaluable for my research team, providing rich insights which have been helpful in guiding us to study the experiential knowledge and skills of coaches and teachers in different sports. These exchanges have helped us to understand the importance of application of science in practice and the communication of research findings to support better practice designs.

Indeed, this has become a major research goal of our group in the past few years and Garrett has become a keen participant in helping our world-class research group to better

communicate the practical implications of our work to those who need it most: coaches, teachers, sport scientists and sports administrators and managers.

Garrett's coaching of figure skating athletes in his Athlete Centered Skating programme has been communicated as an elite model in our books, which he wrote up as a case study in 2020: Button, C., Seifert, L., Chow, J.-Y., Araújo, D. & Davids, K. (2020). Dynamics of Skill Acquisition: An Ecological Dynamics rationale (2nd Edition). Champaign, Ill: Human Kinetics (see Chapter 11, p.208).

His coaching ideas have been studied in our other published work, as part of an elite panel of high-performance, international coaches in a range of different sports: Stone, J., Rothwell, M., Shuttleworth, R. & Davids, K. (2020). *Exploring sports coaches' experiences of using a contemporary pedagogical approach to coaching: an international perspective*, *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, DOI:10.1080/2159676X.2020.1765194

I am also delighted that Garrett has accepted our invitation to share ideas on his outstanding, contemporary approach to figure skating in an invited book in the series entitled "Routledge Studies in Constraints-Based Methodologies in Sport", commissioned by the publishers, Routledge of London: <https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Constraints-Based-Methodologies-in-Sport/book-series/RSCBMS>

Additionally, Garrett continues to work with other world-class academics, including Professor Gabriela Wulf of University of Nevada, discussing how verbal instructions and feedback can be provided to athletes, aligned with findings in contemporary research.

Garrett's passion for sharing information and exchanging ideas from applied science and coaching practice has also led to support, mentorship and guidance for coaches in his own sport of figure skating. He has written 5 continuing education courses that focus on key topics of motor skill acquisition for the Professional Skaters Association in the US, which is the official, national continuing education and accreditation association for ice skating professionals.

In conclusion, I am delighted to support the nomination of Garrett Lucash for this prestigious award. In a country like the US, with highly organised sports programmes in many different sports, I understand how challenging it must be to consider nominations for this award. However, I have no doubt in my mind that the energy, passion and inquisitive approach of Garrett Lucash to improving his work with athletes and teams in the figure skating community, warrants very close attention.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Sand". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.