



USA Deaf Sports Federation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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RESPONSE TO H3 MEDIA's July 25th VIDEO

Santa Fe, NM – USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF) has been consistently transparent and communicative with both the US deaf community, athletes, coaches, fans as well as the international community about the challenges that Team USA faced in order to participate in the 23rd Summer Deaflympics in Samsun, Turkey, to be held on July 18 – 30, 2017. On May 30, 2017, USADSF released a vlog statement which was posted on USADSF's website (<https://usdeafsports.org/news/usadsf-releases-vlog-update-about-team-usa-to-the-2017-summer-deaflympics/>) and on USADSF's Facebook page and Twitter account.

In the video Board Member Danny Lacey shared the top three challenges that were experienced in assembling Team USA:

- 1) **Information:** The challenge of receiving information from the International Committee Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) and from the Turkey Organizing Committee. For over a year, this was very slow and limited information at a sporadic pace. Both ICSD and the Turkey Organizers went through some turnovers, and in May 2017, the Turkish Government established a new Turkey Organizing Committee which started disseminating more frequently information about the Deaflympic plans. USADSF consistently maintained frequent contact with everyone in both ICSD and Turkey to get any information possible and quickly to share with Team USA as much as we can. USADSF aims to be as transparent and informative as possible within our means.
- 2) **Safety and Security:** The American media portrayed bombings, terrorist attacks, and ISIS occupation throughout parts of Turkey on a frequent, almost daily basis. USADSF proactively communicated with the Department of State, other federal officials, ICSD, the Turkey Organizing Committee and other country deaf sport federations to examine the safety of sending an American delegation into a country that has shown instability. We are extremely sensitive and deeply value the safety and security of our team members. In attempts for answers to our grave concerns, USADSF sent official leadership to Turkey several times. In February 2017, Jack Lamberton and two volunteer NSO representatives visited Samsun. They took pictures and videos which were posted on Facebook and shared with the National Sport Organizations (NSOs). The three officials wore apparel labeled with American flags and travelled through two Turkish airports, walked around Samsun, rode public transportation and interacted with local people. They each felt safe and welcomed.

Member of United States Olympic Committee (USOC) as a Multi-Sports Organization (MSO).
Member of Pan American Deaf Sports Federation (PANAMDES) and International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD).
ICSD is recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as a Sport for Athletes with a Disability and is the
Governing body of Summer and Winter Deaflympics. PANAMDES is an ICSD regional confederation.
USADSF is a 501c3 tax-exempt organization.

In addition, the Turkish Organizing Committee informed USADSF that they would employ a large number of security assigned to our team members to ensure their safety during the Deaflympics. This information was relayed to the NSOs.

- 3) Fundraising has always been a challenge every international competition we send athletes. The US government and the US Olympic Committee do not support deaf athletes financially. In efforts to combat this, USADSF has strived to start planning and selecting athletes as early as possible to give them years to both train and fundraise for the costs of attending/participating in the Deaflympics. USADSF works hard to build relationships with donors and take the fundraising burden off the athletes and look for donors, like you the fans that can support our athletes by donating to USADSF. The past two years has been especially challenging to fundraise with insufficient information from Turkey about the safety and security of the Deaflympics, costs to attend among other details about the games. As a result, that has created a shorter timeframe for fundraising.

In facing those three challenges, the NSOs discussed internally with their members and made decisions on whether to participate in Team USA to the Summer Deaflympics. The NSOs who decided to join Team USA are Cycling, Golf, Swimming, Tennis, Track & Field, and Men's and Women's Volleyball. In April 2017, USA Deaf Basketball released a statement on their Facebook page sharing why they decided against participating. USADSF shared their announcement both in April and again several days ago on USADSF's Facebook page.

On July 25th, H3 Media released a video interview with Jack Lamberton, former President of USADSF and current Team Leader for Team USA, and Lynn Ray Boren, Women's Volleyball Coach. Both re-iterated the challenges that USA Deaf Sports consistently experience in participating in not only the Summer Deaflympics, but all international competitions. As an organization, USADSF hopes that the H3 Media video provides the world more insight into our plight, and that you will continue to provide us support. One way to support USADSF and our athletes to continue to participate in international competitions is to ease our financial troubles. Please consider donating to USADSF, as we are a 501c3 tax-deductible organization. Even \$5 will help an athlete compete in their dream to get a medal. You can donate online at www.usdeafsports.org.

Support Team USA to bring home the Gold!