

IFS Lifts Ban on World Sumo League Athletes

On August 21, the International Sumo Federation (IFS) released a statement to its members regarding athletes previously banned for competing in the World Sumo League. The statement reiterated the IFS's opposition to the (2006) activities of Big Boy Productions but announced that athletes banned last year for participating in such activities would again be allowed to compete in the World Sumo Championships from 2007. The athletes, mainly American and

European, had continued to compete in their national and regional jurisdictions but had been banned from IFS-run events.

In particular this announcement means that Bulgarians Petar Stoyanov and Stilian Georgiev will be in the running for medals in the heavyweight/openweight and lightweight divisions respectively. Sidney Carty from the Netherlands will also return after a year's absence and we may also see the return of German veterans Jorg

Brummer and Torsten Scheibler.

Amateur sumo officials who were involved in the World Sumo League are not included in the relaxation of the ban as they have already had their membership of the IFS revoked. The IFS's statement suggests that these officials chose to leave the International Sumo Federation, despite both remaining active in European amateur sumo.