At the opening of the recent European Senior and World Junior Outdoor Championship held in Castlebar, Ireland, I stated that participation in the Olympics remains our highest ambition. This is however also the ambition of virtually every other sport that is not currently on the Olympic programme.

So, to achieve this objective, we have to be realistic because modern sport has become a business. We need to adapt to this environment without losing our soul and the essence of our sport. Big money and professionalism, on the back of discerning spectators and a media thriving on sensation, is driving modern sport - in fact sport has become entertainment. And we have to entertain too.

We certainly have a long way to go to achieve this dream, but we have made a start. There are a number of things under our control such as to act professionally by ensuring that our appearance, our behaviour, and our performance on the field are on par and better than professional sports. That our administration and governance is based on best practice with transparent and ethical behaviour.

As we progress towards developing a new 4 year policy plan (period 2020 to 2024), we can build on these and adapt further to differentiate our sport by the use of technology and innovation to be more attractive for sponsors, the media and spectators. In short, we need to present our sport as if we are professionals - both on and off the field.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I can announce a new partnership agreement with Protocol Sports (see press release page 6) that aims to market our sports to potential sponsors globally. It will be a long-term process, but as one of the most basic sports that has been around since ancient times in virtually every community over the ages, we have much to offer not only in terms of values, sportsmanship, education, exercise and pure fun, but also top level performance by our athletes as we have again witnessed at the last championship.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
We need to support this on the field performance with an equally high standard of judging, recording and general administration which includes compliance with anti-doping requirements, legal issues relating to child protection, abuse and harassment, and privacy policies which will continue to put huge pressure on our limited resources. For this reason, the recent focus on training courses, materials and development seminars in various regions will form an integral part of our next 4 year implementation plans. And for this we need resources.

I wish to invite all stakeholders to provide the TWIF Exco with ideas and proposals on how and with what TWIF can support and augment initiatives on all levels within our tug of war communities. Please submit your ideas to the office of the Secretary General.

Be part of the SOLUTION - Be part of the FUTURE.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Irish Association again for their excellent organisation of the championship in Castlebar. You were wonderful hosts and we are already looking forward to the World Indoors in February in Letterkenny. This will be one of the 2 events in 2020 which will also be the platform for the celebration of the TWIF 60th anniversary.

Until then, may you all have a Blessed Festive season and all the best for 2020.

Anton Rabe President

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**TWIF EVENTS:**

- **February 19-23**  
  WC Indoor Letterkenny, Ireland

- **September 16-20**  
  WC Outdoor Gesto, Basque Country

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**INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS:**

- **May 29-31**  
  Tezze Di Vazzola, Italy

- **June 5-7**  
  Mosnang, Switzerland

- **July 16-18**  
  African Games, Swakomund, Namibia

- **July 25-26**  
  ttv Bison, Beltrum, The Netherlands

- **August 28**  
  GENSIB Heino, The Netherlands

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**INTERNATIONAL TUG-OF-WAR DAY**

IS OBSERVED NEXT ON  
**WEDNESDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2020**  
IT HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN ANNUALLY ON FEBRUARY 19TH
It was an honour for the Irish Tug of War Association to host the European and Junior World Championships last September in Castlebar.

18 countries took part in the four days of competition. We were really lucky with the unpredictable Irish weather as the ground conditions stood up well to the ordeal.

The Czech Republic came to compete in their first ever European Championships and it was great to see another TWIF member taking part.

I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and will have treasured memories to look back on from their time here.

On behalf of the Association, I would like to Sincerely Thank the TWIF EXCO, judges, recorders and all who competed for coming to Ireland, and for all their time and effort making the Championships the success that it was.

It will not be long before the World Indoor Championships commences in Letterkenny, Co.Donegal. This is the county where the majority of our indoor clubs are, so we wish them luck.

We look forward to hosting these Championships in February 2020 . . . see you all there!

Denis Dunlea
Irish Representative for TWIF

SEE COMPETITION RESULTS AND MEDALS ON PAGE 4
## WC JUNIOR COMPETITION RESULTS

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## World Competition Outdoor Castlebar 2019

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I am Danny McGonnigle. I first started pulling with Clonmany Tug of War club in 1977. Since then I have travelled all over the world and have represented my Country at several World Championships. Tug of War is a fantastic sport and during my career I have competed with a lot of good men and made a lot of life time friends and had some of the best experiences in my life. I had three life time ambitions, firstly to win a National Championship, secondly to win a World Championship and the third was to build the only Tug of War clubhouse in Ireland. I’m proud to have achieved all of my ambitions.

Finally moving towards 2020 my final dream will come true when the World Indoor Championships will be hosted In Letterkenny, Donegal, my home county. I always said if I live to see that, I’ll die a happy man. We are proud to welcome all countries, officials and teams to the World Championships and will do everything possible to make it a most enjoyable experience. Roll on 2020.

Danny McGonnigle
On October 22nd Protocol Sports Marketing Ltd. announced at SPORTEL-MONACO 2019 that it has been appointed the worldwide media rights and sponsorship agency by the Tug of War International Federation (TWIF).

Known for their experience in cultivating, nurturing and growing emerging and niche sports, Protocol Sports Marketing will be tasked with the sale of media rights and sponsorship assets for TWIF.

Tug of War has had a long and illustrious history, being one of the first sports featured in both the Modern Day Olympics and the World Games. The sport has seen a surge in popularity thanks for the work of TWIF and its member nations to prioritise agendas such as inclusivity and accessibility which has led to an increase in participation around the world, particularly amongst younger age groups, whilst the introduction of mixed gender weight classes at both senior and youth level, have proved to be very popular in recent years. The senior mixed 580 kg weight class will also feature for the first time during World Games 2021 in Birmingham, USA and will bring a totally new dimension to the tug of war programme.

TWIF has enlisted the help of a full-service agency in Protocol Sports to increase the commercial appeal of the federation. TWIF and Protocol Sports will work together to build the sport within traditional territories whilst simultaneously introducing the sport to new and emerging markets.

“We are delighted to have Protocol Sports working with Tug of War International Federation to support our strategic planning and develop commercial opportunities,” says TWIF President Anton Rabe. “We look forward to working closely with the Protocol Sports team to leverage our assets to the wider sports business world.”

Protocol Sports Marketing President Lowell Conn says that he and his team are locked in, as the agency to showcase the emerging TWIF and its content to broadcasters, streaming platforms and brands worldwide. “Our team has shown an adept ability at crafting narratives to attract commercial interest to niche and emerging sports,” says Conn. “We regard Tug of War as a classic sport that exemplifies grit and determination. It is a sport that everybody knows. We are looking forward to collaborating with TWIF to make Tug of War a sport that everybody watches.”
The event was jointly organised by The Ministry of Federal Territories Malaysia and Federal Territories Kuala Lumpur Tug of War Association and sanctioned by ATWF (Asian Tug of War Federation) and SEATWF (South East Asia Tug of War Federation).

This first ever international championships attracted 82 clubs from 6 nations from as far as South Africa, China, Brunei, Cambodia, Singapore and Malaysia. About 900 athletes geared up in Kuala Lumpur to witness the inaugural championships.

SA Gazelles from South Africa stole the limelight with the largest ever overseas contingent that contested in 8 categories - they were followed by Brunei Darussalam with 4 teams in 5 categories. China had 2 teams contesting in Indoor Championships and won both Men 640 kg and Men 600 kg Indoor respectively. Cambodia had 3 teams in 6 categories that competed in the Indoor and Outdoor. Singapore had 1 team in outdoor category. Obviously, the host Malaysia sent the largest contingent of 61 teams.

This championship is a major breakthrough for Malaysia, where for the first time, 30 high school teams contested. Certainly this is an historical event for the Malaysian and South East Asian tug of war fraternity.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
The championships were held in 10 weight class categories - Indoor and Outdoor. The indoor championship was held in the modern administrative city of Malaysia-Putrajaya and the outdoor championships were held in heart of Kuala Lumpur.

The event was officially launched by the Honourable Tuan Haji Khalid Bin Abd Samad, The Minister of Federal Territories. In his key note speech, the minister said this event will be included in annual calendar of his ministry and able to attract more nations for upcoming years. He also hosted the gala night dinner for all the participants.

Mr Madan Mohan, Secretary General of ATWF witnessed the overall event with other delegates from Cambodia: Dr Meas Sarin, Vice President of SEATWF, Mr Suchart and Mr Krissada from Thailand Tug of War Federation, Mr Lee from Tug of War Singapore, and Lt Col. Keith Rance from South Africa assisted in technical.

In his statement Mr Sathiah Sudakaran, the Organising Secretary of the championships urged the Olympic Council to recognise the tug of war sport’s potentials and to re-enter it into the Olympic games. The sport has a lot of potential and the numbers of clubs have grown drastically in recent years. In Malaysia, we will urge the government to include the sport into the Malaysian Games first before proposing it into SEA Games. He stressed that the tug of war sport should be given a lot of respect due to its history.

The event was officially closed by Dr Hasnul Faizal Hushin Amri, Director of the Federal Territories Sports Council. The event was sponsored by Intersky Development SDn.Bhd, Country Heights Holding Berhad, Metamorphosis Skills Sdn.Bhd and Ministry of Federal Territories.

**RESULTS INDOOR:**

**WOMEN 540 kg:**
1. S.A. Gazelles South Africa

**MEN 640 kg:**
1. Magangjituan China

**MEN 600 kg:**
1. Limingufen China

**RESULTS OUTDOOR:**

**U 18 WOMEN 480 kg:**
1. S.A. Gazelles South Africa

**U 18 MEN 560 kg:**
1. Bandau Warriors Malaysia

**U 23 WOMEN 540 kg:**
1. S.A. Gazelles South Africa

**SENIOR MEN 680 kg:**
1. VAT 69 Malaysia

**SENIOR WOMEN 540 kg:**
1. S.A. Gazelles South Africa

**TRADITIONAL MEN 680 kg:**
1. Shah Alam City Boys Malaysia

**Malaysia.**
I had the privilege to attend the IF (International Federation) Forum on behalf of TWIF in Lausanne from 28 to 30 October 2019. I attended two focussed Forum’s organized by IOC. The first one was about integrity in Sports, like match fixing and betting on competitions. For Tug of War an unknown world, but for a lot of Sports ‘daily business’. IOC has started a campaign with the name: ‘Be True, Be You, Believe in Sport’. There is a lot of manipulation in various sports and sports competitions, which is not only bad for the sport, but also lots of money is going around in this manipulation. IOC has openend a toolbox for athletes on: www.olympic.org/ahntlete365/competition-manipulation

The second Forum was about Sustainability. Already 78 IF’s have signed the contract about sustainability and some of the biggest sport IF’s have big projects to reduce garbage, have more wareness about the climate and try to use as much recyclable material as possible. IOC is also planning to make the Olympic Games more sober. IOC will try and start in Paris 2024 to have a more sober concept. As TWIF we have not signed the contract yet, but will start and work out a plan to reduce garbage and use less plastic during our Championships.

The other sessions I attended, were organised by GAISF (Global Association of Internationals Sport Federations) and the teme was ‘Athlete Centered Sport’. There was an active role by IOC in this whole IF Forum and at every session and panel discussion athletes were involved, which was in my opinion a very good addition.

The subjects of the panel discussions were safeguarding athletes, financial wellbeing, athlete welfare and mental health, protecting clean athletes and strenghtening the voice of athletes. An Athlete Commission is very important for all IF’s but I was suprised that not all IF’s had an Athlete Commission (AC), even some bigger IF’s, so as a small IF, we are doing quite well.

Advice was to have an Athlete Commission, that works with the board members, but if possible also with National Federations. Jost Waser has taken over my task as Chairman of our Technical and Athletes Commission (TAC) and is part of the TWIF Exco, so we have short lines to communicate. Furthermore it is important to have all continents represented in the (T)AC, balance between men/women, indoor/outdoor, but most important of all, the members of the (T)AC have to be dedicated to the sport. So, my request for all the Athletes within TWIF, in 2020 a new term will start for the TAC and we are looking for new candidates for a period of 4 years who wish to be part of the TAC and make a difference. Take your chance to have a voice in the decisions TWIF takes and send your motivation letter and CV to the representative of your country.

Maaike Hornstra
On August 17th 2019, the Beach Games of the ERASMUS Project #BeActive# took place in Riga during the annual Riga Festival. Latvian Tug of War Federation (TWF) partnered the Latvia Sports Federation Council in this project. The programme included competitions and demonstrations in twenty sports - Latvian Tug of War Federation was included.

Latvia TWF club teams competed in the sand - 4 persons in the team. The competition ran in 2 laps with a time limit of 2 minutes first and 1 minute for the second lap. Four European families competed in the same programme as the Latvian families - for them it was a chance to compete in the 11 sports events for a possibility to participate in a similar event in Portugal. One of the events in the family competition was Tug of War.

The event was watched by representatives from the International Sports for All Association (Germany) and the International Sport and Culture Association (Denmark).

All clubs were rewarded with Beach Games medals with well-known athletes involved in the prize-giving ceremony. The Tug of War competition champions were rewarded theirs by Olympic Champion for bobsleigh, Daumants Dreiskens. This was a great opportunity to showcase our Tug of War sport and to get to know other Latvian Federations at such a nice event which we all hope will become a tradition in the future.

Lilita Mukina Latvia Tug of War Federation

Families that participated were:
- Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth;
- Estonian Beach Sports Federation;
- Lithuanian Union of Sports Federations;
- Union of Sports Federations in Catalunya.
Teams from Northern Ireland, British Columbia, Ontario Canada, the Royal Air Force and teams from USA all competed September 28 and 29th in New Glarus Wisconsin, USA, at the New Glarus Oktoberfest. USATOWA and the organizers hope to make Tug of War an annual event. Watch USATOWA.com for updates about this event.

Right: Mt Vernon Open 600 kg.

Shelby Richardson


Oregon WI men 680 kg (left) and DJ's Women 540 kg (right).
I
n June I was asked by Anton Botha (President of SATF) to take on the responsibility of Team Manager for the SA Presidents Team representing South Africa at the Africa Championships in Zimbabwe. What a privilege and an honour. Having done the tour to Zambia almost 3 years ago and falling in love with every aspect of the sport and the camaraderie, the bus trip and the events leading up to the competition left me in awe and so I became a full time coach and wrote my judge exams in 2018.

From the word go, I felt like I was fitting into an extended family. We attended the SA Senior Championships in Pretoria where I met all the athletes. I just knew this would surpass my expectations as each and every person came with greatness and exuded pride and the will to succeed and make South Africa proud. Here we also held our capping ceremony, where all athletes received their official welcome to the team.

Sunday evening we all met up at Dunwoodie Lodge in Pretoria, where everyone settled in nicely - we even had a few mothers, fathers, siblings and even a granny join us. Bring on the music and a fire and everyone soon mingled as if we had known each other all our lives. “Oom [uncle] Anton Groenewald” (our Chef) slapped a few steaks on the fire and served us a meal fit for royalty.

Monday morning after breakfast we explored Pretoria a bit by bus, and then had the experience of the super-fast Gautrain - for some it was a first time experience which they thoroughly enjoyed.

That evening was the inauguration of the teams - one of the first highlights of our tour. The team members were given the opportunity to entertain us with some impromptu stage performances. They really pulled out all the stops to deserve their “Battle Kits” - now we were no longer provincial athletes, but proud members of the official 2019 SA Presidents Team.

Tuesday morning we got into swing early, amidst much laughter and remembering the antics of the previous evening. Next stop Palapaye in Botswana. Here we had our first major problem, where one of the younger athletes discovered they had forgotten their birth certificate at home! 3 hours later, after much tears and frustration, we were on the road again.

Eventually we booked into the Palapaye Hotel where we enjoyed another fantastic meal prepared by “Oom Anton”. Early next morning after a fine breakfast we were ready to hit the road again. The road ahead was long, as Botswana is a vast and big country so
catching up on some sleep was the order of the day. The music was great and when one music box died, we started up a new one. We later arrived at our next abode for the evening - Banyana / Elephant Trail Lodges. This was true African hospitality at its finest – definitely not luxurious, but most of us had a bed! The men and women had to sleep in separate areas, and the mens accommodation was not the best – even our SATF President, Anton Botha, had to sleep on the floor in a tent!

The next morning we were on our way to Zimbabwe. Quite literally a few meters after we crossed the border post, we encountered free roaming buck, baboons, warthogs, a dead hyena and lots and lots of elephant. The bus driver stopped so we could all get some good shots of the elephants right next to the road, and we experience a mock charge from an elephant bull protecting its young. What a spectacular sight. Only the photographs we took can bear evidence of this creatures magnificence.

We finally arrived at our destination . . . Victoria Falls Backpackers. A truly wonderful place filled with ambience and beauty. A communal kitchen space and a fire pit next to a huge pool. What more could we ask for? We shared the space with a few other tourists and quickly made them feel welcome in our company. After the weigh in, we sat down for yet another great meal prepared for us by our Chef. We were so spoilt that it felt like we came on a food eating contest rather than a Sports Tour, but the realisation that we had to compete the next day soon settled in. Another highlight for us all was our trip to Victoria Falls. What a splendid experience! We had a few incidents of theft from fast fingered baboons, but eventually made our way back to base camp. An early night was ordered so we could all prepare ourselves mentally.

**DAY 1:** The Opens - Our Venue: Primary School fields. We soon realised that we are in Africa and not South Africa. They live in another time zone. After setting up our Gazebo’s and equipment on tables provided by the school, we realised that the childrens chairs were a problem - when you sat down, your legs and knees folded up past your chest! Chairs were soon propped up on makeshift bricks to make them higher - great fun!

Here we were graced by the presence of Mr Anton Rabe from TWIF who specially flew in for the occasion. The field was made up of two vastly different surfaces - sand to the left and patches of grass to the right. Advantage obviously went to the team who got the patchy side.. It was soon evident that we would have to give it our all to achieve the Gold we had come to win. The teams were fierce and strong but the moment we walked off the field the huge smiles and embraces we received made us feel welcome in their company. The medals came as an added bonus. At some point 2 of our athletes Lize Visser and Alicia Snyman decided to hand out some sweets to the school children - they were mobbed and totally surrounded, until they eventually had to walk away when they realised there were more kids than sweets!! A Teacher stepped in and called the children to order.
I made the school children make up a boys and a girls team and had them compete against each other. It was great fun and they were cheered on by the rest of the school. The girls fought bravely and won the pull. They were rewarded with Gold medals and the boys with silver. Absolutely the highlight of their year.

**DAY 2:** After saying Grace and thanking God for safe travel, silence crept over us all as the S A Anthem was played as loud as possible in the bus. Seeing big men cry with pride is a sight to behold. We were pumped and amped for the day ahead.

We arrived at Baobab Primary school in good spirits and could not wait to walk up onto the field. A cold morning breeze soon made way for a bright hot summers day. We had a much better pulling field than the previous day, with some lovely trees on the sides for shade and protection.

With much pride and serenade the teams took to the field, with the SA President’s team bearing the SA flag. Once the 1st whistles from the referees were blown and the competition got under way there was no stopping our team. We had come to conquer. We chased those medals, earned them and accepted them with pride. When the going got tough, the teams got spurred on by the music from the side lines and the cheering - from not just our fellow team mates, but even spectators.

Water became our liquid gold as we had to keep rehydrating in the hot sun. We even had some non-melting Ice Cream Cones - truly, they DO NOT melt!! The end of the day came too soon but we were all grateful, satisfied and overwhelmed by the bonds and camaraderie formed.

On arrival back at our abode the dirty hands, clothes and smelly bodies soon dissipated as I herded EVERYBODY straight into the Pool - clothes and all!

Victorious ladies.

Another fine meal ended our celebrations.

Packing the bus the next morning was hard, as we realised that the road ahead of us meant the last leg of our tour together. Botswana is vast and big but comes with so much beauty. Towns are far and wide between. Sleep, music and banter on the bus was plenty, and made the long roads feel so much shorter. Gabarone has become a Metropolis of gorgeous modern buildings with proud and friendly people all round - until you need to use a roadside bathroom.

We were met by some real gloomy people guarding these outposts. 2 Pula (their local currency) buys you two squares of toilet paper - only TWO!!!

We arrived at Gabarone Hotel late, and for many this was the first time to get onto wifi to contact their families back home. Everybody dashed to find a spot, as the signal was weak. Many athletes were found sitting on the stairs on Floor 1 or the Roof of floor 2 where you had to climb through a window to get near the satellite dish where the boosters were.

After a fantastic breakfast the next morning we set off for the last border crossing back into the South Africa.

Saying Goodbye is always the hardest part. But at least it’s just that - not forever . . . Just until we see each other again.

We became Family. Tug of War Family.

**Hamba kahle - go well.**

*The President’s Team of 2019*