

ANNUAL TWIF CONGRES  
GETXO, BASQUE COUNTRY  
APRIL 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> 2019



## **MINUTES – CONGRESS 2019: SATURDAY, 27 APRIL**

### **1. Opening address. By the President**

President Anton Rabe opened the congress by welcoming all members attending and thanked them for coming to Getxo, Basque Country. The President also thanked the Basque Federation (Galder, Jone, Idoia and Mikeldi) for the excellent hospitality and assistance with arranging for visa's etc.

Members observed a moment of silence as requested by the President for those who have passed away from the TWIF family and for the people that lost their lives in Sri Lanka.

All representatives and delegates gave a short introduction about themselves and their roles in the country they represent.

### **2. Roll call of the members. By the Secretary**

Secretary General, Glen Johnson called the roll and the following countries were present:

Basque Country	Belgium	China
Chinese Taipei	England	France
Germany	Ireland	Israel
Japan	Latvia	Netherlands
Scotland	Singapore	South Africa
Sweden	Switzerland	USA
Wales		

Representatives from Malaysia attended as observers.

A quorum was confirmed with 19 voting countries present. It was noted that a number of proxy votes were received for host countries of future TWIF events and Exco elections.

### **3. Confirmation of members in good standing. By the Treasurer**

Treasurer, Dan McCarthy, confirmed that all members present were in good standing and had fulfilled their financial and other obligations as members. The Treasurer mentioned that 31 countries has paid their affiliation fees this year and had filed their annual report.

### **4. Appointment of scrutineers**

Mrs. Marga 't Lam from the Netherlands and Mr. Anders Andersson from Sweden

were appointed scrutineers.

## **5. Confirmation of the Minutes of Congress 2018 held in Cork, Ireland**

The minutes from congress 2018 were circulated to members previously. On a proposal by Wales and seconded by Ireland, the minutes was unanimously accepted.

## **6. Matters arising not covered elsewhere**

Update on Data Protection (GDPR) Policy (A final draft document was distributed prior to congress for consideration and approval)

The President referred to the detailed discussion of the draft policy during the seminar on the day prior to congress. He mentioned that the GDPR and WADA wrt anti-doping compliance issues, require that such a policy must be in place. He thanked Ireland for making their policy relating to GDPR available to TWIF and Peter Dyer for his liaison with WADA to ensure that their requirements are contained in the document.

On a proposal by Switzerland and seconded by Israel, the document was unanimously accepted.

## **7. Report covering the period since the last Congress**

By the President: see attachment (A) for reference.

The President takes the report as written and briefly highlighted a number of key issues as contained in the report. There are more and more obligations and rule compliance requirements expected from International Sport Federations such as TWIF that need to be dealt with. This puts more pressure not only on the TWIF Exco but also on the National Federations who are members of TWIF to ensure compliance. The most important issues are the database and WADA compliance issues which will have a severe impact should TWIF in any way be found to be non-compliant. Pete Dyer and Birute Miseckaite take care of the WADA obligations but will need a lot of assistance from the member countries to ensure that all the necessary documents and database remain updated. The IOC and ARISF also ask for more details from TWIF to fulfill all their conditions and requirements which determines the financial support received from the IOC.

The President also thanked the committees that are active, mainly the TAC (Technical and Athlete's Committee), the PR Committee and the Doping Committee. Also a word of thanks to all the officials that do all the hard work on a voluntary basis in their own private time and with their own money to travel. We can't exist without volunteers.

TWIF Exco and the TAC also did a lot of work on the upgrading of the evaluation of judges to ensure that the rules are consistently interpreted and applied, as well as upgrading the judges briefing prior to events. Other issues to work on are the format of future TWIF events (too many weight classes), the health of the athletes and the

challenge to ensure further global growth and development of TWIF. We can't and will not forget our history and culture, but we need to join the challenges in the world to make our sport more attractive and modern for participants, the media and sponsors.

All these items are also mentioned in the Policy Plan and is an ongoing process with focus on development in Asia, the African Continent and South America. In the coming months more focus will be on updating the website and the competition software program. The data protection issue will also in future be a key part of the administration on the website. It was noted that sometime in the future TWIF will also have to consider an upgrade to a new software platform for the competition program.

The report and remarks were unanimously accepted.

## 8. **Finance.**

By the Treasurer

### 8.1 Submission and vote on the balance sheets and accounts

The Treasurer, Dan McCarthy, presented the accounts. See attached for reference. The Treasurer mentioned that the interest is very low and TWIF has done three investments. It does not give a lot of interest but at least it is a riskless investment.

The accounts were unanimously accepted

### 8.2 Approval of the budget (2019/20)

It was noted that the IOC grant was increased, but on the other hand the WADA costs will increase given that more anti-doping tests needs to be done in the future. This increase in tests will start at the European Championships 2019.

TWIF currently has its reserve in Stirling (Pounds) and US Dollar accounts. Given the volatility in exchange rates, especially relating to the uncertainty caused by Brexit, TWIF Exco is somewhat concerned about the currency mix and will obtain some expert opinion as to how accounts should be structured. The issue of transaction safety with the risk of hackers also remain a concern whilst indemnity of TWIF officers will be looked into.

The President mentioned that Exco is currently looking into the options and costs of 3rd Party verification (audit or review) of accounts. This was noted.

The budget was unanimously accepted

## 9. **World Games 2021:** Report by Technical Delegate

It was confirmed that Glen Johnson will remain as the technical delegate for TWIF for the World Games 2021. The full report that was provided during the seminar will be sent out by the Secretary General. The Tug of War World Outdoor Championships 2020 will be the qualifier for the World Games 2021.

It is the first time TWIF will have a mixed class on the World Games program and both IWGA (International World Games Association) and IOC (International Olympic Committee) are excited about this given that few sports have the ability to host mixed teams on the highest level of their sport.

#### 10. **Strategic matters/Policy Plan – Feedback/Update**

The President mentioned that in September 2019, TWIF Exco will start to draft a new policy plan for the next 4 years cycle starting in 2020. This will be submitted for approval at Congress 2020. Exco will also invite nominations for the various committees and commission which will be put forward for ratification at congress 2020 in Holten. The current policy plan is based on 3 items, 1) Organisation, 2) Promotion and 3) Members.

**Promotion:** TWIF's goal remains the re-admission to the Olympic Games, but this will not be an easy task. TWIF cannot really compete against professional sports, so our focus must be to use other multi-sports event such as the Commonwealth Games, the Youth Olympic Games and the World Games as stepping stones to increase the tug of war profile. Also focus on Youth and School Tournaments and the presentation of teams and officials.

**Members:** TWIF will continue to support both new and existing members with development courses, coaching and the training of officials. Currently we have 72 member countries, of which only about 25 are active on international level with 6 to 8 countries fighting for the medals. It is therefore encouraged that countries continue to help each other to get the sport to a higher competitive and wider global level.

TWIF wants to remain in the World Games. It is expected that the World Games 2025 will be hosted in the city of Chengdu in China. TWIF Exco will again engage with the IWGA wrt to the best possible program for Tug of War in the World Games 2025 and will engage with the Chinese Tug of War Federation (CTWF) should assistance and advice be required. Ralf Brauningner from Germany asked whether indoor will be considered for the World Games 2025 program. The President indicated that Exco will keep an open mind and will agree the best possible program taken the focus of Indoor in Asia, but that it is impossible at this stage to indicate exactly what the program will look like. We need to adapt as circumstances change to ensure optimal exposure and attractiveness of tug of war.

#### 11. **Reports by the Commissions:** See Attachment (B)

##### 11.1 **Technical Athletes Commission – Maaïke Hornstra**

Vice President Maaïke Hornstra highlighted various items in the written report that was circulated some time ago. She added that a number of members have as yet not provided feedback on the grading systems of the judges utilized in their countries. Only 14 reports have been received to date. She urged members again to provide the information to the TAC. Where required, assistance and guidance will be provided to countries who need help.

The Vice President also mentioned that there will be an upgrade on the briefing for judges with a constructive Powerpoint presentation. The thinking behind this is to ensure that judges are fully informed about changes in rules and to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the rules.

There will also be changes to the evaluation system for the judges in Castlebar with a revised evaluation sheet with weightings to different aspects of judging. Every judge will also get more direct feedback from the evaluators relating to their performance and where they can improve.

Jost Waser, as a member of the TAC, attended the 9th International Forum of the Athletes Commission of the IOC. For the first time IOC recognized federations such as TWIF were invited. Main topics of the IF Forum were the changing landscape of sports, WADA and mental health of Athletes. IOC is working on helping Sports Federations to have more awareness for the mental aspect in sports and mental health of the Athlete.

The TAC Report was unanimously accepted.

### 11.2 **PR Commission** - Maaïke Hornstra

Vice President Hornstra highlighted some aspects, in particular the International Forum at Olympic Channel (OC) in Madrid which she attended in November 2018. TWIF has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OC who is keen to offer more to TWIF to promote the sport. OC is 24/7 on internet and especially young people watch documentaries on their phone. There is also a growing amount of Esports worldwide. TWIF Exco will discuss how to benefit from OC without incurring costs which is exorbitant at this stage.

The PR Report was unanimously accepted.

### 11.3 **Anti-Doping** – Pete Dyer

Senior Vice President Pete Dyer, mentioned that annual reports are very important because it gives him the information about the anti-doping data in the member countries which assist with reporting to WADA. A lot of the reports were too late this year. Reports should be in before the first of January of the new Year.

Worldwide in Tug of War there were 54 In Competition Tests (ICT) and 44 Out of Competition tests (OOCT). All were negative. There are less countries doing anti-doping tests than in the past. Countries like Germany, Sweden and China are very active with tests. TWIF did 5 ICT's in China and 5 ICT's in Cape Town in 2018. In 2019 there is a new list with prohibited substances.

Tug of War is not a high risk sport but we must ensure that it remain this way. On the website: [www.globaldro.com](http://www.globaldro.com), athletes can insert the name of the substance they (want to) use to check if it is safe or not. Pete Dyer also asked the members to pay attention to the TUE forms for the Athletes. He also highlighted various aspects relating to the ITA (International Testing Agency) who conducts TWIF's OOCT

programme. ITA's services will be utilized more extensively in the future.

The current TWIF website is not sufficient to deal with all the new compliance requirements of WADA and GDPR, so the website will be changed and upgraded in the near future. TWIF events and other (national/club) events will also have to be separated more clearly on the web-site calendar and we need to add more information about WADA on the website.

The competition program has to be changed and also the database needs an update. This means that every person needs to fill in a new accreditation with a new picture this year. Pete Dyer and Bruce Schuman work on this and the plan in the future is to work in a 4 year cycle from World Games to World Games.

The anti-doping Report was unanimously accepted.

11.4 **Medical Panel** – (no report/no activity this past year)

11.5 **Appeal Commission** – (no report/no activity this past year)

12. **Affiliation of new members:**

There are no new members to confirm or vote for. Contact has been established with Algeria, Uganda, Bangladesh and Trinidad & Tobago. TWIF Exco has also agreed that in future new members will only be put forward and voted for at congress when such new country has payed their annual fee.

13. Proposals and question submitted by the members and all other matters which the Executive Committee wish to propose See Attachment (C)

It was stressed that proposals only will be discussed and voted for when there is a seconder for the proposal. If not, no discussion will be allowed on the specific proposal. A quorum on the votes will be 50% +1 = 19 votes, so 11 votes will be required for a proposal to pass. Only "yes" or "no" votes will however count relating to any particular proposal as an abstention does not count when the number of votes is taken into account to determine a majority.

The results of the voting are indicated in Attachment C. Where possible, proposals will come into effect within 60 days.

14. **TWIF Championships: Past, Present and Future**

14.1 **World Indoor Championships 2018, Xuzhou, China** (dealt with 2018 Congress) – there were only 5 evaluations sent in, three of them from TWIF Exco. Overall it was a good Championships and after congress 2018, no further evaluations where received.

14.2 **World Outdoor Championships 2018, Cape Town, South Africa/Evaluation** (See attached evaluation). Overall it was a good Championship. All items were above average (3 = standard).

14.3 **Future** – Progress reports/Updates

- 14.3.1 2019 Regional EC Outdoor– Castlebar, Ireland. Presentation given during seminar.
- 14.3.2 2020 World Indoor – Letterkenny, Ireland. Presentation given during seminar.
- 14.3.3 2020 World Outdoor – Getxo, Basque Country. Presentation given during site visits after seminar.
- 14.3.4 2021 Regional EC – Holton, Netherlands. Presentation given during seminar.
- 14.3.5 2022 World Outdoor – Sursee, Switzerland. No report.

There were no further updates during congress as all progress reports have been done during the seminar.

**15. Tenders for future Championships** (Presentations during seminar/voting during congress)

15.1 2022 World Indoor – Singapore, Sweden, Chinese Taipei

On the first vote with 26 votes (7 proxy votes) Singapore got 12 votes, Chinese Taipei 8 and Sweden 6. Sweden dropped out and after the second vote Singapore had 15 votes and Chinese Taipei 11.

**World Indoor Championships 2022 will therefore be in Singapore.**

15.2 2023 Regional EC – England. England has withdrawn the tender.

15.3 2024 World Indoor – None received

15.4 2024 World Outdoor – China, Sweden, Germany, England.  
England has withdrawn the tender.

On the vote with 19 votes (no proxy votes) Germany got 11 votes, China 6 and Sweden 2.

**World Outdoor Championships 2024 therefore will be in Mannheim, Germany.**

**16. Election of TWIF ExCo** (period 2019 to 2023 for President, Vice President and Secretary General) – See nominations as received. See attachment D

Anton Rabe was unanimously re-elected as President.

Maaïke Hornstra was unanimously elected as Secretary General.

Elections were seconded by Ireland and South Africa. No voting by paper, but this item was dealt with by acclamation by the Senior Vice President, Pete Dyer.

On the vote for Vice President there were 20 votes (2 proxy votes).  
Jost Waser got 14 votes and Ralf Bräuninger 6 votes.

Jost Waser will therefore be the Vice President for the next 4 Years.

## 17. **Other Business for the good of Tug of War**

17.1 **Master Games Japan 2021:** Mr Masaji Takahashi, representative of Japan, provided some information about the Master Games which will be held in Japan. It will be the first Master Games with Tug of War on the program. It will NOT be a TWIF event. Information can be found on: [www.wmg2021.jp](http://www.wmg2021.jp)

17.2 **60 Year TWIF:** In 2020 TWIF will celebrate its 60th anniversary. TWIF have two events in 2020, WC indoor and WC outdoor. It has not been finalized as to how this anniversary will be celebrated, but TWIF Exco has already engaged with the organisers of the events in 2020 (Indoor in Ireland and the Outdoor in Basque Country). Further discussions will be held in September, but any ideas from the membership would be welcome.

17.3 **Retirement of Glen Johnson:** Congress convened in camera. The President informed members of the farewell function after congress and that some tokens of appreciation will be handed over. He also requested members' support to bestow the title of Honorary Life Vice President to Glen. (It was noted that in the sporting world there is no title as Honorary Life Secretary General).

This proposal was unanimously supported.

In future TWIF will therefore have 3 Honorary Life members namely Messrs Co Koren and Cathal McKeever as Honorary Life Presidents, and Glen Johnson as Honorary Life Vice President.

## 18. **Future meetings**

Seminar/congress 2020 will be in Holten, the Netherlands on 17th and 18th April 2020.

## 19. **Closing by the President**

The President thanked members for the accurate time schedule and good working attitude and wished everybody safe travels home.

Attachment (A)

**TWIF PRESIDENT’S REPORT – APRIL 2019**

It is with pleasure and appreciation that I provide this brief report on the TWIF activities during the past year.

The pressure to deal with an ever-increasing spectrum of issues, including reporting and compliance requirements from amongst others the IOC and WADA, require more and more time from the various portfolio holders and Exco as a collective. In my view, we will need to broaden the capacity on some aspects where not only expertise is required, but also a more full-time monitoring of developments to ensure a quick and competent/expert response. This will entail innovative thinking and responsible utilisation of the Federation’s limited resources, but it will entail a “business un-usual” mind set and approach to the way in which we administer and govern our sport.

My sincere thanks to my fellow Exco members for their continued support, dedication, wisdom, guidance and hard work during this period. With the election of some Exco positions during the 2019 Congress, we will welcome at least 1 new member to the Exco which will not only bring new thoughts and skills to the table, but it will require a

re-allocation of some portfolio's as well as the development of a new 4 year Policy Plan (to be submitted at Congress 2020) which need to address the challenges as highlighted in this report.

My sincere thanks and appreciation also to the members of the various Commissions for their contributions, and also to all the TWIF officials at championships, mostly behind the scenes and during long hours. You all do this at your own expense and time – without you as volunteers, the spirit, nature and running of TWIF events will not be possible. It is therefore vital that we continue to build our judges and recorders panel to spread the load and ensure that this valued resource is never taken for granted.

The reports on the work and activities of the various commissions should be read in conjunction with this report.

## **1. MEETINGS**

The TWIF Exco met on 3 occasions during the past year with ongoing one to one or group telephonic and/or e-mail exchanges between ourselves. The physical meetings were in September 2018 in Cape Town, South Africa, (with WOC'18) and January 2019 in Amsterdam, Netherlands. We will meet again in Getxo, Basque Country, just prior to congress end of April 2019.

Meetings and dealing with ongoing activities of the various portfolio's and commissions were held as and when required and convenient. Apart from the ongoing and increasing anti-doping compliance requirements, a clear focus during the past year was to address the quality and consistency of interpretation and application of competition rules. Various initiatives to address this vital aspect of our sport will be affected going forward which includes a revamping of evaluation criteria and weighting of key criteria and elements of the rules, a comprehensive briefing of officials at TWIF events and some new guidance material illustrating the correct (and wrong!) interpretation of the various infringements.

We will also have to continue with the debate to comprehensively look at the nature, structure and format of future TWIF events. It is not viable to continue increasing the number of weight classes during our events – somewhere we will have to consolidate and compromise to ensure that the delicate balance between growth and development of the youth, gender issues and broad-based participation, is found. We will continue to focus on this during our seminars prior to congress or dealing substantively with these topics when the various proposals submitted by members as contained in the congress agenda, are being dealt with.

Another vital item is the health of our athletes where the once off weigh-in at events which have been instituted for very good reasons some years ago, have led to unintended consequences of severe weight loss and de-hydration, especially prior to indoor events. Exco will continue to gather statistics during future TWIF events and will advise on adjustments where required. Given the nature and requirements of the competition programme and structure, it is not feasible to go back to daily weigh-ins, but some solutions need to be found. This will include education and awareness raising on the risks, as well as a re-focus on TWIF's anti-doping rules and targeted testing prior to international events.

Items dealt with by the Exco are included in the agenda and will be reported on during Congress, whilst others are being expanded on in more detail later on in this report.

## **2. SPORT ACCORD/GAISF, IOC, WADA, IWGA & ARISF**

The next GAISF Sport Accord meeting is scheduled for the week of 6 - 10 May 2019 in Australia. A range of one-to-one and plenary meetings and workshops will again be attended with the IOC, WADA, IWGA and ARISF. The theme for the 2019 Convention is: "The Future of Big Data and Analytics".

A comprehensive written report will be provided after the event and distributed to members via the office of the Secretary General.

In the meantime, Exco agreed a new programme for TWG 2021 in Birmingham, USA. Tug of War will be hosted outdoor only, with 540W, 640M and 580Mix on three consecutive days in this sequence. We had to compromise with regard to numbers for the event and it will be expected of countries qualifying for all 3 events, to participate with a smaller allotment of athletes. Exact numbers will however only be agreed once the qualifying event (WOC 2020 in Getxo) has been concluded. The first site meeting for the event was attended by Glen Johnson who has been appointed as technical delegate for the event. He will make a comprehensive report at congress.

## **3. THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE**

As was indicated in recent years and discussed during seminars, we will have to innovate, adapt and change our sport with regard to its format and presentation to the needs of a more modern environment be it participants, spectators, the media and sponsors if we wish to remain relevant in the future. I believe we can do this without compromising on the core values, ethos, our historic and cultural roots and the very nature of the sport which boils down to strength, endurance and skill. Tug of War has illustrated its value both in the educational and physical exercise spheres and now recently also as a nation builder and contributing to peace in a country such as Colombia.

These values are also echoed in the rules of the Olympic Movement through which all athletes and sporting delegations should be guaranteed participation without any undue discrimination or political interference. The TWIF family of nations have a proud history in this regard and we have adapted and seen some innovative changes over the past 15-20 years. We need to build on this legacy and continue to find new ways to display and play our sport. I therefore wish to encourage members to continue with experiments and explore different ways in order to be attractive to future athletes, officials and the media. Our ultimate goal is re-inclusion on the Olympic Programme – we will only achieve this by thinking out of the box and trying new things whilst optimising opportunities in multi-sports events such as World Games, the Youth Olympics, the Urban Games and the Beach Games.

## **4. ACTIVITIES**

4.1 Doping Compliance – Under the guidance of Snr VP, Peter Dyer, TWIF had various engagements with WADA relating to a range of doping compliance issues following a comprehensive review of policies and procedures. Some amendment to TWIF's anti-doping policy and procedures is currently being dealt with to ensure continued compliance and alignment with WADA's requirements. This included the signing of a new ADAMS User agreement and a revised international standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUE's) which will require amendments to the guidelines and templates used to date. WADA is also in the process to revise the

Athlete Rights' Charter whilst the data protection requirements will also entail further changes. Peter will provide comprehensive feedback at Congress relating to the process to date and a number of outstanding matters still to be dealt with. The message from WADA is clear – a more pro-active and risk based targeted approach is required even in a low risk amateur sport such as tug of war. The sport may be participated in by amateur athletes, but it needs to be administered exactly as any of the major sports with professionally paid participants and officials!

- 4.2 Development courses/seminars – Development and growth towards a true global footprint, remains one of the pillars of the TWIF policy plan. Seminars were held in Russia and France whilst engagement continuous with various potential host countries for further courses in 2019/20.
- 4.3 Asian development – The process to formalize organisational structures in Asia were partly successful but key members remain uninvolved whilst it also seems as if at least some countries in the region continue to have other agendas. It is however heartening to see further interest from this region with various tenders being submitted for both Indoor and Outdoor TWIF events from Singapore, Chinese Taipei and PR of China. I am hopeful that successful bids from any of these potential hosts will create further platforms for development in Asia working towards a formal TWIF continental championship aligned with the European model where bi-annual European Championships is tendered for and hosted by member countries on a structured basis, under the auspices and control of TWIF.
- 4.4 New uniforms for officials – After embarking on a process to re-kit all TWIF officials in 2017, everybody has now been issued with new gear. This is an expensive and ongoing exercise but is vital to enhance the presentation of our sport both on and off the competition arena. It is vital that athletes/teams also embrace the improvement of their appearance not only whilst competing, but also during medal presentations and opening/closing ceremonies which attracts ongoing viewing post events.
- 4.5 Web-site – Development work on the TWIF web-site is ongoing. This includes some structural changes relating to doping compliance, education and awareness which will be comprehensively reported on at Congress as indicated earlier. Further work on the archives and storing of historic material will receive attention over the next few months whilst a more user-friendly content management system will also be introduced.
- 4.6 Competition software – Various new functionalities will be added and ready for use during the coming EOC '19 in Ireland. This will include some changes to ensure anti-doping and data protection compliance.
- 4.7 Data Protection - A draft policy to ensure compliance with the new privacy rules pertaining to data protection will be tabled at Congress for approval. Members are encouraged to look at this and consider following suit if they have not done already. For EU countries this is a legal requirement but remains a good practice also for those members outside of Europe.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON ACTIVITIES AND SHARE SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT MAY LIE IN THE FUTURE.

ANTON RABE  
TWIF PRESIDENT

## Commission Reports (B)

### **Public Relations Commission**

#### **Current PR commission Members:**

- Chairwoman Ms. Maaïke Hornstra/ ExCo
- Mr. Anders Andersson/Sweden
- Mrs. Shelby Richardson/United States
- Mr. Denis Dunlea/Ireland
- Mr. Anton Botha/South Africa

In 2018 the PR commission have had two meetings, the first one was during congress in Cork on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 and the second meeting was during the WC Outdoor in Cape Town, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2018. All members attended the meeting.

In April 2018 during our meeting we discussed about new items for the coming TWIF magazines and we agreed to pay attention to people with special needs and Anders and Denis arranged the articles, because there is attention for pulling for people with special needs in Sweden and Ireland, so other countries can learn from this.

Also, we payed attention to the WC Outdoor in Cape Town and the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the USATOWA. We also agreed that publishing a newsletter three times a year is enough. The big issue is how we reach all our members worldwide with the TWIF

newsletter. We spread it out via the Representatives of all member countries, post it on the TWIF website and spread it out via TWIF Facebook page.

To make the TWIF newsletter more attractive, we agreed to use more pictures. Pictures are more interesting than long text. So, we try to make a good mixture of that. Also, we agreed to place articles about history of Tug of War from different countries, the current Tug of War with upcoming events and information about the future of Tug of War. Also, there must be place for important items in the TWIF newsletter, like WADA news and other items which will be important to know for the members and readers of the magazine.

As PR Commission we are not happy with the current structure of the TWIF website and the possibilities of the website. Anton Rabe and Pete Dyer from TWIF Exco and webmaster Bruce Schuman have had a meeting with the company (ABC in South Africa) after the WC Outdoor to speak about the issues around the website and how to change things. This will be an ongoing process to make the website more user friendly and more attractive.

During our second meeting in Cape Town, September 2018, we spoke about the items for the coming magazines. We agreed to make a kind of special edition on the WC Outdoor Cape Town which was completed with a lot of pictures, made by Eddie van Raamsdonk from the Netherlands. TWIF has asked Eddie van Raamsdonk to attend the WC Indoor China and WC Outdoor South Africa to do the media coverage by pictures, which was very successful. Eddie always shares his pictures on the website [www.tugofwarpicture.nl](http://www.tugofwarpicture.nl)

Focus for 2019 on the TWIF newspaper is on history, current situation and future of Tug of War, so there will be announcements and information about International Tournaments, the coming European and Junior/U23 World Championships in Castlebar, news about the World Games 2021, IOC information, reports from new countries and new representatives and information about WADA, a very important part of our sport nowadays.

Also, we notice that the TWIF Facebook page is being discovered more and more and the Facebook page gets more followers. It is good to see how some items reach a huge amount of people. At this stage we have already more than 3000 followers, but this grows every day. To give an example about information on the Facebook page: the announcement about the European- and World Junior/U23 outdoor Championships reached 4219 people and also the results of the different weight classes in Cape Town reached a lot of people, but we should not forget the good livestream coverage we had in Cape Town, which reached a lot of people as well. All is done for the promotion of our beautiful sport.

In 2017 TWIF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Olympic Channel (OC). OC spreads out sport news 24 hours a day on social media and especially Youth is following this sport items on their smartphones. This could be a media for TWIF to reach more younger people. At this stage there is an agreement that OC will cover one of our events this year and probably this will be the EC/WC Outdoor in Castlebar in September 2019. Further details must be confirmed. If TWIF wants more coverage, then TWIF has to pay money for this. In TWIF Exco we will discuss this year how we

can benefit the best of OC.

Of course, as PR commission we like to receive articles, reports and pictures about items going on in the member countries, because as commission we try to catch all the news items, but we are not always aware what is going on in Tug of War World, so thank you already ahead for sharing all your media coverage with TWIF.

You can send the news links to Maaïke Hornstra per email: [10cc@hetnet.nl](mailto:10cc@hetnet.nl) or share it on Facebook, so the news will be shared on the Facebook page of TWIF. Also, you can send your reports/articles and pictures to this email address.

Maaïke Hornstra  
Chairwoman PR Commission  
TWIF Vice President

### **Report Technical and Athletes Commission (TAC)**

The Technical and Athletes Commission exists of the following members:

- Chairwoman: Ms. Maaïke Hornstra/ ExCo
- Secretary: Mrs. Marga t'Lam/Netherlands
- Mr. Jost Waser/Switzerland
- Mr. Ray Fray Smith/England
- Mr. Mikel Areitio Elordui/Basque country
- Mr. Erik Atterheim/Sweden
- Ms. Kittie Terblanche/South Africa
- Mrs. Shelby Richardson/ United States
- Mr. Ralf Brauninger/Germany
- Mr. Vincent Chen/Chinese Taipei

Due to personal circumstances Kittie Terblanche has not been able to attend one of the TAC meetings since 2016 and also could not attend our meeting in Cape Town, South Africa (her hometown) 2018, so Kittie withdrew from the TAC and we decided not to select a new candidate for the coming years till the next election in 2020.

Since 2016 we have decided to have one formal meeting a year, which is held during the European- or World Outdoor Championships. So in 2018 we had one formal meeting during the WC outdoor in Cape Town, September 2018, but because quite a number of TAC members were present during congress in Cork, April 2018, we decided to have a dinner meeting which was very useful.

Items we spoke about in Cork were the refresher course for judges to bring it back to

4 years in stead of 6. After discussion and asking judges it will stay to 6 years. We spoke about comments on the evaluation proceed, dropping of teams and how to caution this, attitude of some judges towards pullers and recorders. Some ideas we thought about in Cork came back on the agenda during our September meeting in Cape Town on the 20th of September 2018.

Items we spoke about was the theory test points for the TWIF judge examination. Now all questions are worth the same amount of points, but the difference in difficulty in questions is not the same level. This needs an overlook.

Dropping a team/deliberate dropping; TAC has to give advice how judges can give a caution of warning for this. Sometimes teams are dropping the opposing team on purpose to gain an unfair advantage and hoping the opponent is getting a caution. This is unfair pulling and TAC agreed this could be part of rule 24, point 8 to disqualify a team without caution. This is not always easy to notice for a judge so during the TWIF Exco meeting in January 2019 it has been agreed that TAC has a closer look how to mention this right in the rules manual but also make a good statement for the briefing of the judges.

Also during our meeting we spoke about the attitude of some judges on the field and it will be part of the role of Chief Judge and evaluators to inform judges about this attitude. Maybe some of the judges have no idea how they act on the field, because it is part of their focus, but for some pullers and sometimes recorders, it can be very intimidated.

After the situation we had during WC indoor in China, where the center judge made a mistake, we discussed this item during our TAC meeting and agreed that the Chief Judge, controller and referee will discuss the situation on the field or mat if a judge makes a mistake and that there will be a time-out and conclusion can be the chance of a re-pull, so then the solution will be made directly after the match. This will save discussion, appeals and a lot of commotion. If TWIF Exco agrees on this, this will be introduced. It needs to be very clear that a Chief Judge/controller/referee cannot be overruled by a coach of a team.

Also we agreed to make a better briefing for the judges before a Championships starts. It seems that not all the judges read their Rules Manual before a tournament and of course language is sometimes a big issue, so a very good briefing with instructions on a powerpoint presentation will be part of the briefing for the judges. Also is agreed that changes in the rules or other items which will be important for judges (and recorders), this will not only be send by email to the representative, but also to the judges and recorders.

Items for the TAC to work on are the following:

- Theory course needs to be updated, not every question is worth the same amount of points. Some questions have more level then others;
- Chief Evaluator needs to act more directly if something happens on the field, so talk to the judge when a mistake has been made, but also mention the good things, good feedback is very important and necessary to keep judges motivated and sharp;

- Making a good briefing with the current rules, pictures of mistakes, changes in the rules and get discussions between judges to get everyone on the same level. This will start in Castlebar, Ireland during EC/WC with a powerpoint presentation;
- Make a better evaluation report, written items are more useful than points;
- New No Pull system can only be introduced if the TWIF computer system can be changed, is part of discussion with ABC, server of TWIF website.

The TAC will have a meeting once a year during a World- or European Outdoor Championship. If necessary the TAC can have extra meetings but we try to do the rest of our consultation and discussion by email. The next meeting will be in Castlebar, Ireland, in September 2019.

I would like to thank all the TAC members for their hard work.

Maike Hornstra  
Chairwoman TAC  
TWIF Vice President

- **DOPING REPORT TO CONGRESS in Gexto, Bilbao, Basque Country, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019.**
- **Whereabouts Information.**
- The Twif Registered Testing Pool (RTP) currently consists of those athletes in the winning squad for each of the three weight classes in the World Games. Therefore, following the World Games in July 2017, we have a RTP consisting of 26 athletes from three countries which will be in force until Twif notifies them otherwise or they retire from the sport, some of which have already done so. I can't stress strongly enough the importance of those athletes keeping their whereabouts up to date as they can rest assured pullers from that RTP will be tested. Should a WADA Doping Officer arrive at the location, indicated in the ADAMS system, and the athlete is not present, two things happen. 1. The athlete is registered as a missed test and 2. Twif incur unwarranted costs.
- Furthermore, late filing of your whereabouts in a quarterly period is also an anti-doping violation and could be subject to sanctions.
- We are currently revising our anti-doping strategy, so over the course of this year testing will be more intelligence based rather than purely random and the members of the testing pool could change on a more regular basis. If you are identified as a candidate for the testing pool you will need to comply with the whereabouts information requested of you.
- **TUE's and prohibited list.**
- WADA have issued the **2019 LIST OF PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AND METHODS** which came into force on the 1st January. You have previously received advance notification of this in September/October 2018 and there was also an article in the December issue of the Twif magazine. As part of our obligation as a member of WADA and to maintain our Olympic recognition we,

and hence ALL of our membership, are mandated to comply with this latest list. The prohibited list is updated annually based on intelligence and medical developments. Tug of War is generally considered a clean sport and we wish to stay that way, making yourselves aware of items in this prohibited list is important to ensure you remain compliant.

- There is a useful website that can also help identify 'over the counter' products that may contain prohibited substances, that is <https://www.globaldro.com/Home>. If you are not sure ask the Pharmacist.
- Even if you are prescribed something by a medical practitioner, inform them that you are an athlete who is required to be compliant with WADA regulations, they may have a choice of what to prescribe you so that you remain compliant. If not, it will be necessary, with their assistance, to complete a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) form that can be downloaded from the Twif website.
- I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of all of our athletes remaining compliant as both in competition and out of competition testing continues both by Twif and your countries National Anti-doping Organisation (NADO), so be careful don't take risks.
- **REMEMBER – You, as an athlete, are solely responsible for any banned substance found in your system.**

### **3. World Indoor Championships 2018**

During the World Indoor Championships in China, 5 in competition tests were carried out as follows;

Male pullers from Singapore, Hong Kong, Basque Country and China, female puller from Chinese Taipei.

All tests were negative.

### **4. World Outdoor Championships 2018**

During the World Outdoor Championships in South Africa 5 in competition tests were carried out as follows;

Men's 560 – Germany, Men's 680 – Netherlands; Men's 640 – Switzerland; Ladies 500 – Chinese Taipei; Ladies 520 - Basque Country.

All tests were negative.

### **5. Annual Reporting Forms.**

At the time of compiling this report 21-member countries, had completed their reports. Their reports show that in total 28 in competition tests and 9 out of competition tests

were carried out, all were negative. This is a significant reduction on last year and I will be discussing with countries regarding them undertaking anti-doping tests.

It is important all countries complete their annual report forms as the information within these reports is required by both the IOC and WADA, I therefore stress to each and every International Representative to complete and submit their forms.

I would like to thank Birute Zachariene, our TWIF anti-doping administrator, for her continued hard work in this area.

***Pete Dyer***

Chairman of TWIF Doping Commission

## **Proposals & Questions (C)**

### Proposals & Questions

1. Proposed by South Africa Seconded: Basque Country

Rule 5.1. It is proposed that a puller be eligible to participate in the junior category from the beginning of the year in which the puller reaches the age of 14 years until the end of the year that a puller reaches the age of 18 years. (Currently the rule states 15 years).

Reason/Motivation:

A large number of High School or Secondary Schools worldwide starts from 8th grade (US) or year 9 (UK). This is also the year when most of the learners turn 14. To expand the TWIF rule to 14 years, will allow these learners to participate in the junior category from the moment that they start with High/Secondary School, and NOT having to wait it out until they become eligible. It is further believed that, by officially extending the junior category with one year, the participation base will be "broadened" which will hopefully lead to an increase of youth athletes in our sport.

**On a vote the proposal PASSED. 15 in favor, 2 against and 2 abstentions.**

2. Proposed by Belgium Seconded: South Africa

Belgium proposes that the minimum age for participation in the men U23 will be decreased to 16. For countries with a small number of participants it is difficult to retain youth and U23 men especially when the current rules prevent these countries from entering a complete team.

Reason:

There are a lot of sports where athletes compete on a professional level at these ages.

Motivation by South Africa:

The age of 16 Years should be the same for Men and Women.

Ireland points at the Child protection legislations so parents need to sign.

**On a vote the proposal PASSED. 14 in favor, 3 against and 2 abstentions.**

3. Proposed by South Africa

Seconded:

Rule 5.2. It is proposed that BOTH male and female pullers be allowed to participate in the U/23 category from the beginning of the year that they reach 16 years of age until the end of the year that a puller reaches 22 years of age. (Currently only females can participate in the U/23 category from 16 years of age).

Reason/Motivation:

Currently the rule restricts male pullers to 18 years of age in order to participate in the U/23 category, whilst female participants may participate from 16 years of age. In order to simplify the application of the rule, it is proposed that the age category be dropped to 16 years for U/23 males as well. This will have the added advantage that juniors that perform well, can progress seamlessly to the U/23 category at age 16 already (if they are good enough), ensuring continuity from juniors to seniors.

**This proposal is withdrawn being the same as the previous proposal**

4. Proposed by South Africa

Seconded: Ireland

Rule 5.3. It is proposed that BOTH male and female pullers be allowed to participate in the senior category from the beginning of the year that they reach the age of 18 years. (Currently females are allowed to participate in the senior category from the beginning of the year that they reach the age of 16 years).

Reason/Motivation:

It is understood that females were historically allowed to participate in the senior category from the age of 16, because the junior and under 23 categories for females were not sufficiently established at the time. Since 2013, this situation has changed substantially - not only is the Junior Ladies category and the U/23 Ladies category well established, but the Junior Mix and U/23 Mix provide additional opportunities for ladies to participate. In the light of the above, it is proposed that the starting age of the senior category be changed to 18 years of age for BOTH males and females.

Note: In summary, if the above proposals meet the approval of Congress, the starting ages will be 14 years old for the junior category, 16 years old for the U/23 category and 18 years old for the senior category - for BOTH males and females.

Note: In summary, if the above proposals meet the approval of Congress, the starting ages will be 14 years old for the junior category, 16 years old for the U/23 category and 18 years old for the senior category - for BOTH males and females.

Wales proposed an amendment to this proposal, which was seconded by Germany. Ladies in the senior class at the age of 16 Years but in the Mix Senior class Ladies have to be 18 Years old.

Reason/Motivation:

The Mix class is a tough class and can be too tough on the body for 16Year old girls/ladies.

**On a vote the amendment FAILED. 8 in favor, 9 against and 2 abstentions.**

**On a vote the original proposal FAILED. 5 in favor, 12 against and 2 abstentions.**

5. Proposed by South Africa

Seconded: Belgium

If the above proposal is NOT carried, the age for senior male pullers should also be adjusted to 16 years of age.

Reason/motivation:

There should be no discrimination between sexes.

**On a vote the proposal PASSED. 16 in favor, 3 against and 0 abstention.**

6. Proposed by South Africa

Seconded: USA

Rule 8.1.4. It is proposed that a specific judge (per weight category) be appointed to ensure compliance with regard to the protective clothing worn by the anchor (anchor suits).

Reason/Motivation: It was noticed that a substantial number of anchor suits utilised during the 2018 World Championships, were NOT in compliance with rule 8.1.4. Anchor suits had grooves in, as well as attachments/constructions to hook/secure the ropes, rendering a "lock". Although the anchor suits of some teams were addressed, others were not, leading to issues of inconsistency. In the light of this, it is proposed that a judge be appointed to a specific weight category to check ALL the anchor suits of the different teams in that specific weight category just prior to the team taking the field. After the initial check, spot-checks can be done during the remainder of the competition. (Note: The number of judges does NOT need to increase - the current number of judges allowed for in a TWIF championship, is sufficient to address this issue).

**On a vote the proposal PASSED. 13 in favor, 5 against and 1 abstention.**

7. Proposed by England

Seconded: Sweden

That Rule 8.1.4 Protective Clothing is amended to standardise pullers protective clothing and the Anchor's Vest.

Reason:

At the moment this is a minefield and protection for pullers is being used to lock the rope preventing free movement. Examples are adapted belts, anchors' padding, rubber on shirts/belts and material wrapped round the waist all helping to lock a rope.

At the moment there is only one manufacturer of purpose made protection we have found for pullers and anchors - TOWS. It might be that there are others that have been missed. Side protection for pullers and anchor's vest are available through their website. These are robust and give all the protection a competitor requires.

By having a standard protection this will eliminate the abuse of being able to lock the rope through the different methods mentioned and it is fair to all participants. To clarify a competitor would have a tee-shirt appropriate protection and pulling shirt, nothing else. We strongly recommend that this protection is adopted until other manufacturers are available for approval.

**On a vote this proposal FAILED. 7 in favor, 11 against and 1 abstention.**

Note from TWIF Exco: To get all the Athletes in approved clothing takes time and money. This is an item with high priority within TWIF, especially protective clothing and anchor vests, but it is difficult to make this compulsory at this stage.

8. Proposed by South Africa

Seconded:

If the consistent application of the rule is too difficult to police (ie. the previous proposals is NOT passed), it is then strongly proposed that the latter part of the rule (pertaining to anchor suits), be scrapped.

**This proposal was withdrawn.**

9. Proposed by Switzerland

Seconded: Germany

The weight class 720kg Senior Man Outdoor should not be pulled any more

Reason:

The last four years none one of the teams participating in the 720kg weight class, were over 700kg. All of them were lighter than 700kg. So, it makes no sense to pull 720 weight class as it is not a spectacle and not attractive for the media too.

**On a vote this proposal PASSED. 13 in favor, 6 against and 0 abstention.**

Note from TWIF Exco: It will not be possible to implement this in the future TWIF event that has already been contracted. So this change will not be applicable to the Outdoor events in Ireland (EOC 2019) or Basque Country (WOC 2020) or Netherlands (EOC 2021).

10. Proposed by Switzerland

Seconded: Germany

That the following weight classes be pulled in Switzerland WOC 2022:

700kg man senior U19 man junior

640kg man senior U23 man junior

580kg man senior U23 women junior

580kg mixed 520 women senior.

**On a vote this proposal FAILED. 2 in favor, 15 against and 2 abstentions.**

11. Proposed by Scotland

Seconded: Belgium.

That in future Indoor and Outdoor Championships the Mixed weight should never be put together with the heaviest weight on the programme.

**On a vote this proposal PASSED. 9 in favor, 6 against and 4 abstentions.**

12. Proposed by Scotland

Seconded: Wales

That we change Weighing in procedure for all future Championships as follows. Each team will be required to weigh in as a team on the day of the competition only for the weights that they are competing on that day. Weigh in maximum 2 hrs. prior to the commencement of the weight that they are competing in.

Example: If a competition starts at 10am weigh in will be open at 6 till 8am.

Reason. We have a duty of care to every puller that competes at Tug of War. At present we weigh individuals on a Wednesday, and we have currently pullers who are dropping between 8kg & 10kg prior to a Weigh in. This is bordering on a serious loss of weight at 10% of body mass.

**On a vote this proposal FAILED. 4 in favor, 14 against and 1 abstention.**

Note for TWIF Exco: This issue is a very high priority given the health risk to the athletes in cases of severe dehydration . A number of spot checks wrt weight gain has been done at TWIF events in recent years to gather data on this issue. It was also agreed with the Deusto University that in-depth research will be done at both the EOC in Ireland and the WOC in Basque Country to develop a non-intrusive method and benchmarks relating to hydration status at weigh-in. More information will be provided in due course.

13. Proposed by England

Seconded: No seconder.

That Rule 8.4.2 Indoor Shoes be amended to standardise the Indoor Pulling Shoes.

Reason:

There are now two main indoor shoe manufacturers: Asics and TOWS. Both are readily available on the internet. By standardising the indoor shoe, it will make it fair and competitive to all teams.

The current ruling of constructing a sole to give optimum grip has now been abused. Teams are using rubber material soles that can give way and deposit rubber onto the pulling surface (mat). The construction and make-up of the soles is becoming

ridiculous and an ever-increasing expense. We propose the above shoes are adopted as standard shoes.

**This proposal was not seconded**

## **Questions**

### **1. Netherlands: Request regarding the last congress:**

During the congress in April 2018 there were mention made of a lower fee for organizing a World or European Championship. Is there any progress about this issue?

Answer: the President informed the members that the fees already have been reduced in 2011. 15.000 for WC, 12.000 for EC and 6.000 for WC indoor. The Netherlands have put forward a proposal in 2017 at congress, but this was not seconded. The fees for Championships are not the issue, it is the price of accommodation and travel.

### **2. Netherlands Request regarding the World Games:**

When can we get a clarification of the number of pullers of each country for the next World Games? There is a possibility that there will be three different teams who will qualify themselves during the WOC 2020 for the Mix580, Men 640 and Women 540. If this will happen, the maximum of 22 pullers is not sufficient.

Answer: The amount of pullers per country will be known after WC 2020 and decisions can be made then.

## **Election of TWIF ExCo (D)**

### **Nominations for TWIF ExCo**

#### **President:**

Anton Rabe (South Africa)

Nominated by Netherlands, Sweden, England & Basque Country

#### **Vice President:**

Ralf Bräuninger (Germany)

Nominated by Sweden & Germany

Jost Waser (Switzerland)

Nominated by Netherlands, Switzerland, England & Basque Country

#### **Secretary General:**

Maike Hornstra (Netherlands)

Nominated by Netherlands, Sweden, England, Switzerland & Basque Country

## **Minutes (summary) of seminar Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

### **(WADA compliance requirements/NF roles & responsibilities/Athletes – Pete Dyer**

Pete Dyer gave the members a presentation about the WADA and all the changes in the whole WADA administration. All the information is attached in the Powerpoint presentation which is part of the minutes.

Some important issues:

- In 2021 TWIF has to be WADA proof;
- Probably a WADA information stand on TWIF events;
- The World Games pullers in the RTP, 3x Year doping control;
- Working together more closely with National Federations and National Anti-Doping Organisations;
- Working on a 4 year cycle from World Games to World Games;
- Education Portal, via elearning agreement with the WADA policy;
- Athletes Chargers, which has already been send to the Representatives, will be active by the end of 2019.

### **Privacy policy – Anton Rabe**

Anton Rabe gave the members information about the Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

All the members have to give permission to TWIF for adding information on the TWIF website.

All these documents will be send out to the members to sign. These items are not part of the minutes but are send out separate with an information letter with the documents.

### **World Games 2021, Birmingham, Alabama, USA**

Glen Johnson is the Technical Delegate for TWIF for the World Games 2021. Glen Johnson gave the members a presentation about the rooms in the Universities in Birmingham. There will be sleeping two per room in single beds. Maybe there will be rebuild old buildings for supporters to stay. There will be room for 66 Athletes/coaches in the W540, 66 in the M640 and 44 in the Mix580.

There will be a jetlag day for teams traveling from outside North America.

Training will be on July 21, 640 on July 22, 540 on July 23 and Mix on July 24.

### **Presentations by those countries tendering for future Championships.**

The countries that have tendered for future Championships, gave a presentation on their bids:

WC indoor 2022: Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Sweden.

EC outdoor 2023: England has withdrawn the tender.

WC indoor 2024: no tender received.

WC outdoor 2024: Germany, Sweden and China. England has withdrawn the tender.

Ireland, the Netherlands and Basque Country have given reports on their future Championships.

Ireland will use sissel ropes during EC/WC outdoor 2019 and WC indoor 2020.

We discussed the fact to give countries that did not win the vote on the Championships tenders at this congress, to give the opportunity to tender for the Open spaces in Championships, like the EC 2023, WC indoor 2024 and EC 2025, but did not agree on this after objection of the members present at TWIF congress. They can tender again for next year's congress.

It is possible to tender 6 year's ahead.