

Annual TWIF Seminar
& Congress
21 & 22 APRIL 2023

Mannheim, Germany



PROGRAMME: 21 & 22 APRIL 2023

Friday, 21 April - Seminar

Time: 9.00 am – 12:30pm

Anton Rabe welcomed all the attendees in person and hybrid to the seminar & congress. The mayor of Mannheim, Ralf Eisenhauer is welcoming us on behalf of the city and is very pleased that the WC outdoor 2024 is in the city. Anton thanks the hosts of the seminar & congress, so far everything is organized very well.

1. Continental Federations(CF)/Regional Structures(RS) – Anton Rabe(AR)

AR is leading the discussion about the subject. A Working Group(WG) has been formed and discussed how to continue with the CF/RS. A report and majority recommendations have been drafted and distributed to members.

AR explained that it took some time to get a WG convened as interest from members and the individuals that was approached were lacking. The concept of CF/RS is not new and common in many sports and mainly used for regional qualification for global events. In TWIF RS already exist in Africa, Asia, the UK and Europe. Everybody agrees that development at all levels of the sport, but especially on grass roots, informal and youth, are required. The question is how this objective is to be reached. The main concerns with formal CF/RS in a TWIF context are duplication, extra costs and complexity of structures. TWIF also "owns" the European Championships which has been allocated up to 2027.

It was reconfirmed that the TWIF constitution and Congress remains the highest governance/decision-making for TOW globally. TWIF is also the only party to liaise/affiliate with IOC/ARISF/IWGA and WADA. It is proposed to create a development commission, like the TAC/PR, to coordinate the development of tug of war globally. If approved, a formal Terms of Referents (ToR) will be set up to guide activities. Such a commission will be established during congress 2024.

Question from Netherlands: Will it be possible to organize EC after 2027 on another basis? It is accepted that this question can be discussed in future meetings.

Ralf Bräuninger mentioned that the ETWF has not yet the capacity to organize EC. He also stress that development of the sport is required in all parts of the world and that it cannot only be a TWIF Exco duty. Regionally it should be easier to organize seminars and courses instead of under the umbrella of TWIF. AR mentions that Exco utilise the services of various individuals and that it is not only Exco members who deal with courses and seminars. TWIF plays a coordinating role and the Sec General is informed by the regional structures of all activities.

Hari Gupta of India informs us about the Asian Federation, which is not acting on the same level. There are also some ideas in Asia, also working with UAE.

It was concluded that all initiatives to develop the sport worldwide at all levels need to be supported, but that formal structures are not required at this stage. It was agreed that a Development Commission be constituted at Congress 2024 with the task of coordinating and guiding development within a global context.;

2. **WADA/Anti-doping** – Pete Dyer (PD)

PD stated that some WADA information, as conveyed during briefings at recent TWIF championships (ie. Holten and Parkgate), is a requirement from WADA. Exco believe that it is equally important that Representatives are also fully informed about this important subject, hence the reason for having this topic on the agenda of the seminar.

All NF's have to inform PD about the anti-doping program in their Federation. This is requirement of WADA. PD also indicated that TWIF will accept TUE's that has been issued and accepted by NADO's. Otherwise a TUE is only accepted by the ITA (International Testing Agency). ITA will confirm/approve the TUE and if not, the TUE is not accepted for a TWIF event and the athlete could be in trouble when a test will be done. An athlete is always responsible for any banned substance found in his/her system.

TWIF is doing 2 types of testing, namely in competition testing at EC/WC indoor & outdoor., and out of competition testing (OOCT). Athletes will also be selected for the TWIF testing pool and included in ADAMS.

An anti-doping rule violation by one athlete will lead to disqualification of the whole team and the ranking/results will be adjusted.

Whistle blowing: If someone notices breach of the anti-doping rules, that person can report this via a link on the TWIF website. This goes to the ITA and TWIF Exco has no access to it, so it completely confidential.

Education: Education is a very important part of WADA to inform athletes and coaches to better understand the anti-doping rules and sanctions. Athletes at the World Games 2022 have done the education before participating. However, TWIF and NF's must to more wrt education and testing. TWIF will mandate all member countries to develop and implement an anti-doping program.

The TWIF website has now been updated with all anti-doping information.

Question from England: Is there an age limit for anti-doping violations?

Answer: No, all athletes can be tested. WADA require that more tests should be done on juniors as well. Also, they require TWIF to send in more information from the member countries. Therefore, it is vital that information is included in annual year reports on order for TWIF to fulfil all the requirements of WADA.

Question from Germany: Is education information available online for all athletes, because the information may not reach them via the representatives?

Answer: Yes, information is available online. It is not a long program, but short and informative on this difficult subject.

Question from Poland: Is a program available for all members so every country has the same (online) education.

Answer: Yes, generic information is available, but countries need to negotiate with their NADO's in order to provide education in their own language.

Question from Netherlands: Can TUE's for national/international events also be done by NF's?

Answer: Yes, it could be that the NADO is doing random testing, so a TUE should always be recognized by the NADO to be safe.

3. **Workshop/discussion format future weight classes outdoor & indoor after World Games Chengdu** – Jost Waser (JW)

JW informed the attendees about a research he has done about team weights in different weight classes since 2015. Some discussions also went on in the TAC on this subject.

Especially the Women 540kg do not reach the weight and teams are mostly lighter. The same trend is seen with the Men 680kg. In Sursee, JW wishes to organize a workshop about team weights in the different weight classes but he needs input from the members to have a successful discussion.

He indicated that since the age of a junior has been decreased to participate in a senior weight class at the age of 16, a lot of juniors and U23's now pull in the senior weight classes. The result is less participation in the Junior/U23 weight classes which is not a good development. An idea may be to create one weight class for youngsters in which they can develop but the options can be discussed in Sursee. Input from all the members is very welcome. It is for the future of Tug of War.

Piotr asked if we have checked in other sports with youth weight classes. This can be part of the discussion in Sursee.

Anton Botha speaks about the gap between the youth and senior while they leave high school and how to ensure that this transition run smoothly from youth to seniors.

Our youth is our future, so we have to take care of that very much!! The youth is growing in competition, so they need a platform to compete at the highest level as well.

Ralf Bräuninger stated that it is a good idea to bring in the youth in the EC/WC, but some are still too young to compete at that level. During EC/WC we should rather focus on the senior weight classes to showcase our sport at the highest level. For youth probably the GENSB is better to perform their showcase in a cheaper format.

Agreed that JW will organize a workshop as indicated earlier in Sursee during the WC. There is no haste in making decisions, as TWIF works in 4 years cycles

aligned with the World Games. Solution and changes are therefore required for the 4 year period towards World Games 2029 after World Games 2025.

4. Transgender Policy(TG) – Anton Rabe(AR) (See attachment D)

A draft policy on a TWIF Transgender Policy has been included in the congress pack. AR indicated that this is a complex, technical, scientific and emotional subject and that TWIF has been advised to progress slowly given developments in this regard virtually daily. In many sports the first steps towards a formal policy has not even begun. This is therefore a process and not something to rush.

He indicated that TWIF was confronted with this issue during the last two Championships with transgender athletes that wanted to compete. Given the complexity and limited experience, TWIF asked for some guidance from IOC and have now developed the draft policy for discussion and approval. The interim policy is proposed to provide structure and guidance to Exco on how to deal with TG matters for the period towards World Games 2025. The document and procedure can then be amended further.

AR explained that the IOC has 10 guiding principles on this matter which was used to develop the document. It must be accepted that this will be a moving target in the TG field of science.

To start, 4 categories is proposed: 1) a trans-male athlete, 2) a trans-female athlete, 3) a transgender athlete and 4) a transgender female athlete. This policy is only applicable to TWIF level events, not national or recreational level, but organisers may use these guidelines and can decide themselves on how to deal with the matter.

Transgender athletes must apply for participation not later than 2 months prior to a TWIF event to the Secretary General. Exco will treat request confidentially.

It was agreed that the proposed TG will be formally voted on during Congress.

5. Evaluation report on World Games & World Outdoor Championships 2022 –

Maaïke Hornstra (MH) provided an update on the feedback, facts & numbers during the World Games (WG) in Birmingham. Tug of War was well received by the media, VIP's and IWGA officials. Also, a lot of spectators attended the TWIF events.

MH also gave an update about the WG in Chengdu. Tug of War is most likely on the program in Chengdu for men 640, women 540 and mix 580 (all outdoor as requested by the organisers and IWGA) but formal voting on the programme will only take place at the AGM of the IWGA in Madrid in the first week of May 2023. It should also be noted that the IWGA wants a broad global representation at the WG. Therefore the qualification criteria may have to be amended.

Anton Botha requested clarity on number of participants for WG25 and whether it could be an option to instead of 6 teams of 8 members each per weight class, to go to 8 teams with 6 members per team. This will provide broader participation. This is an out of the box idea which could be considered for the future, but would not be possible for WG25.

MH also provided feedback on the evaluation of Outdoor WC22 in Holten and the Indoor WC23 in Parkgate. Responses were split between feedback from teams/countries and those from officials given the large gap between the ratings. Overall the ratings were average for Holten and very good for Parkgate where the organisers managed to put on a good event in a short period of time.. MH will send the reports and comments to the organizers soon.

6. Progress reports/Update on events awarded (about 5 minutes each):

6.1 WOC '23 – Sursee, Switzerland

Pirmin Steinman gave an update on the WC 2023. Start of the program every morning will be 9.00 am afternoon 13.00 pm. A flower ceremony will follow after the morning/afternoon program on the field, with the medal ceremony every evening after dinner at the Campus Sursee at 21:00 pm. The package includes 5 nights, but extra nights can be added, in budget, standard or premium rooms. There will be shuttle transport between hotels and Campus competition field. Budget category is outside the Campus. Standard is at the Campus or close to the field. Accreditation is 125 CHF if people book outside the package.

Anton Botha raises the issues about the price of the package which differs from that which was originally indicated when Sursee tendered for the event. Given the exchange rate, this is extremely expensive for South African participants. Pullers literally have to save a whole year to attend the WC 2023. It is vital that TWIF events to be inclusive instead of exclusive.

After discussion, it was accepted that inflation plays a role, but that organisers should be sensitive to costs. It was agreed that the organisers will be approached to consider a reduction in the costs at least for the youth. The issue of transport for teams staying off campus and related difficulty to attend medal ceremonies in the evening also need to be addressed.

6.2 WIC '24 – Helsingborg, Sweden

Lars Lindh gave a verbal update on the WC indoor. Package prices still need to be confirmed but costs will be around € 650. To be confirmed during the WC outdoor in Sursee.

6.3 WOC '24 – Mannheim, Germany

Ralf Bräuninger and Thomas Kaltenbach gave an update on the WC outdoor 2024. Arrival to Mannheim by plane into Frankfurt airport and then train/bus/car to Mannheim. Train is also easy to reach Mannheim from elsewhere in Europe. About 320.000 inhabitants in Mannheim with a lot of hotel beds, sightseeing and historical city. Hotels for the Championships will be in the city center. Dorint Hotel will be the officials headquarter hotel. Public transport will be used between hotel and the competition field. This will be included in the accommodation package. Prices of the packages will follow after the WC in Sursee.

During the afternoon, visits to hotels & competition arena for WOC 2024 will take place.

AGENDA – CONGRESS: SATURDAY, 22 APRIL 2022

1. Opening address. By the President

Anton Rabe (AR) opened the Congress.

A moment of silent reflection is observed for tug of war people that passed away in the last year.

AR also invited those attending for the first time, to introduce themselves. He also confirmed that the NemoVote system will be used for voting.

Marga 't Lam will act as an observer to ensure independence and transparency in the process.

2. Roll call of the members. By the Secretary

Maaïke Hornstra (MH) do a roll call of attendees.

Members attending in person: Basque Country, Belgium, England, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei and USA.

Attending online: Canada, China, Greece, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania. Scotland and Wales.

Voting by proxy: France, Nigeria, Singapore.

3. Confirmation of Quorum and members in good standing. By the Treasurer

Dan McCarthy (DM) confirmed that 27 countries are members in good standing who have the right to vote online or by proxy vote. A simple voting majority of 50%+1, is therefore 15 (13,5 +1=14,5 =15).

4. Confirmation of the Minutes of Congress 2022 (hybrid meeting)

See attachment. Minutes have been sent out a few times, and again with the agenda. Belgium propose and Switzerland second the approval of the minutes. On a vote, 20 votes in favor, none against and no abstentions.

5. Matters arising not covered elsewhere

No matters arising that is not covered elsewhere.

6. Report covering the period since the last Congress. By the President

See Attachment (A)

The report is taken as read. AR highlighted a number of aspects contained in the report, which is slightly longer than in previous years. He express his concerns about some members and individuals who in recent years, are seemingly only interested in a private agenda rather than accepting that a global mind-set and approach is required in the interest of the sport globally.

Robust debate and critical questions is not a problem, but the way in which issues are dealt with by a small group is problematic and is undermining the TWIF "family" in general. He appealed to members to work towards that family feeling again.

Serving on the TWIF Exco is not a fun job, it is a lot of hard work, dedication and being away from home. In the 30 years AR has served the sport, it has grown from an amateur sports federation that now need to deal with an amateur

sport, with a professional mind-set, and strict governance, reporting and compliance requirements. Competitions are at a very high standard and tug of war and TWIF as an international federation is respected in the global sporting world and provide an excellent platform to continue to grow the sport at all levels. For this all members need to develop the sport at grass-roots, be inventive and adapt to changing times.

He thanked his fellow Exco members and TWIF officials at championships for their continued dedication and service to the sport.

On a vote, the report is accepted: 19 in favor, no abstentions, none against.

7. **Finance By the Treasurer / Financial report and Budget 2022/23/24**

7.1 Submission and vote on the balance sheets and accounts

The balance sheet and Income/Expenditure account was distributed prior to Congress. See attachment.

DM highlighted various items. He indicated that he was made aware of a difference in the balance sheet if compared with previous years. He agreed to check with the accountant and revert to members with an explanation. Members will then be requested to vote on any revisions within 60 days from date.

7.2 Approval of the budget (2023/24)

The proposed budget was also distributed prior to Congress. See attachment.

On a vote, the budget is accepted: 21 in favor, no abstentions and none against.

8. **Continental Federations: Report and plan for future** (Attachment C)

This matter was discussed the previous day during Seminar where it was proposed not to proceed with regional/continental structures, but that a Development Commission rather be created to look at development globally. No changes are therefore required to the TWIF constitution. If approved, a commission will be established with formal Terms of Reference at Congress 2024.

On a vote, the establishment of a Development Commission is approved: 19 in favor, 1 abstention and none against.

9. **Transgender Policy** (Attachment D)

This matter was also discussed and explained in depth during Seminar. This is very much work in progress and as indicated, need to be dealt with sensitively. If approved, the policy and guidelines, including definitions and eligibility as guided by the IOC framework, will provide a framework to deal with gender issues until after the WG '25

On a vote, the draft policy and procedure was approved: 20 in favor, 1 abstention and none against.

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

AR explained that TWIF operates with a strategic framework on 4 year cycles. The current plan has been developed for the period to congress 2024 after which a new policy will have to be proposed to members. The framework is based on 3 items: 1) Promotion of the sport, including coaching, training,

judges courses, magazine; 2) administration, governance, reports, events; 3) anti-doping and education on anti-doping and testing.

The Organizers Manual has also been updated. MH will send a copy to the organizing countries and put an electronic update on the website.

Another major project for the coming year, would be an update of the competition- and software program. The current program is outdated after 25 years and need a revision and update on a new platform with some functionalities that need to be added.

The same applies to the web-site which also need an upgrade, whilst policies such as the Transgender Policy, Safeguarding and protection of the Youth also need continuous revisions. In this process, the proverbial wheel should not be re-invented but we need to see what we can learn from other sports and even business processes. It was stressed that every country should have a policy for the protection of the youth and have a formally appointed safeguard officer.

11. **Reports by the Commissions:** See Attachments E, F & G

10.1 Anti-Doping Commission – Pete Dyer (PD) (Attachment E)

PD provided a detailed update on the current situation and challenges during seminar. The amount of testing has dropped and the request to members is to engage with their NADO's to do more testing, whilst education must be a very high priority of both TWIF and all members at country level. PD indicated that Birute Zacharine will continue to assist with ADAMS related matters. The report is noted.

10.2 Technical Athletes Commission – Jost Waser (JW) (Attachment F)

The report is taken as read. JW stresses that we need more recorders and judges for future TWIF events, to continue with a high standard level of TWIF officials. He therefor encourages members to nominate suitable candidates for TWIF courses. The report is noted.

10.3 PR Commission- Maaïke Hornstra (MH)(Attachment G)

The report is noted. MH gave an update on the activities within this commission, updates on Facebook and Instagram, and regular news letters. Katie Kruse is currently engaging with Matt Metzger of Canada on the TWIF YouTube Channel. Reports, articles and news is always welcome to add to the Newsletter/ Focus and members is encouraged to provide suitable material to MH. The report is noted.

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

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

12. **Affiliation of new members**

Azerbaijan: Elnur Shikhaliyev was invited to introduce his federation to the members. He indicated that they have support from their Ministry of Sport and have started development on Tug of War. A championships and educational webinars have been organized in 2022. They are in contact with the NOC and plan to organize an indoor and outdoor tournament during 2023. They have also formed a national team already. Azerbaijan is a sporting country and there is a good structure for sport competitions. The Federation has big plans for the future and the hope is to organize big championships in the country.

On a vote, Azerbaijan is accepted as a new member: 21 votes in favor, none

against and no abstentions.
Azerbaijan is welcomed as a new TWIF member.

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

AR explains to procedure that will be followed. If there is a seconder for a proposal, the proposer will be asked to discuss that item. After that the item will be opened for comments and debate after which it will be put forward for a vote. If an amendment is proposed, such an amendment will be voted on first. If there is no seconder, there will be no discussion on that proposal.

Proposal 1 and 5 related to the anchor vests, proposed by Exco and Netherlands is contradictory and will be dealt with in tandem.

A 50% plus 1 majority is required to approve any proposal. Any abstentions does not count to calculate the majority, so numbers may vary with every proposal. The majority required will be clearly indicated with every proposal to prevent any misunderstandings. In case of a tie, the President have casting vote.

14. **TWIF Championships: Past, others already dealt with during Seminar**

15. **Tenders for future Championships** (no new tenders received for future Championships)

No new tenders for future events, so no voting on that. It was noted that next year, tenders will be open for World Indoor 2028, European Outdoor 2029, Indoor and Outdoor World Championships 2030.

16. **Election TWIF Exco on the position of President, Vice President and Secretary General**

16.1 ***Nominations for President – Each nominee will be given 5 minutes to introduce themselves/See also CV's attached:***

1. Dan McCarthy: nominated by Singapore, Sweden, Latvia and South Africa;
2. Pete Dyer: nominated by England;
3. Jost Waser: nominated by Switzerland;
4. Ralf Bräuninger: nominated by Poland.

AR explained that should there not be a simple majority (50%+1), the candidate with the least number of votes in any round will fall out and that a next round of voting will follow with the remaining candidates. Votes takes place via Nemovote with Marga t'Lam as observer to provide independent oversight and verification.

Round 1: 24 votes: Ralf 4 votes, Pete 5 votes, Jost 7 votes, Dan 8 votes. Ralf therefore dropped out for round 2;

Round 2. 24 votes: Pete 5 votes, Dan 10, Jost 9 votes. Pete therefore dropped out for round 3;

Round 3: 24 votes: Dan 12 and Jost 12. AR request members to consider their votes carefully and ask for a 4th round. If still undecided, he will make a call;

Round 4: Dan and Jost both 12 votes. AR called the 2 candidates aside and

explained his rationale for giving his vote to Dan.

Dan McCarty will therefore be TWIF President for the next 4 years.

Dan continue to thanking those countries that nominated and voted for him. He also pledges that he will work for all members, also those that had not voted for him. He expresses sympathy for AR having been put in a very difficult position. He also thanks JW for his understanding. He states that WE all need to work together and deal with the future in the best way we can collectively.

16.2.1 **Secretary General (re-election):**

1. Maaïke Hornstra (MH): nominated by England, Italy and Sweden.
By acclamation, MH is elected for a new term. 21 in favor, none against and no abstentions.

16.2.2 **Vice President (re-election or election):**

1. Jost Waser (JW): nominated by Italy and Sweden and also by Switzerland if Jost Waser is not elected as President;
2. Dan McCarthy (DM): nominated by South Africa if Dan McCarthy is not elected as President.

Given that DM has been voted as President, voting were only required for JW.

By acclamation, JW is elected for a new term. 21 in favor, none against and no abstentions.

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

MH reads a letter on behalf of Lilita Mikuna from Latvia on her retirement as TWIF representative. Lilita attending online, thanks everyone as well. A copy of the letter will be sent to the member countries.

Mister Gupta wishes success to DM and thanks AR for his contribution to the sport over many years. He thanks AR specifically for what he has done for the sport in India. He proposes that AR stays on as a 6th person for the Exco. AR explains that this is not possible in terms of the TWIF Constitution and that he will not disappear overnight. He is only a phone call or email away should Exco or others' require his advice or inputs.

18. **Future meetings**

Congress 2024 will be in Nottingham, England. Dates and venue will be confirmed in due course.

19. **Closing by the President**

At 13.00 AR close the Congress, thanks the hosts for looking after us very well and again expressed that it was a huge privilege to have served TWIF. He wishes DM and the rest of the Exco and all members all of the best with the future.

Attachment A:

TWIF PRESIDENT'S REPORT – APRIL 2023

This is my 7th and last report as TWIF's President.

It has been an extreme honour and privilege to have served TWIF over a period of 27 years. I have mostly enjoyed this service and were blessed with working and meeting extraordinary people over this period. I, and sometimes my wife and children, managed to visit many unique places and venues globally.

For this I will be eternally grateful, but, there is a time to come and a time to go. For me, the time has come to go.

I will certainly miss many individuals whom I have developed a personal relationship with, many whom I regard as friends. Many of you have welcomed us into your homes. Many more have visited our home too. Most of you are welcome to continue do so in the future - we do have excellent beverages, food and hospitality where I come from. And we enjoy sharing this with friends and those that may still become friends!

Over this period, I have experienced the transition of an amateur sport having to cope and adapt to professional administration, governance, oversight and compliance issues. Basically, an amateur sport having to be administered and managed like a professional sport and with participation and training based on science and very hard work and dedication to ensure performance akin to professional sportsmen and women.

At its very core, tug of war is a simple and basic sport, but the level of performance, dedication and training required to excel and compete at an international level, is very hard work. It is heartening to have witnessed the professional and scientific approach which has enhanced the level of competition and performance over the years.

This is both a blessing and a challenge for the development of our sport as the gap in the performance of various members have broadened over time. Only about 10-12 countries have a meaningful chance to win medals at TWIF level. This will need to change and imply not only hard work, but also thing and doing differently.

So, although we can all be extremely proud, these challenges will not get less. In fact, it will become even more and more complex and more and more technical and time consuming.

Unfortunately, it seems as if we have lost some of our heart and soul over the past

few years. Yes, the Covid challenges has probably changed all of us in some form or other, but it seems to me as the respect, integrity and the spirit we used to engage with each other, has somehow been lost.

It feels (hopefully just a perception) that especially the Exco is regarded (at least by some?) as the *enemy* and that somehow every decision and action taken, is being experienced as being sinister or deliberately trying to undermine some individuals or groups.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I can assure you that healthy, robust and meaningful discussions with different options, including fairness, integrity and insight into the core and values of our sport remain the foundation of decision making. We always try to balance global needs and interests in our decisions.

Off course we will make, and have made, mistakes. Healthy debate and challenging decisions are welcomed, but the way in which this is done must pass the test of rationality, fairness, objectivity and transparency.

Engagement must be in good faith, with mutual respect, dignity and in the spirit of sportsmanship which remain at the very core of our sport. Unfortunately, I now sense something of a dis-respect, an arrogance, an entitlement, even sarcasm and down-right bad behaviour and bad manners in some instances.

How and why did this happen?

Your Exco is elected by *you* based on their experience, insight and knowledge of the sport and their proven leadership not only in their home country, but internationally. This Exco, as individuals and as a collective, does not suddenly become something or somebody different and the proverbial “enemy number 1”.

They remain individuals who merely interpret and implement the decisions of members. Sometimes such actions do not suit everybody, but is decided and done with the best global interests of our sport in mind.

In global sports, I believe tug of war boxes above its weight class. We are respected with in umbrella sporting bodies and are one of the consistent performers on the World Games program. Over the years we have been innovative with excellent amendments and additions to our rules which materially augments our sport.

We need to duplicate our successes and eliminate our mistakes and failures by balancing continued performance and development in new and innovative ways. Fact of the matter is that each of us has started somewhere at grass roots level. Someone, somewhere have taken the trouble and invested their time and energy to develop each one of us. To provide us with the opportunities and exposure to be where we are in life – be that in our communities, in our work, or in our sport.

It is therefore my and your responsibility to invest in new entrants and to plough back

in the sport to support and develop the next generations. None of us are too important not to do so.

In this process, there is not a one size fits or silver bullets and quick fix type solutions. Horses for courses and thinking and doing out of the box. Not blindly duplicating others' and driving fit for purposes program at various levels.

Yes, we also need to learn from other sports and even from the commercial arena and then apply what works for us in a common sense and logical manner. Not for the sake of a hidden or private agenda as that will explode dramatically in time.

Within TWIF we have always allowed space for each other. Serving with humbleness and respecting others' views, expectations and ambitions has always been at the core of our sport. In my experience this sport always give you what you deserve and that cannot be at the expense of someone else!

Somehow, we need to get our soul and ethos back and start pulling in the same direction.

As indicated, we cannot only compete at an apex or TWIF level. More than ever before, we need to provide room for development and entry into our sport at recreational and developmental level. Amongst others, more informal and fun, bare feet and beach events, less strict rules and experimentation with less pullers a side are required.

We live in a world where participants, spectators and a very demanding media and sponsors, require instant gratification and quick results. Yes, this is a different environment than 20-30 years ago, and we need to be pro-active to prepare for the next 20-30 years. We therefor still need the traditional international events, but broadening the participation base in innovative and less formal ways, are equally extremely important otherwise the TWIF level will become extinct.

On this objective I am sure we can all agree. The way in which we approach and how we make it happen is clearly different. We need to adapt and allow new ideas and initiatives or we will become irrelevant. However, we need to do so selflessly, humbly and with respect for each other in order to pass something meaningful on to future generations.

The requirements, especially those in the anti-doping/WADA space will not get less given the "one size fits all" mindset of regulators. Sustainability and challenges relating to climate change, the safeguarding of minors, and gender related issues will complicate matters and clear policies, procedures, mechanisms and capacities need to be put in place to ensure these matters are dealt with pro-actively.

TWIF will require more and more competent, dedicated and serving individuals who all have their "day jobs" to deal with as well. People who willingly spend their spare time and energy for the good of our sport because that is who and what they are.

They certainly don't deserve to be treated as the enemy, be abused and be undermined.

TWIF will certainly need more capacity and expertise going forward. At least some of that would probably have to be contracted or in-sourced from commercial 3rd party service providers, but at its very core TWIF need a membership that proverbially all pull in the same direction with an Exco, international reps, national executive boards and officials having a similar serving mindset.

If we fail do so both as individuals and a collective, we will fail future generations.

Serving on TWIF's Exco and the various Commissions is not a popularity contest trying to appease and please everybody. It is impossible and in fact, it is all about being accountable, being objective, rational and fair to ensure transparency and clear logic in decision making in order to guide the development, administration and governance of tug of war within a global context.

So, when you elect, appoint or nominate officials for Exco and the various Commissions, make sure of their credentials, their track record and experience, expertise, character and intent. Choose wisely, hold them accountable and responsible, ask the difficult questions, demand transparent, objective, fair, rational and clear decisions.

But also treat them with respect and be thankful for the many hours and energy they willingly spending to the benefit of the sport. Thank them, don't bash them.

If I am over-sensitive or have offended anybody, my unreserved apology. That is and was never my intention, but I will not leave what need to be said unsaid, nor allow my successor to be undermined or be given a proverbial hospital pass.

With that, let me get to what an annual report should actually deal with – the activities and reporting on the work of TWIF over the past year.

The highlight of the past year was no doubt the very successful participation at the 2022 World Games showcasing our sport at the highest level. The participants displayed great skill and competed at a very high level. My thanks again to the athletes, coaches, supporters and TWIF officials who participated at great cost, sacrifice and personal effort. You did us proud.

It did not go unseen. Tug of War (again) received a very good rating in the independent evaluation of the event on all the matters and elements of the competition that were under our control. Some aspects around the event did not all work out as was promised, but we will (again) learn from these for future events.

It has already been confirmed that tug of war will be on the WG program in 3 weight classes at the 2025 WG in Chengdu, China. The specific weight classes, disciplines and participation numbers for the event still need to be finalised with a number of

factors that need to be taken into account. This will be done in a rationally and objective manner taking the global context and IWGA directives such as the global representativity and footprint, gender, performance and fairness into account.

We expect further feedback and information towards end March 2023 so we should be able to discuss and agree this further at Congress.

We also had a successful, and albeit somewhat challenging World Outdoor Championship given the ground and weather conditions and some technical glitches, in Holten, Netherlands. Some key learnings have materialised from the evaluation of the event which will be taken into account going forward. The introduction of a Competition Manager is proving to be a step in the right direction, but then all officials and organizers need to do their bit. We cannot afford to keep on repeating the same mistakes, in some cases by individuals who don't want to adapt and embrace new thinking and approaches.

I wish to once again express my thanks and gratitude to the Netherlands and the organizing committee. You were great hosts and did a great job under difficult conditions.

At the time of writing this report, the 2023 World Indoor Championship in Belfast, Northern Ireland, have not been held. The main reason for arranging this event is to bridge the gap between 2020 and the cancelled 2022 event in Singapore with a further effort in the Netherlands which also had to be cancelled due to continued Covid-19 challenges.

I wish to thank all the countries, participants, officials and organizers, especially also the host country, Northern Ireland, and Aukje van Raaij, who closely worked with Exco, to make this a reality. Unfortunately entries in the youth classes were lacking, but most of the senior men, women and mixed classes will no doubt again lead to an excellent event.

In the past year, TWIF Exco and Commissions, managed to also meet in person rather than just virtually, with many engagements and communication via e-mail, WhatsApp and Zoom/Teams.

This included a working group looking at a more formal role within TWIF of possible continental structures as was agreed at the previous Congress. It was a struggle to get individuals to participate in the WG, but the process was concluded in my view openly and objectively. A separate report covers the recommendations and proposed way forward flowing from this engagement and will also be a topic for in-depth discussion during seminar. Again, there are no one size fits all and the needs and requirements of different regions require flexible solutions.

TWIF also continued its participation in the various multi-sport entities (Sport Accord, GAISF, ARISF and IWGA) it is affiliated to, as well as reporting to amongst others the

IOC. This included a special general meeting relating to the dissolution of GAISF and collapsing of its functions within a “new” Sport Accord with future indirect membership of sporting bodies via the IOC (summer and winter sports), ARISF and AIMS. TWIF Exco have expressed various concerns (as was also forthcoming from other sporting codes) with this development as there remain a number of grey areas for which we still await clarity on. This includes future multi- sports events, funding and continued democratic global sport decision making going forward.

Various other items dealt with by the Exco and/or Commissions, including finances and related annual reports, compliance matters, technical issues, anti-doping and PR/Communication are included in the Congress agenda and will be expanded on during Congress or dealt with during the planned seminar.

In conclusion, I wish to once again express my personal appreciation to all officials at all levels of our sport, be it at club, national or international level. Without your dedication and commitment, TWIF would not be able to operate or even exist. My sincere thanks also to the members of the various Commissions, our ICT support and DCO for their respective contributions

I also wish to specifically thank the various Chief Officials at our TWIF events, Marga 't Lam as Secretary of the TAC, Bruce Schuman (ICT) and Glen Johnson (Technical Delegate for WG'22) for their hard work and dedication.

My thanks and appreciation also to my fellow Exco members for their continued support, dedication, insight and in-depth knowledge of our sport. Their wisdom, guidance and hard work during this past year is priceless and can never be over-estimated. I for one don't take this for granted and will remain eternally grateful for this support.

This being my last report, it would be re-mis of me to not also thank my wife, Murette, and our children, Anke and Dieter, for their support and sacrifices over the past 27 years. Dieter was not even a year old when this TWIF-journey started. Now my grand-daughter is about that age!

They did sometimes accompany me on trips, but they mostly allowed me to spend many days and weeks away from home. Without that support, and also without the Grace and Blessings of my Lord God, this would not have been possible. Also, my employer was very

accommodating and flexible for me to be able structure my tug of war commitments with the requirements of my job. I am truly thankful and grateful.

I will always cherish the relationships I was privileged and blessed to have experienced over virtually a life time of serving the sport at various levels. I have really seen and experienced it all – as a puller, as a judge, as a coach and as an administrator.

Thank you for me entrusting me with this responsibility and the opportunity to serve you over nearly 3 decades. I tried to contribute in a serving, humble, ethical, objective, professional, trustworthy, consistent and transparent manner.

I got so much more than what I could give. I have learnt so much from my predecessors and fellow Exco members over the years. I really trust that I managed to make a small contribution and that TWIF is in a better place than when I attended my 1st congress in 1993. Exactly 30 years ago. Effectively half of my life!

I wish my successor and the new Exco and the to be appointed Commissions all of the very best for the future and their term of duty. I will try to stay informed, and where required and asked for some advice or opinion will gladly do so, but I am sure you will manage quite well without me.

Lastly, I have many items on my bucket list which I hope I will be blessed and afforded the time and health to be able to tick off over the coming years. I am sure it will keep me out of mischief!

Bon Voyage & Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anton Rabe', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

ANTON RABE

TWIF PRESIDENT (February 2023)

Attachment B:

Financial report/Budget

Update on the financial reports to follow after agreement of the members.

Attachment C:

Report on Continental Federations/Structures
(Discussed during Seminar/Voted on during Congress)

Continental Development/Federations – Discussion document

Background

TWIF Congress 2022 agreed that Exco establish a Working Group (WG) to assess the merits and purpose of Continental Federations in a global tug of war context. This flowed from the establishment of a European Continental ToW Federation with their stated aim to develop the sport at grass roots level and to augment existing activities and initiatives.

Such an objective in itself is not an issue, but unfortunately consultation with TWIF Exco was totally lacking prior to the establishment of this body which led to unnecessary friction and even mis-understanding and dis-trust. After engagement, it was therefor agreed that the purpose and role of such regional bodies will be looked into in a global context and that further discussion will be held at Congress 2023. This includes an assessment of any possible impact on the TWIF Constitution. Such continental structures are not unique and many (mostly) professional sports, have such federations with the purpose of (mostly) running regional qualification events for world championships. Most sports however do not have such additional layers in their global governance structures which can potentially lead to duplication and confusion and prefer to keep things simple.

Process and Purpose

A formal Terms of Reference (ToR) was drafted for inputs from, and nomination of WG members, by the TWIF members. The response was mostly non-existent and lukewarm and given time zone limitations, Exco eventually agreed to appoint a small WG consisting of 2x Exco members, (Anton Rabe & Pete Dyer) 1x European (Lilita Mūkina) and 1x African representatives (Anton Botha).

The purpose of the WG was to:

1. To identify the purpose, objectives and key roles and responsibilities of Continental structures in the support to, and development of, the tug of war sport in such regions in context with the sport globally.
2. To consider and propose possible alternative ways to address the needs and requirements on a continental level, other than through a continental structure.
3. To guide and advise on any amendments and/or additions to the TWIF Constitution, specifically relating to CF's as sub-structures within the TWIF structure.
4. To develop and propose a framework and implementation plan to TWIF Congress relating to continental initiatives and to facilitate agreed actions in a logical and cohesive manner.

Responsibilities of WG

The following framework has been set for the WG:

1. Accountable to the TWIF Congress.

2. To develop, guide and provide strategic direction to the establishment of possible Continental Federations (CF's) and/or alternative structures to achieve a similar objective.
3. If required, develop a policy and implementation framework relating to:
 - Purpose
 - Objectives
 - Roles & Responsibilities;
 - Activities & Programmes
 - Governance & Voting rights
 - Membership and Finances
 - Structure and alignment with TWIF Constitution

Deliberations

The WG looked at how various other sporting bodies structure their sport, specifically relating to development. This included a look into the ETWF's Constitution, the Asian Tug of War Federation and the manner in which the UK/Ireland and the African development group engages and coordinates events and training initiatives.

From this it flowed that an informal grouping of interested stakeholders can quite easily and effectively coordinate and agree joint activities, including the organisation of regional events (including less formal and recreational type events such as barefoot and beach pulling) and the training of judges/recorders.

- In Africa for instance an informal forum exists in order to coordinate an annual African development event (pulling, training, coaching) rotated between various countries;
- In Asia, the Asian Federation (ATWF) coordinate events in the sub-continent, arrange and coordinate training with TWIF, and enhance communication amongst members. The major tug of war nations in the region (China, Chinese Taipei and Japan) are not participating in the ATWF;
- The UK/Ireland Commission is a formal arrangement without any structure or standing within the group of countries other than to agree arrangements for and rotation of the annual British & Irish Championship.

None of these structures have any formal standing in the TWIF hierarchy, are not recognized in terms of the TWIF Constitution and play no formal role in decision making and/or representation. They do maintain engagement and exchange of information with the TWIF Secretary General as and when required.

- The ETWF has a formal Constitution with members, including TWIF members but not all European based members, with the following vision, mission and objectives:
 - a. To promote and administer the Tug of War sport in Europe.
 - b. To act as an independent structure
 - c. To organize and license tournaments for different target groups and non-traditional nations.
 - d. Training of coaches, judges and recorders

- e. Support to members.

The following concerns need to be expressed in this regard:

1. Any regional structure need to have some link (informal is good enough with regular information and communication with the TWIF Secretary General) with TWIF and cannot act totally “independently”.
2. The ETWF does not have membership of all the current European TWIF members.
3. The European Championships (Outdoor) is a bi-annual TWIF owned and licensed event as per the TWIF events schedule – events have been allocated to host countries up to 2027.

It was concluded (majority) that:

1. It is not required to have a formal regional structure to achieve the objectives as indicated above – such needs and objectives can be achieved via other and less formal means.
2. It is not required to formally integrate such platforms into TWIF relating to governance and voting rights or to create a new category of membership – so no changes to TWIF Constitution.
3. Additional membership fees and lack of coordination with TWIF could lead to a waste of limited resources (funds and human capacity) and duplication of effort.
4. Possible confusion as to mandate, purpose and role, also at an IOC, ARISF, IWGA and WADA level, would be harmful to the TWIF standing and brand internationally.
5. It remains the prerogative of any group of countries/members to initiate or create formal/less formal structures of platforms to deal with their respective needs with preferably a good line of communication with TWIF’s Secretary General as to their initiatives and activities.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that the following matters be further discussed and agreed at the 2023 TWIF seminar/congress:

- Re-confirmed that TWIF Congress is and remain the highest governance and decision-making structure for tug of war globally.
- TWIF is the only representative body affiliated to IOC, ARISF, IWGA (including World Games) and WADA.
- TWIF maintain the sole owner and Licensee of events currently owned and licensed by them as per the TWIF events schedule and no other regional grouping or body shall organise an event that may conflict with the TWIF events schedule.
- That regional groupings be acknowledged as coordinating platforms to focus on non-traditional development activities, events and training to augment TWIF's

developmental activities and programmes with potential new members and less formal events at grass roots level.

- That such groupings have no formal standing in and/or recognition from TWIF and that no changes is required to the TWIF Constitution.
- That consideration be given to create a "Development Commission" (Dev.Comm.) with continental representatives (in addition to the TAC, Anti-Doping and PR commissions) to advise Exco and Congress on developmental needs and priorities, as contained in a to be drafted formal Terms of Reference focussing on:
 - a. Act a coordinating platform to maximise the impact of new and non-traditional initiatives and potential new members in the respective regions;
 - b. Advise on various aspects relating to the development of the sport, including the following:
 - i. Recreational/Traditional events such as at community fairs, recreation, beach and bare foot pulling;
 - ii. Regional developmental events following less strict TWIF rules, ie four/six-a-side, more relaxed rules, and utilising basic equipment and accommodation to reduce costs;
 - iii. Augmenting the existing coaching, judging and recorder training courses.
 - iv. Utilisation/allocation of the TWIF budget available for development courses, youth and other events based on the policy and procedure that was put in place for this purpose.
- That if approved, members nominate suitable individuals to such a to be established Dev.Comm. as is the case for other Commissions for appointment by Exco as from 2024 for a 4 year term.

Attachment D:

Transgender Policy

(Discussed during seminar/Voted on during Congress)

TWIF TRANSGENDER POLICY & PROCEDURE (Draft for discussion at Congress 2023)

Note: This is a highly complex, technical, sensitive, emotive and dynamic arena with terminology and definitions continuously changing. This draft document will therefore be subject to further amendments given that experts in this field are still being consulted in the period leading up to the Congress mid-April 2023

Values Statement

The TWIF is committed to ensuring that the sport of tug of war continues to offer a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all athletes, regardless of their gender identity, cultural background, dis/ability status, nationality, or any other characteristic. The TWIF also recognizes the importance of fair and meaningful competition at the elite level of tug of war, particularly for women athletes, whose participation is integral to the success of our sport.

With these values in mind, the TWIF is aiming for an eligibility policy that strengthens our sport by valuing diversity, encouraging respect for each other, maintain the credibility and inclusion on a non-discrimination basis, ensure safe and fair competition, enhance dignity and fairness to all athletes and where no athlete has an unfair or disproportionate advantage over others.

Introduction

This policy and procedure will be used by TWIF and NF's to ensure a responsible approach to establish and implementing eligibility rules for organised international and national tug of war disciplines and events. More generally, it will ensure safe and fair competition in context of inclusion and non-discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sex variations.

Through this policy TWIF endeavours to:

1. Promote a fair and safe environment for all athletes;
2. Ensure consistent application of the principles underpinning this policy and eligibility criteria; and
3. Acknowledge the central role that the eligibility criteria play in ensuring fairness and consistency.

This policy and procedure clarify participation of transgender athletes undergoing hormonal treatment for gender transition based on a principled approach in order to ensure that participation is fair and safe and that athletes are not excluded on the basis of their transgender identity or sex variations.

IOC Framework of principles

This policy and procedure are underpinned by the 10 IOC principles confirming commitment to these principles, values and alignment with the IOC Framework.

These principles are:

- Inclusion
- Prevention of harm
- Non-discrimination
- Fairness
- No presumption of advantage
- Evidence-based approach
- Primacy of health and bodily autonomy
- Stakeholder-centred approach
- Right to privacy
- Periodic reviews

For more detail on these principles, please see Appendix A.

Process & Interim Policy

Given the ongoing debate, complexity and technical nature of transgender matters, including the development of legislation and related legal issues, TWIF will adopt an interim policy to allow time and an inclusive process to consider and inform further context and refinement of this policy and procedure.

For the 2 year period from April 2023 to April 2025, the eligibility of transgender athletes in elite international tug of war (competitions governed by the TWIF) will be subject to the regulations outlined below. In this interim period, the TWIF will undertake a longer-term, comprehensive process that assesses the needs of the sport with respect to providing an inclusive and fair environment for all athletes. This approach will aim to promote respect for the trans and gender diverse members of our sporting community, whilst also ensuring that competition at the international level of tug of war remains fair and meaningful.

The ultimate objective of the TWIF is a policy and procedure that provides reasonable accommodation for trans athletes that are evidence based and that allow athletes to participate in their preferred gender identity where possible.

Preliminary Definitions and Eligibility

A transgender person (often shortened to "trans") is someone whose gender differs from the sex category that they were assigned at birth. Sex variations refers to the wide range of natural variations that can occur in someone's sex characteristics. Such people may or may not identify with the term intersex.

The following definitions will be used to guide decisions on which category and discipline an athlete may be able to compete in:

- A. A trans male athlete is an individual with elevated testosterone levels who is undergoing treatment as part of their gender affirming care and should be distinguished from those that have chosen not to increase their testosterone levels as part of their preferred gender affirming care pathway. For TWIF competition purposes, such person may compete in a men's team, and is no longer eligible to compete in a women's team without changing that team status to a mixed team.
- B. A trans female athlete is an individual undergoing testosterone suppression as part of their gender affirming care. For TWIF competition purposes such person may continue to compete in a men's team but may not compete in a

women's team without changing it to a mixed team status until completing one calendar year of testosterone suppression treatment.

- C. Any transgender athlete who is not taking hormone treatment related to gender transition, may participate in the sex class in accordance with his or her assigned birth gender.
- D. A trans female athlete who is not taking hormone treatments related to gender transition may not compete in a women's team.

Athletes with sex variations

For avoidance of any doubt, the TWIF does not have any additional eligibility rules applying to athletes with sex variations.

Grassroots statement

Given the risk of imposing elite-level eligibility criteria on local/informal/recreational level competitions, these eligibility criteria will only apply to international competitions governed by TWIF to ensure development, inclusion and growing the sport consistent with the vision of Sport for All.

Procedure

Any athlete covered in the definitions above, must timeously, but not later than 2 months prior to a sanctioned TWIF event, apply for participation in the category they wish to compete in, i.e. men, women and/or mixed.

Applications/motivation, in writing and inclusive of adequate medical and related information, must be submitted on a confidential basis to the TWIF Executive Committee via the Secretary General at that time.

The TWIF Executive Committee will provide a ruling on the application within 4 weeks of the receipt of such application.

Any athlete or other affected stakeholders may raise concerns, or object or appeal any ruling, or lodge any grievance in terms of this policy connected to gender-based eligibility.

Adopted: TWIF Congress - April 2023

Attachment E:

Anti-Doping Commission Report

1. TUE's and prohibited list.

WADA have issued the **2023 LIST OF PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AND METHODS** which came into force on the 1st January. 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. Please ensure your athletes are aware of, and comply with, this latest prohibited list, which can be found on the TWIF website.

IMPORTANT – I have said all of this before, but it still seems to be a surprise when a TUE isn't granted due to a lack of information. Just because you were successful in the past IT DOES NOT mean you will be successful now.

TUE's should be applied for **PRIOR** to taking any medication – justification for using a prohibited substance is required based on medical evidence not just a Medical Practitioner's signature. We have published guidance on the TWIF website of the application process and also a typical checklist of what supporting evidence is required to accompany a TUE application. Further links to the WADA website are provided in the TUE Guidance. It isn't a taken that your TUE will be approved. **If you do not receive an approval certificate your TUE is NOT approved and is not valid.**

We have subcontracted the TUE approval process to the International Testing Agency (ITA) and if you receive correspondence from them asking for more information, you must respond. If this isn't responded to and the appropriate information provided then ITA's TUE panel are unable to consider your TUE and it will not be approved.

Just a reminder that TWIF have adopted a new email address for TUEs and other Anti-Doping correspondence which is specific for this purpose and more secure. The email address is anti-doping@thetwif.org Please send all TUE's and any other Anti-Doping correspondence to this email address.

You should also be aware that even if you are prescribed something by a medical practitioner, you must 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.

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.

2. World Games

Prior to the World Games, all athletes attending were mandated to complete the WADA ADEL International-Level Athlete education programme. This meant some 150 athletes have completed this education. We, TWIF., are being mandated by WADA that much more education of athletes and athlete support personnel is required (see later). TWIF undertook some 18 Out of Competition tests on athletes attending the World Games with a further 21 tests done in competition by the World Games themselves. I am pleased to report that all were negative

3. World Outdoor Championships 2022

During these championships in the Netherlands 8 tests were done, some at the weigh-in, some during the open club competition and some during the national closed competition. Athletes from the following countries were tested; Netherlands, South Africa, Basque Country, Chinese Taipei, and Switzerland.

I am pleased to say all tests were negative.

4. World Indoor Championships 2023

As you would expect, we will be conducting Anti-Doping tests at the World Indoor too.

5. Annual Reporting Forms.

At the time of compiling this report 24-member countries, had completed their reports. This is two less than this time last year which was already down on the previous year, and is very disappointing. Their reports show, that during 2022, 10 countries conducted Anti-Doping tests with a total of 57. This is an improvement on 2021, nevertheless we strongly encourage ALL national federations to consider undertaking Anti-Doping tests. All but one of these were negative, and the single positive was for recreational drugs, which are still prohibited even if they are legal in some countries.

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.

6. Code Compliance Questionnaire:

At the end of 2022 I had to complete a mandatory self-assessment against Compliance with the WADA Code, presenting evidence as necessary. This was a significant piece of work and in general we are OK. However, two main items came to the fore, the first is a significant challenge from WADA that we are not doing enough testing, either in competition or out of competition. The second being we have to do much more in the education of our athletes and athlete support personnel.

7. Whistle blowing

Anti-Doping and testing are intelligence led activities, and every athlete can assist in ensuring our sport is and remains a clean sport. If you have any suspicions or even substantive evidence of a breach of the TWIF Anti-Doping rules then you can, and should, report this, in confidence, to TWIF using the dedicated Anti-Doping Whistle-blowing platform called 'Reveal', which can be found on the TWIF website <https://tugofwar-twif.org/2022/08/22/reveal-informational-report/>

8. Education

As noted above, as part of the CCQ, WADA has identified that we, TWIF, and the National Federations are not doing sufficient as regards educating our athletes and support personnel. WADA mandate that TWIF must provide Education at ALL TWIF Events (Championships) as well as other Educational events. **In addition, TWIF have to mandate that ALL National Federations have, or will develop, and implement an Anti-Doping Education Programme.** I strongly advise National Federations to engage with your National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) (or similar), if you haven't already, to develop and assist with your education programme. Your athletes will be able to do much of this as E-Learning and examples of this can be found on the WADA Education platform ADEL <https://adel.wada-ama.org/learn>. Information about ADEL can be found on the WADA Website <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/what-we-do/education-and-training/adel>

Finally, I would like to thank Birute Zachariene, our TWIF Anti-Doping administrator, for her continued support.

Pete Dyer

Chairman of TWIF Anti-Doping Commission

February 2023

Attachment F:

Report Technical and Athletes Commission (TAC)

The Technical and Athletes Commission exists of the following members:

- Chairman: Mr. Jost Waser / ExCo
- Secretary: Mrs. Marga t'Lam / Netherlands
- Mrs. Rachel Lewis / England
- Mr. Galder Gobantes / Basque country
- Mrs. Jennie Andersson / Sweden
- Mr. Gavin Corden /England
- Mr. Ralf Bräuninger /Germany
- Mr. Vincent Chen/Chinese Taipei
- Mr. Matthias Arnouts / Belgium
- Mr. Bennie Geldenhuys / South Africa

After the years with COVID the world has slowly found its way back to normal life. The communication during the year was visual and after a long time again in person in Holten.

This year, technical support and training courses were in demand at various events. In Italy, Israel, USA, Netherlands, France and the Czech Republic.

Support in questions of setting up associations and material and training information are countries like Greece, Venezuela, Uzbekistan, UAE, Lebanon. Due to different policies and regulations, it is not easy to support the different interests of the requests.

Nevertheless, we are committed to help and support all enquiries and problems. In today's world of digitalization and communication, writing and replying is fast, but the different procedures in the governments and offices needs patience. Unfortunately, this is not always respected.

The anchor protection still is a topic of discuss. We agreed to work out a proper solution. Especially the added parts under the protection need attention. The resolution of it is to force the Judges to implement the given regulations of TWIF Rules Manual during competitions.

The implementation of the rules of anchor protection and the new belt guidelines still require more resources. Especially since some nations do not have the same strict rules for international tournaments like the European or World Championships do according to TWIF rules.

In the TAC, a working group is working together to develop support for members to train and mobilize more judges.

Items for the TAC to work on are the following:

- Anchor protection optimization and implementation of the rules in progress;
- Briefing on the current rules, pictures of mistakes, changes in the rules and get discussions between judges to get everyone on the same level. During the World Championships in Holten, rules were not applied properly. These situations will be analyzed in this regard and the members are requested to train their referees properly. Still in progress;
- No Pull system is implemented. Still need update for judges during the briefing; will use bullet points to refresh. Still in progress;
- Contact with potential members and technical support in various countries underway;
- Updating the TWIF Rules Manual ongoing procedure;
- **Something of great importance is to find new young judges and timekeepers for the international TWIF events. This is an important challenge for each nation to contribute.**

The last two years have left their mark on our society. The difficulty of isolation, renunciation and social behavior has left its mark, also, in our sport. We all need to focus more on the value of working together, arguing fairly, and shaking hands after necessary or unnecessary arguments, just as we do after a tough fight on the tournament field. We need to respect and appreciate both sides. We need the energy for the further development of our sport.

Next TAC meeting will be Sursee, Switzerland, in September 2023.

I would like to thank all TAC members for their great commitment and the time they have given and to the whole ExCo for the support and useful additions.

Jost Waser

Chairman TAC
TWIF Vice President

Attachment G:

Report Press and Publicity Commission

Current PR commission Members:

- Chairwoman Ms. Maaïke Hornstra/ ExCo
- Ms. Christine Yang/Chinese Taipei
- Mrs. Katie Kruse/United States
- Mr. Alan Knott/England
- Mr. Anton Botha/South Africa

In 2022 the PR commission had an active year with promoting Tug of War as best as we could. The start of the year 2022 was not a good one, as we had to say goodbye to our active PR member Shelby Richardson from USA. Although Shelby fought very hard, she could not win the battle against cancer. Shelby was always very supportive and helpful and she is missed by a lot of people worldwide. As PR committee we were happy that Katie Kruse from the USA is willing to take the empty space.

During the World Outdoor Championships in Holten we had a meeting with all the members. Alan Knott was attending online, the others were live at the meeting. It was the first time since a few years, that we could meet again and make plans for promoting our sport. We discussed what is important for the promotion and agreed that we will still send out (at least) three TWIF Newsletters per year with interesting subjects, but also a TWIF Monthly Focus 1 x 6 weeks (if reachable). So if your country or one of your athletes or officials have an idea for a subject, please inform the PR commission.

Especially the last TWIF Focus on the highlights of 2022 had a lot of input, so maybe a subject to repeat every year. Especially a lot of younger athletes were very proud of their first international performance and shared their experiences worldwide. Maybe they can inspire other young athletes to keep on training hard to come at that stage as well.

A bit disappointing in promoting our sport were the athletes competing at the World Games. Although I asked several times to send input for the promotion campaign of the International World Games Association, the result was very poor. I know everyone is busy training for the highest competition, but promoting yourself at this high level can be a benefit to promote your sport. Disappointing from the World Games Birmingham themselves was to cancel the meet&greet with athletes during a training session. Also planned interviews were cancelled. Overall Tug of War during the World Games had a good media coverage, what became even better when the golden Swiss Men's 640 kg team became athlete of the day.

TWIF still has not a new website, which would be a good step forward in our promotion, so this is a goal for 2023 as well. The TWIF archive website can still be found on www.itowstory.org but needs to be updated over the last years. Co Koren, former TWIF President, has developed and updated the website till a few years ago so there is some work to do. Any volunteer, please contact me.

We like to receive your input on every event or subject that can be interesting for

the TWIF Newsletter or TWIF Monthly Focus. Please share this with me with some pictures as well. Also if you share a message on Facebook, try to tag #TWIF as well, same on instagram, then it will have my attention as well.

Thank you in advance for your support to supply me with information and keep on promoting our beautiful sport as much and as often as you can.

Maike Hornstra

Chairwoman PR Commission
TWIF Secretary General

PROPOSALS/QUESTIONS FOR TWIF CONGRES 2023

Proposal 1 by TWIF Exco
and England

Seconded by: South Africa/Belgium

8.1.4 Protective clothing

This text will be below the revised protective clothing (belt) rule

The proposed amendment to the rule is shown in RED text

Anchor specific protective clothing

The protective clothing worn by the anchor shall not exceed a **maximum** thickness of 5 centimetres (**uncompressed**) ; it must always be worn under the sport **shirt/jerseyclothing** and placed between the rope and the body. No hooks, grooves or other constructions intended to lock the rope are allowed on any of the sports or protective clothing. **The lower part of the sport shirt/jersey, and any protective clothing that extends to that length, must be worn inside of the shorts i.e. from the waistband of the shorts. A protective belt (see above) may be worn over the sports shirt/jersey. There must be no loose part of the sports shirt/jersey or protective clothing below the belt that doesn't go inside of the shorts. No additional material may be added to the shorts.** Recommended Anchor vest (see page 45)

➤ ANCHOR'S POSITION

The end puller shall be called the Anchor. The rope shall pass alongside the body, diagonally across the back and over the opposite shoulder from rear to front. The remaining rope shall pass under the armpit in a backward and outward direction and the slack shall run free. The Anchor shall then grip the standing part of the rope by the ordinary grip; i.e. the palms of both hands facing up, with both arms extended forward. **The Anchor is allowed to keep the rope below the level of the protective beltelething and contact with the belt for safety considerations will not constitute a Lock.**

Reason:

It has become very apparent that anchors sports shirt/jersey has become longer and longer, along with the protective clothing. It is clear that the sports shirt/jersey, nor the protective clothing is required to offer protection below the waistband of the shorts. Currently the sports shirt/jersey and / or the protective clothing has been used more and more as a means of locking the rope rather than its intended purpose of providing protection to the athlete.

It is extremely difficult for the centre Judge to determine when this has become a lock and when it is not, especially with the wording in bold in rule 13. To remove this ambiguity and the subjective nature of this decision we consider it better to treat the cause and remove the 'object' that is being used, intentionally or unintentionally to lock the rope, while still maintaining the protective clothing where it is required, across and around the back.

Rule 13 has a slight amendment as there will no longer be any protective clothing at that position, only the belt or sports shirt/jersey.

We believe this is the fairest way to deal with the problem where some anchors are adhering to the rule and the spirit/intent of the rule and other are 'bending' the rule to the point of breaking it and hence, in reality, cheating by gaining an advantage over those that are 'doing the right thing'.

Amendment on the proposal:

Ief Smets from Belgium asks whether there should not be a maximum weight of the anchor vest. With regard to the proposal of Netherlands, he misses this in the proposal of the Exco.

Netherlands seconds the notion of a maximum weight, besides the proposed maximum thickness of 5 cm, and propose a maximum weight of 5 kg. It can be weighed at the weigh-in.

PD, obo Exco argues that the anchor vests would require continuous checking during the competition within the marshal arena. How can the judges check the max weight then?

Vote on the amendment is to add a maximum weight of 5 kg of the anchor vest to the proposal or not: 20 votes, 12 in favor, 8 against.

The amendment passes and wording will be added to the proposal that a maximum weight of the anchor vest will be 5 kg.

Back to the original proposal: Dorus Konijn from Netherlands stresses that we all like to have fair play and work with the same rules. He goes back to the position of the anchor of a team, that person has a different position on the rope. Good anchors do not need it, but most of the anchors that do not compete at the highest level all the time, like to come to international level, but need clear and simple rules to compete. Allow the anchor to wear the protection clothes he/she needs.

Voting: 21 votes, 16 in favor, 5 against. Approved as it has been published with the addition of the maximum weight of 5 kg.

Proposal 2 by TWIF Exco

Seconded by: USA

Changes to, and renaming of, the Inactivity rule / infringement. Affecting Rule 21 and Infringement number 13.

The proposed changes to the rule are shown in **RED** text:

21 NO PULL

A "No Pull" will be declared in the event of;

- a) both teams being guilty of infringements; after twice being cautioned;
- b) both teams being guilty of inactivity **or a stalemate/deadlock (most likely due to poor ground conditions)**: A warning (judge pointing to his/her watch) shall be given to both teams before a No Pull for inactivity/**stalemate/deadlock** is given in order for both teams to have a possibility to react. Any cautions will be carried over to the new pull;
- c) both teams leaving go of the rope before the finish of a pull;
- d) a pull being interrupted without infringement by either of the teams, the

teams will be granted a reasonable rest and retake the pull.

Voting: 20 votes, 18 in favor, 1 against, 1 abstention. The proposal is approved. This will be added to the Rules Manual.

➤ INFRINGEMENTS DURING COMPETITION

Proposal 3 by TWif Exco

Seconded by: South Africa

Interpretation of Inactivity (not leading to disqualification)

13. teams failing to actively engage in a competitive effort during a pull (which could bring the sport into disrepute), or poor ground conditions, leading to a prolonged stalemate/deadlock, which could bring the sport into disrepute will constitute a "No pull", (see rule 21) which can be called at any time. The judge will make the coach aware of his/her plan to give a no pull by pointing at his/her watch and if no activity starts, a no pull will follow. *The pull will be restarted, and will continue for this match and all subsequent matches for this weight class, on either new or less broken ground in the immediate proximity of the original pulling lane. This No matches will not be allowed to return to the original pulling lane. If a pull with periods of inactivity lasts longer than ten minutes, the Chief Judge will draw the attention of the Centre Judge to call a "No pull" for this purpose The warning (judge pointing to his/her watch) shall still be given to both teams in accordance with rule 21..*

For practical purposes, this proposal is dealt with in 2 parts:

Firstly, the addition of the terms stalemate/deadlock to the inactivity aspect of a 'No-Pull'. This is because, as we have seen, when the ground condition is poor, that teams are unable to 'get out' of the holes/trenches, despite their best efforts, which lead to excessively long pulls. This is frequently being considered as 'inactivity' so this change in the wording is to bring clarity to the fact that a No-Pull can be given due to the ground conditions, at no fault of the teams, as would be the case in 'inactivity'.

Voting on part 1 of the proposal: 20 votes, 20 in favor. Proposal is approved.

Secondly, if it is necessary to move to fresh ground due to the ground conditions (whether deemed inactivity or not), after witnessing several championships where this has happened, it seems inappropriate to make teams return to the same holes/trenches and struggle in the same way to get out of them. The final sentence added to '13' above, is purely for clarification, in that even if the Chief Judge intervenes as the time approaches 10 minutes, the Centre Judge must still follow rule 21 and give a 'warning' to the teams as indicated.

Gavin Corden (England), questions the part as to the remainder of the competition

to be completed on the new ground if it was just inactivity by 2 teams. Concern is specially about whether there will be enough space on the field.

Voting on part 2 of the proposal: 20 votes, 13 in favor, 6 against, 1 abstention. Proposal is approved. Once the rope has been moved, the remainder of the competition will remain in the new lane.

Proposal 4 by England

Seconded by: South Africa

Pull Offs for Placings:

In closed competitions where there are two groups, the pull off for placings below 4th place be scrapped, with the exception of the World Games weight classes held at the TWIF World Championships used as the qualification event the year prior to the World Games.

Reasons:

The pull offs for placings often result in a significant delay in proceedings and is detrimental to those teams competing in semi-finals, where they end up waiting around for long periods of time or the placing pulls have to take place at the same time as a bronze medal match/final because of a lack of time, as was the case in The Netherlands. With the removal of the need to provide placing trophies below 4th place, there is therefore no need to decide a ranking list. If there is still a wish to determine a ranking, then TWIF could consider using a similar format to determine placings as they do at GENSB, based on average score, matches won, cautions etc. In recognition of the fact that rankings are necessary to determine the top six countries for a World Games, (because some countries do not compete at the World Games, or because there is a need to rank the UK countries), this proposal provides an exception to the World Games only, whatever weight classes they may be, for the relevant year.

Piotr Ramowski of Poland states that the ranking is important for the sport in their country, but also for future competitions to keep people at competitions. Hari Gupta from India also states the financial aspects on the ranking. Ralf states the ranking of the UK countries in this proposal. Bill Gallagher states that the ranking can be done in between the break of the teams that compete at the semi- and finals. Rob Watkins of Wales states that teams for the semi- and finals have to wait longer but also we need rankings.

Voting: 20 votes, 8 in favor, 12 against. Proposal is not approved.

Proposal 5 by Netherlands

Seconded by: no seconder.

Proposal to amend Rule 8.1.4 as follows (black is existing wording, in red added wording/words scrapped):

The protective clothing worn by the anchor shall not exceed a maximum thickness of 5 centimetres; may include a portion (hump on/near the hip) that is thicker than the basis thickness of the vest. This thicker portion is not allowed to exceed an extra

thickness of 50 mm. For the basis thickness and the total thickness of the vest, no maximum is prescribed; It must always be worn under the sport clothing, but an additional belt is allowed under or outside of the pulling dress. The belt buckle must be worn on the front/middle of the body at the start of a pull. Any movement of the buckle during a pull does not constitute a caution or disqualification. ~~and placed between the rope and the body.~~

No hooks, ~~grooves~~ sharp edges or other constructions intended to lock the rope are allowed on any of the protective clothing. Free use of materials is allowed, except for metals The use of metals is only allowed for connections and fasteners. The anchor vest/suit is limited to a maximum weight of 10 kg. The rope does not need to follow a straight diagonal line from shoulder to hip over the back of the anchor puller. ~~Recommended Anchor vest (see page 45)~~

Original proposal:

Free use of materials except for metals;

- *The use of metals is allowed for connections and fasteners only;*
- *Sharp or pointy parts are not allowed;*
- *The rope doesn't need to follow an exact straight diagonal line from shoulder to hip over the back of the player (this is hard to check objectively by a judge);*
- *It's allowed to wear a belt over or under the suit;*
- *The buckle of the belt needs to be in the middle before the start of the game, movement of the buckle because of tension on the rope doesn't lead to a warning or disqualification;*
- *Thickening of the suit (hump on/near the hip) to "hold" the rope is allowed until a maximum of 50 mm;*
- *No maximum size for the overall thickness of the suit (base layer + thickening);*
- *The suit is limited to a maximum weight of 10 kg.*

Motivation:

- *Last world championships there was a lot of discussion regarding the regulations of the anchor vest;*
- *The current rules seem to be interpreted in different ways by different judges at different tournaments;*
- *This results in uncertainties among the players;*
- *We need to make the sport easier accessible;*
- *A good fitting anchor vest prevents injury;*
- *A uniform or standard available vest is not an option because of different physical shapes (length, width) of athletes;*
- *From judge's perspective: clear rules/definitions help to check anchor vests more easily and without doubts/discussions.*

There is no seconder so no further discussion on this proposal and also no voting took place.

Time schedule EC/WC completion of weight classes:

It is acknowledged that championship officials try to have semi-finals and finals separate from group competitions pulling in other weight classes. Sometimes conditions and number or teams in specific weight classes lead to long waiting periods before semi-finals and finals are done separately. This is not good for pullers to wait for long periods, especially during cold/wet weather. So, although not applicable to a specific rule, it is proposed that championship officials consider as a best practice and when required by conditions to complete a weight class without waiting for other weight classes to reach semi-final/final stage. This means that all weight classes can be completed independently of each other.

Motivation:

During European and World Championships the finals **only** starts **once other** ~~after all~~ group competitions of other weight classes are finished. Often does this mean that pullers have to wait a very long time before they can start with the finals **in their weight class**. Sometimes more than an hour. Pullers will cool down and have to warm up again before the finals start, which is hard sometimes especially in outdoor competitions when the weather can be cold and wet.

This will also help to run the program on time and have no delay at the end of the day.

Original proposal:

We like to propose that finals will start directly after the group competitions of their weight classes and judges will not wait until the other groups are finished. This means that all competitions of other groups will go on, during the finals of weight classes which already have to start.

This was already the case in Parkgate during the WC indoor and also happened in past events.

Voting: 21 votes. 20 in favor, 1 against. Proposal approved as a best practice and recommendation at future events.

Regulations approval – addition to ARTICLE 5

Added sub-article:

(22) TWIF Exco or one of the relevant Commissions may need to rewrite the text of a proposal, or an amendment hereof, more clearly after a proposal is accepted after voting in Congress.

This rewritten proposal needs to be send to the Members after congress and approved by all Members that have voted in favor of the proposal, before it can be put into action via publication, according to (21).

Motivation:

In the past, it has occurred that a Committee has rewritten a proposal that has passed the Congress and this resulted in conflict with the original Proposal.

Original proposal:

After a proposal is accepted by the members, the TAC may rewrite the text to have it more clear and without grey areas. Before this rewritten text will be added to the regulations, the TAC has to ask for approval of the members.

On behalf of TWIF Exco, MH explained what happened in the past two years when Exco in good faith tried to "interpret" what proposer meant and reworded proposal prior to Congress. These amendments were checked with the proposers, but when it was featured at Congress they indicated that, that is not what they meant. This was messy and led to confusion and that electronic voting had to be done subsequent to Congress.

If this proposal is accepted, it will always lead to different interpretations. Proposals need to be clear and concise. If not, members may vote for something they do not quite understand. Exco do not support this proposal as subsequent back and forth versions of what is meant and voted on will lead to messy affairs as was experienced the previous year.

Voting: 21 votes, 8 in favor, 12 against, 1 abstention. This proposal is not approved.