Greetings to all Tug of War Family and Friends

It is hard to believe that 2023 is coming to an end, where has time gone again? For me personally it was an honour that during 2023 congress in Mannheim I was elected as Twif President by the member countries, who attended congress in person and online and voted for me.

For most of us it was another normal season with Indoor Championships in Belfast and a World Outdoor Championship in Sursee. With that statement we must remember that some of our Tug of War friends who find themselves in a difficult situation regarding violence conflict in their countries. Our thoughts are with you in these difficult times.

We are all facing challenges in different ways on a daily basis, from rising costs, environmental issues, and sustainability of the planet and its people. This includes issues related to economic and social issues. Then we are facing the ‘green’ issue like reducing plastic and using more reusable materials. Going forward in regards to Tug of War, we all need to be more aware of what and how we use materials.

We are also facing challenges with regards to developing our sport globally. This can only happen if the countries themselves are interested in development: youths are the future for our sport and school development is essential, this is for further discussion. The Olympics obviously remains our biggest challenge and we will continue to pursue this challenge. Unfortunately once again we are not on the short list for the foreseeable future. Personally I think there are other stepping stones that we need to walk on first; for example, the Commonwealth Games, the Asian Championships, the Oceanic Championships - again this is for further discussion.

For now let me take the opportunity to wish everyone who is involved in any aspect of Tug of War a happy, peaceful and healthy Christmas and a prosperous 2024.

Yours in sport, DAN MC CATHY
President of Twif

Greetings from

TAIWAN 2 & 4 | SWITZERLAND 3 | AZERBAIJAN 4
NORTHERN IRELAND 4 | USA 6 & 7 | POLAND 8 | GERMANY 9 | ENGLAND 11 - 14
LATVIA & LITHUANIA 15 & 16 | FRANCE 17 | KUALA LUMPUR 18

2024 EVENTS CALENDAR 14
The TPE International Tug of War Invitational Tournament 2023

The TPE International Tug of War Invitational Tournament, which was suspended for 3 years due to the epidemic, returned to Taiwan from 2nd - 3rd December and was a great success. This annual tug of war international event in Taiwan is its largest event.

This year is the 15th year that international teams have been invited to Taiwan to compete with Taiwanese pullers. There were 11 teams from 7 countries competing - including USA, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Taiwan. The Secretary General, Maaike Hornstra and Judges, Andrea Nasso, Gavin Corden and Ralf Braeuninger of TWIF were invited to participate.

Maaike Hornstra said, “It’s a very good initiative from Taiwan - a lot of Asian countries have a high competition level but they can’t afford to participate - so in organising this International Tournament, Taiwan is raising the level of the sport. As well as supporting the home teams it’s also instructive for the other Asian countries - so that more countries try to get to the TWIF events - resulting in a bigger championship."

“I feel really good about coming to Taiwan, we did not know what to expect, but the combination has been very well organized and been very efficient. We’ve been very pleased with our welcome, hosts and stay here - every time we go for dinner it’s well prepared and honestly the food has been very good, did not know what to expect but it is excellent.” said the team leader from the USA, Taylor Wayne.
Thank you so much for coming to Taiwan from so many countries and to TWIF for your support. Taiwan holds international invitational tournaments every year and we will invite more countries in the future.

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SWISS HIGHLIGHTS 2023
TEAM OF THE YEAR
At the beginning of the year, the Swiss World Games Gold men (right) were nominated as World Games Team of the Year 2022. Voting ended on 31 January 2023 and the Swiss pullers made it into the podium. Congratulations on 3rd place.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2028 IN ST. GALLEN (CH)
As the capacity for staging the World Championships in the municipality of Mosnang is too small, a strong partner was found in the city of St. Gallen with its Gründenmoos sports centre. The Mosliger pullers, led by local council president Renato Truniger, literally brought the rope from Mosnang to St. Gallen on 28 March '23 to hand it over to the city councillor Mathias Gabathuler. Nöldi Forrer, ambassador for the 2028 World Championship, officially presented the World Cup logo.

TUG OF WAR BET
On Saturday, 25 November 2023, it was ‘Top, the bet is on...’ at the valley station of the Stanserhorn cable car. Eight athletes from the Tug of War Club Stans-Oberdorf, which won the gold medal in M640 at World Championship in Sursee, competed with the bet that they could pull the Stanserhorn cable car, filled with 44 people, 10 metres within 120 seconds. The boys won the spectacular outdoor bet after around 1:30 - congratulations on this great achievement. The show ‘Wetten, dass..?’ was watched live on TV by more than 12 million viewers.
Greetings from Azerbaijan to the TWIF family!

We are proud to be a member of this family. Tug of war promotes unity and friendship. Power is together!

We always try our best to promote this sport at a high level. As a team, our goal is always to be among the best in the world. The seminars and competitions organized by us in our country have created great interest in tug of war among teenagers and young people.

Our goal is to organize international competitions and to see all members of the TWIF family in our country. Also, to be properly represented in international competitions. Today, Azerbaijan is known as a sports country in the world. The always beautiful city of Baku and its regions host various sports competitions. The First European Games and the Formula 1 World Grand Prix are real examples of this.

The head of our country, President Ilham Aliyev, always pays special attention to sports. Thanks to him, the sports infrastructure in Azerbaijan is at a high level today.

In a short time, we already have indoor and outdoor arenas for training camps of our teams. In August of this year, for the first time, our junior team participated in the GENSB youth international tournament organized in Mannheim, Germany.

This competition was a great experience for us. Also, meeting with teams representing different countries brought us new friends. We love tug of war! Best regards,

ELNUR SHIKHALIYEV President of Tug of War Azerbaijan

A massive year for a small association

Hosting a world championship with snow and completing in another world championship 6 months later - as well as playing around in snow on our day off. I would say that doesn’t happen often. Not forgetting Northern Ireland Gold medals 560 and 600 kg, and Cathal’s message to Anton at congress.

My personnel highlight of 2023 was attending my first congress in Mannheim Germany.

After our business was concluded we attended the technical seminars and workshops on the first day. It was great listening to all the technical CONTINUED ON PG 3
A group of 11 men founded a tug of war club in a citrus orchard in Hsinchu County, hoping to win Taiwan’s first ticket to the World Games men’s tug of war event in three years. The club officially launched in April 2022, and the current total number of members has exceeded 60 people. “Mammoth is probably the only outdoor tug of war club in Taiwan at present. We hope that all tug of war athletes can have the opportunity to continue their dreams. We want to break the stereotype of the outside world that Taiwan’s tug of war is not only for female athletes, but men’s tug of war can also have a place.” In the 2022 outdoor tug of war world championships held in the Netherlands, Taiwan’s men’s tug of war team won fourth place in the 560 kg class, which is the best in history, only one step away from a medal. This “golden generation” of Taiwan’s men’s tug of war team did not stop there. Eleven young people who had just graduated from college still had unfinished ambitions. **The Mammoth Outdoor Tug of War Club is their driving force to pursue their dreams.**
I have grown up around the sport of Tug of War my whole life. My grandparents, parents, siblings and most aunts and uncles have all participated over the years and I watched them at practices and competitions. I started my career in Tug of War at age 13 and I have made many life long friends both near and far. I have participated in countless tournaments both locally, and at the national and international level. I’ve taken a little time off here and there to start and raise a family. I’ve seen teammates come and go. I’ve been part of incredibly talented teams throughout the years that have earned medals nationally and internationally. I will always cherish the incredible memories I’ve made. While my career in Tug of War has now spanned 30 years, it is this past year where I made one of my most special and memorable tug of war memories. While competing at the TWIF Outdoor World Championships in Switzerland, I had an amazing opportunity to compete at such a high level - all with my close family in attendance. At one point during the closed Senior Mixed competition, I shared the rope representing the USA with my sister and two of my brothers, while our dad coached us, our other brother was on the field as trainer/pucky, and our mom was cheering on the side!! Truly a moment I will never forget...A moment that sticks out as a highlight over these 30 years! While we may not have walked away with a medal that day, I will always cherish and be so proud of that moment, knowing all the hard work and dedication we had put in to get us there. We all came together with love and support for each other as well as a sport we all love! I have already begun to share the love of Tug of War with my own children, having my oldest son start practicing and competing a few years ago and my younger four children watching competitions and trying fun kids pulls. Hoping to continue creating special Tug of War memories for many more years! ♥

VANESSA (GALLAGHER) SCHMIDT

DJ’s Tug of War Club - the year in review

2023 was a busy year for our club. After Covid we concentrated on rebuilding our club and now we have a nice young group of pullers looking to gain international experience.

We started the year by deciding to give the indoor discipline a try. In March we traveled to Parkgate, Northern Ireland to compete at the World Indoor Championships. This was the first indoor tournament these athletes had ever participated in and although we had no success on the rope, we learned a lot and met many people who helped us out tremendously. I was reminded of how friendly and helpful the indoor teams are. It was a very fun and informative trip.

Summer found us competing in our USATOWA tournaments around the Midwest. These tournaments ran from early June till the first of October. On July 1st we traveled to Embro, Canada for their Highland Games tournament. This was the
first tournament they have hosted since Covid, and it was
great to see the turnout of teams participating. We were
especially impressed by the Bluewater youth teams.
They fielded 3 teams of youth and said they had enough
kids at home to field more. On July 2nd the Bluewater
club hosted a training session for anyone interested. It
was good to get together and socialize with members of
the Bluewater and British Columbia clubs.
In August a large contingent of our club travelled to Sursee,
Switzerland for the World Outdoor Championships. This
was only the first or second championship most of our
pullers had attended and if the electric atmosphere at
the pulling grounds wasn’t enough to keep you coming
back, the majestic scenery certainly was.
Finally on December 1-5 we travelled to Taichung Taiwan
for the CTTWA Indoor Invitational Tournament. This was
absolutely a once in a lifetime opportunity. There were
seven countries represented over the two days of pulling,
many of which we have never had the opportunity to
compete against. One of the most exciting sights I have
seen in this sport was walking into the arena on Saturday
morning and seeing literally hundreds of young people
warming up on the mats and even the gym floor. There
were competitions for everyone from grade school up
through university age. The enthusiasm of these young
pullers was truly contagious.
We would like to thank the CTTWA for the invitation
and the opportunity to compete at this well organized
and remarkable tournament. Our sincerest gratitude to
Christine and Wei Ting for the incredible hospitality you
showed our club.

In summary our club pulled competitions in 5 different
countries on 3 different continents in 2023. The members
that competed in every one of them traveled 35,578 miles, flew
through 11 airports in 7 different countries in addition to all the car
and bus rides. Everyone agrees the best part of all was renewing
old friendships and making new ones. Hopefully we will see you all
in 2024.
1. On 14 April 2023, the first Regional Methodological and Training Centre for Tug of War in Poland was opened in Sichów Duży. The centre’s professional equipment will allow athletes to develop their sports skills.

2. The 3rd Polish Championships of Agricultural Schools took place in Sokołów Podlaski on 7th October. It was another example of a great tug of war event in Poland.

3. Polish National Team took 4th place at Indoor European Cup in Saldus, Latvia. It was great experience for our team.
“Today it’s all about everything. We have trained and this year we are the favourites, men. Now it’s about glory and honour. We’re giving it our all again now!”

After a thrilling competition, the German U23 men were able to break the winning streak of the Swiss at the 2023 World Championships in Sursee for the first time since 2009 and take the long-awaited world title.

Germany is ready for the 2024 World Championship!

Preparations are already in full swing, and we look forward to welcoming you back to Mannheim for the World Championship in 2024.

This year, the largest youth tug of war tournament took place in Mannheim, serving as a dress rehearsal for the 2024 World Championship. Over 400 athletes from various nations gathered and participated in the tournament. The successful sports event provided an opportunity for young people to compete on an international level. Additionally, within the programme following the competition, participants had the chance to form international friendships and early on embrace the values of tug of war.
In itself this was testament to the hard work put in by the original members to resurrect a side, more so that the recruitment came not just from within the county of Essex, but the surrounding counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, a large catchment area to be sure, and as such required a name change to the all encompassing East Anglia Tug of War Club.

Their sights and goals were modest, to compete when they could and encourage each other to improve within the sport, distances made training together difficult during the working week and with their Young Farmer and work commitments we did the best we could, which meant a number of weekend training sessions. We entered the English National Championships entering two Senior Mens weights and three Senior Ladies and the Mixed event, mainly for the experience. The teams pulled well all day but totally out-did themselves by winning the Bronze in the Mixed event, after a cracking first end and then the second more comfortably, against more experienced opposition.

This said much for the teams spirit and camaraderie as it was certainly a medal won by all members of the club not just those on the field.

Added to this a number of the members were selected for the England U23 Mens and Ladies Squads and excelled themselves at the British and Irish Championships as well as the World Championships in Sursee, Switzerland. We now look forward to 2024, looking to keep growing and hopefully joining you all in Mannheim, Germany for the World Championships.
This was the first time for a few years that a junior national competition had taken part in England, and it was the first time that Kilroe had won a national medal at junior level. In addition to this, the majority of the team members are also members of the Penistone Young Farmers Club who compete on the “Young Farmers” tug of war circuit in England which is a very popular event for young people from rural communities who come together to compete in a range of sports including tug of war. This year, the Penistone Young Farmers team also won the junior GENSB rules competition at the Young Farmers National Finals at Tenby Wells for the 3rd year in the row.

Some members of the team then went on to compete at GENSB in Germany and the World Championships in Switzerland. Both the Kilroe and Penistone teams are led by their coach Andy Howe who was a successful puller with the Kilroe team on the outdoor and indoor circuits and is now giving back to his club and the sport in a coaching role. In 2024, the team is very much looking forward to competing again, and is looking forward to taking part at the 2024 GENSB competition which is taking place in England at Keele University in Staffordshire!

See details on page 14!

2023 has been another year of progress for Bosley Tug of War Club. This year we were able to field a junior team for the first time in a number of years at the English National Championships and whilst no medals were won, it was vital experience for our younger members. The club went on to win a silver and bronze medal in the Tug of War Association.

Continued on page 12
National League, and then finished the year with a successful indoor season, winning gold medals at the English national indoor championships in the mens 560 kg and 600 kg competitions and also the mixed 580 kg competition.

On the international front, a number of junior and under 23 pullers went on to both GENSB in Germany and the World Championships in Switzerland, with some under 23s also competing at the British and Irish Championships as England C in the mens 600, women 520 and mixed 580 kg (see pic centre).

The under 23s came away with a fantastic bronze in the senior mixed 580 at the British and Irish Championships, then came away with a number of medals from the World Championships, including a silver in the open club mixed U23 560, and bronze in the women U23 500 kg and mixed U23 560 kg which was another set of fantastic results.

The year ended with our team coach Dave Knott being nominated for the prestigious Tug of War Association Award of Merit which is awarded to individuals for long and distinguished service to tug of war. Having served as a puller, coach, volunteer and committee member after almost 50 years of involvement in the sport, this is certainly something that is well deserved!

We would like to wish everyone in the tug of war family a merry Christmas, and all the best for 2023 where we hope to see all of our international friends at the World Championships in Germany!
After just four months of dedicated coaching the newly formed team competed in the British and Irish Championship and returned home with several medals including:

- Gold in the Junior Men’s Open
- Gold and Silver in the Junior Mixed (A & B teams) and
- Gold and Silver in the Junior Mixed Open.

Later in the year the team competed in the World Championships in Holland with the Junior Girls bringing home bronze medals.

Sadly, the team suffered the tragic loss of one of their star up and coming pullers. After a very tough few weeks our Coach of the Year was invited to take the England Junior team to South Africa to participate in the junior championships – the biggest in the world. A plan was formed to do this tour in memory of their lost teammate, and the Tom Allan Memorial Tour was planned.

Months of planning, twice weekly training, strength work and all-round fitness development followed. The tour was a great success with the girl’s team bringing home gold medals. Never sitting still, our Coach continued to plough all available time and effort into developing the team and finding new members.

In August 2023, 3 teams attended GENSB at Mannheim in Germany (the largest European junior event) competing against some of the strongest teams in Europe.

A week later the squad went to the World Championships (2023) in Switzerland where the Junior Boys came 7th overall and the girls team claimed Silver in the Open Competition and an amazing Bronze in the Closed Competition for their country.

After such a busy year you might think they would relax a bit - but no. Plans are already being made to compete at GENSB 2024 in the UK, World Championships 2024 in Mannheim and ultimately to reach full throttle at the World Championships in 2026 in Mossel Bay with the best squad ever.

Throughout it all our Coach of the Year has been the central driving force - a young man with real ability to engage with young people, to inspire them to train hard and reach to attain their potential, to be mature and responsible when necessary but always to retain a sense of fun, competition and pure joy at being able to compete as equals in a sport which levels everyone.

CLAIREE THWAITES
On the weekend of 24 August, England will be hosting the 2024 GENSB junior international tug of war competition. The event will be taking place at Keele University on the edge of Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire, an area close to where there have been a huge number of well-known and successful tug of war teams over the years including Norton, Leek, Sheen and Bosley to name a few!

The England Tug of War Association invites clubs from all associations to send junior teams to take part in this event, and we hope to see large numbers of young teams taking part and representing the future of our sport, and hopefully we can make it the biggest GENSB competition ever! More information will be published on the GENSB web site in due course, so watch this space for further information!

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and see you all at GENSB in 2024!

2024

twif EVENTS

8-11 FEBRUARY 2024 World Indoor Championships Helsingborg, Sweden
12-13 APRIL 2024 Seminar & Congress Nottingham, England
27 APRIL 2024 ETWF U23 Cup Kosta, Sweden
10-11 MAY 2024 International Outdoor Tournament ttv Eibergen, Netherlands
25-26 MAY 2024 International Indoor Tournament Baku, Azerbaijan
1-2 JUNE 2024 International Outdoor Tournament Dublin, Ireland
24 AUGUST 2024 GENSB Tournament at Keele University Staffordshire, England
5-8 SEPTEMBER 2024 World Outdoor Championships Mannheim, Germany
The Latvia-Lithuania Border Festival provides an opportunity for two nations - Latvians and Lithuanians - to enjoy the charm of the festival together - engaging in sports activities, good music and well spent time together. Since 2015, the festival has been held in Ezerė, Saldus municipality - at the border - where Latvia meets Lithuania. The main task is to promote friendship and cooperation between nations. In the event tug of war national athletes from both countries participated. Lithuanian and Latvian families and children were also invited to try tug of war.

Throughout its 30 years of operation, the Tug of War Club Velkonis have achieved remarkable success, including four World Championship titles, two European Championship titles, as well as silver and bronze medals from the European Championship. Additionally, they have earned 79 Latvian Championship titles to be proud of.
Saldus is a small, beautiful town with a population of about 10,000. A total of nine teams from Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Poland took part in the competition that was held in the following weight classes: 680 kg men, 430 kg women, 480 kg Mix, 600 kg U-23, "Saldus cup" 530 kg (5+1).

The purpose of the competition is to be together at the end of the season. With including U23 in the competition, the main task is to develop youth sports. Youth sports is good for students for many reasons - including preventing obesity, improving mental health and teaching important life skills.

We learned from each other and made new contacts and cooperations. It was a good event to prepare for the 2024 World Championships also. This was a good end to the 2023 season!
started my Tug of War ‘life’ in 1984 in the Netherlands with TTV Rauwerd and after a few years with Teerns. My first World Championship was in 1985 in Stans, Switzerland. Special years were the WC 1988 in Malmö, Sweden where we won a golden medal (TTV Teerns) and in 1990 in Slagharen, Netherlands with the Dutch national team.

In 1993 we moved to Brittany, France. It was only in 2022 that I heard of a French Championship so I went to see and was very surprised: there were a lot of teams - but they were all pulling with bare feet!!

There I met the team of Casson and the president of the FNSMR, the French Federation, Brigitte Linder. Casson pulls with shoes all year and participate at TWIF events.

In April 2023, the FNSMR asked me to volunteer for the French Championship with Maaike and Jost (pic above). Brigitte would like me to help the FNSMR to try to achieve a higher level in French Tug of War. However France is a big country but so far I decided to train the team of Casson once or twice a month - it is a 250 km drive, but it is with great pleasure that I am back in the Tug of War world.

My highlight of 2023 was the WC in Sursee. I continue to enjoy my adventure as trainer/coach - hopefully also with the French teams in Mannheim - and who knows what other competitions lie ahead!

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and an amazing 2024!

JELTSJE ALGERA

The French delegation during the World Outdoor Championships in Sursee.
The KL2023, Kuala Lumpur International Tug of War Club Championships, held from September 14-17, 2023, at the iconic Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur, was a resounding success. Organized by the Federal Territories Kuala Lumpur Tug of War Association (Malaysia) and co-organized by the National Department for Cultural and Arts, this event was a thrilling showcase of strength, unity, and cultural diversity. Supported by key governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Youth & Sports, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Plantation Industries & Commodities, the championships took on a special significance, aligning with the Malaysia Day celebrations.

A total of 80 teams, representing seven nations - Brunei, Chinese Taipei, India, Nepal, Thailand, South Africa, and the host nation Malaysia - enthusiastically participated across six weight categories. The competition not only highlighted the athletic prowess of the participants but also served...
as a platform for cultural exchange and camaraderie.

The event kicked off with a grand opening ceremony, graced by dignitaries from various ministries, reinforcing the commitment of the government to promote sports, cultural exchange, and international cooperation.

The Dataran Merdeka transformed into a battleground of strength and skill as teams battled fiercely for supremacy. As the host nation, Malaysia took pride in welcoming participants from diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of unity among nations. Spectators and participants alike were treated to an array of cultural performances, exhibitions, and local delicacies, creating a vibrant atmosphere that celebrated both sports and heritage.

The championships were not only a testament to the global appeal of tug of war but also a reflection of Malaysia’s commitment to hosting international sporting events. The championships were graced by Hari Shanker Gupta, Senior Vice President of Asian Tug of War Federation (ATWF) and Madan Mohan, Secretary General of ATWF, and as the International Judges Suchart and Krisada (Thailand), Asoka N. Serasinghe (Sri Lanka), Chen Chung Lin (Chinese Taipei), Hj Hasnani (Brunei) and Keith Rance as the Tournament Manager (South Africa); Chief Judge was Khairul Faizi (Malaysia) and Zulkaranaen (Malaysia) as the Controller.

In conclusion, KL2023 was more than just a tug of war championship; it was a celebration of diversity, strength, and unity. The success of the event will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the participants, spectators, and the global tug of war community, fostering a legacy of international cooperation and goodwill.

MR SATHIAH SUDAKARAN Hon. Secretary,
Federal Territories Kuala Lumpur Tug of War Federation (Malaysia)