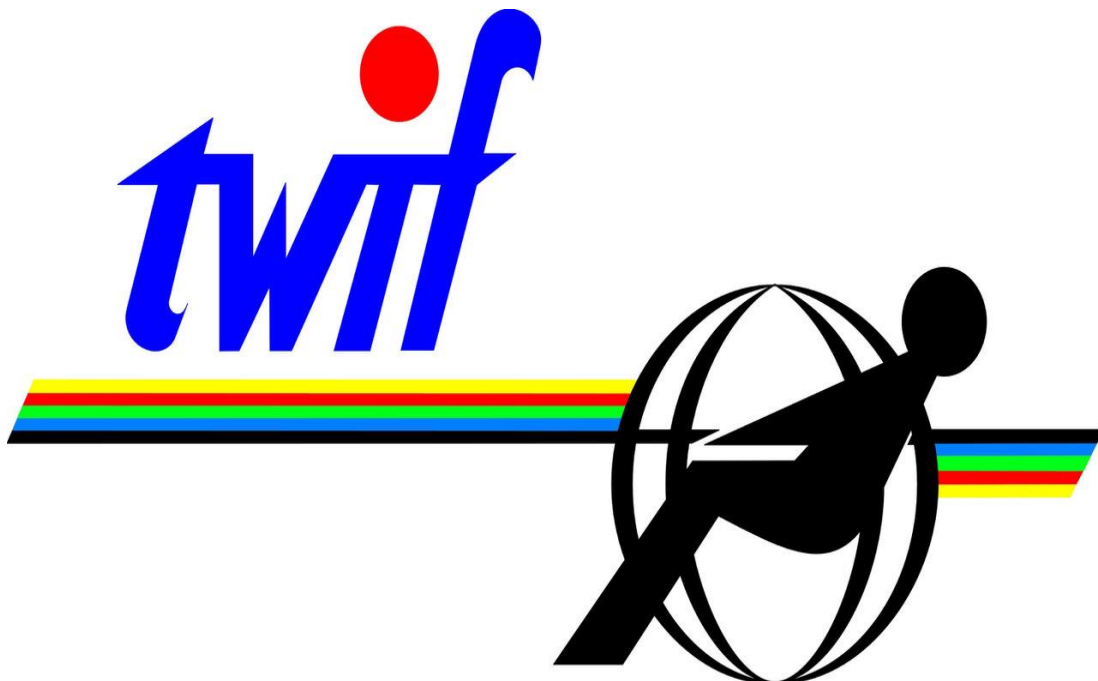


Annual TWIF Seminar  
& Congress  
12 & 13 APRIL 2024

Nottingham, England



## **MINUTES TWIF SEMINAR & CONGRESS 2024**

### **PROGRAMME: 12 & 13 APRIL 2024**

#### **Friday, 12 April - Seminar**

9.00 am: President Dan McCarthy opens the seminar and welcomes all attendees in person and those online. Thanks to the English Association for hosting the congress in a nice hotel.

- 1. DEUSTO research and future plan – Jost Waser**  
Dehydration control in Tug of War. Power Point presentation will be sent to the members. We use the electronic measurement bioimpedance . We use a scale and it takes a short moment via a finger to get all the information. However, precise conditions are required for this to be accurate, which do not exist during Tug of War weigh-in. Therefore it is necessary to create an algorithm, based on real data, to get the accuracy required. We therefore need much more 'real' data. We used to do checks with Deusto University on volunteer base in Castlebar 2019 and Holten 2022, but from now on it will be obligated and it will be random who has to do a measurement. It will be part of agreement on the accreditation. We need to take dehydration very seriously before weigh-in, especially at indoor Championships. We are a high level sport and we have to take care of the safety of our athletes. We can stop athletes from pulling when it is not safe to continue when the health is in danger. There is a question about education to protect athletes from dehydration. This is one part but it is also a responsibility of the countries and athletes themselves. Make athletes aware of the risks and take care of education!
- 2. Update weight class workshops outdoor & indoor after World Games Chengdu 2025 – Jost Waser**  
Jost organized a few workshops about weight classes and how to continue after the World Games 2025 to start a new cycle of 4 years. Discussion about the senior men weight classes were 560 kg, 600 kg, 640 kg, 680/700 kg as a result. Senior women weight classes 500 kg, 540 kg, not a big discussion like with the men's weight classes. Senior Mix 580 kg will remain the same. U 23 and U23 Mix leave it like it is. Junior weight classes are a topic to discuss and only 3 countries responded on the questionnaire which was sent out. We like to bring the juniors on a certain level but the response to the questionnaire was very poor. The youth is our future and we need to think wise about them. The discussions during the workshops were good and Jost thanks the countries for that. England states that they develop the U23 in their own country but there is not enough money involved to send them to all TWIF events, so they choose the outdoor instead of indoor. We need to look at costs as well, we don't have to stay in luxury hotels, basic is good enough. We don't want to kill our sport.

3. **WADA** – Pete Dyer

WADA is not just about testing, very importantly, it is about education too and is part of our sport. Pete is doing a quiz to test the knowledge from former briefings. We use the 2021 WADA code. The new code probably comes out in 2027. Apply for a TUE is necessary before you start taking medicines. If one athlete of the team has been caught with a doping test, now the whole team will lose the medal. This was implemented in 2021. We have asked countries for an education plan with a deadline of 1 June 2024. Countries can ask NADO's for support. This is part of a member in good standing for the WC Mannheim 2024 competition. Also, this will be part of the annual year report from now on. It has been stated that it should be part of our constitution to make education and anti-doping taken more seriously. We have to be compliant with WADA, otherwise TWIF is out of the World Games program.

**Supplements** (unintentional doping and nutritional supplements). Pete attended the WADA global education conference 2024 in Nice and there was a presentation about supplements. A lot of athletes are not aware of the risks of supplements and do not take action on this, but it can be tricky what is in the supplements as they are not regulated. When you got tested and it is positive, it is all on the risk of athletes. WADA don't recommend the use of supplements, rather, have a healthy balanced diet. However, if you chose to, beware! Be careful about labelling, Some supplements have false labels showing approval by certain laboratories, or even WADA. However, WADA do not approve any product. There are also counterfeit products out there!

4. **Evaluation report on World Outdoor Championships Sursee 2023 and World Indoor Championships Helsingborg 2024** – Maaïke Hornstra

Maaïke gives a presentation on the numbers of evaluation for the officials and teams for Sursee and Helsingborg. Since Holten we decided to make two presentations. Overall both Championships were ranked well. Maaïke will send the evaluations to Pirmin Steinmann from Switzerland and Lars Lindh from Sweden with all the comments. Some comments were positive, some negative and main issues are (as always) about transport and food.

Cameroon is attending seminar and introduces themselves. Franck and Frederik are explaining how they work in Cameroon with Tug of War. Anton Botha is informing them that Cameroon will be part of the African Forum (including about 17 countries) and that TWIF is there to support them in developing the sport in their country.

5. **Progress reports/update on events awarded** (about 5(+) minutes each):

a. WOC 2024 - Mannheim, Germany

Ralf Bräuninger is giving a presentation about the WC 2024 Mannheim. The dates are 5-8 September 2024. Most of the hotels are in the city center. All the packages include public transport to/from venue.

b. EC 2025 - Nottingham, England

Gavin Corden is giving a presentation about the EC 2025 Nottingham. The logo is shown and explained (Robin Hood is involved). Accommodation and venue is all at the University of Nottingham, so no

transport during competition but all walkable. Packages for 5 and 6 days are offered. Every accommodation provides their own meals in a hall, part of the accommodation building.

- c. WIC 2026 - Taipei, Chinese Taipei  
No updates at this stage.

- d. WOC 2026 - Mossel Bay, South Africa

Anton Botha is giving an update on the WC 2026 in Mossel Bay. Package prices are offered for 5 or 6 days. Pre-bookings during congress 2025 are possible to get the best accommodation. It will be an Olympic style village at the Championships. The organizers don't mind if you book outside the package and will help and support teams/countries as best as they can. The organizers booked the whole (holiday) accommodation park. Everything is walkable so no transport needed during Championships.

- 6. **Tender World Indoor Championships 2028** – Morbegno, Italy

The tender is presented by Nicola Capelletto, TWIF Representative of Italy, and 3 persons of the organization/region.

Afternoon program/visit to accommodation & competition arena for EC2025:  
After lunch there was the possibility of checking the accommodation buildings, weigh-in building and competition field.

### **Saturday, 13 April - Congress**

#### **AGENDA – CONGRESS SATURDAY, 13 APRIL 2024**

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

At 9.00 am President Dan McCarthy is opening the Congress and welcomes everyone to the annual Congress. Every representative is introducing him/herself to the other attendees. We take a moment of silence for people that passed away the last year or suffering illness at this stage. We all know someone in person or know them via people we know.

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

Attending in person: Azerbaijan, Basque Country, Belgium, England, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, United States of America and Wales.

Attending online: Canada, Israel, Latvia, Nigeria and Poland.

Planning to attend online: India and Japan.

One proxy vote: France.

3. **Confirmation of members in good standing. By the Treasurer**  
28 paid members. We have 28 paid members, 23 attending in person or hybrid. A majority is enough for voting for the proposals. For the constitution we need a majority of 2/3.
  4. **Confirmation of the Minutes of Congress 2023**  
Seconded by England. Voting on the minutes: 18 in favor of the minutes. Some countries were not online yet.
  5. **Matters arising not covered elsewhere**  
No matters arising.
  6. **Report covering the period since the last Congress. By the President**  
Attachment A (page 8) in this document. First year for Dan to be President. We have had an active year with meetings, courses and two Championships. Voting on the report of the President: 18 in favor. 0 against and 0 abstention.
  7. **Finance By the Treasurer/Financial report and Budget 2023/24/25**
    - 7.1 Submission and vote on the balance sheets and accounts  
- we have a check by auditor/overview on our finances. Anton explains the current situation and stating that we still have a lot of money but losing as well a lot due to unforeseen expenses. On a vote: 15 in favor, 1 abstention.
    - 7.2 Approval of the budget (2024/25)  
- voting: 17 in favor, 1 against, no abstentions. TWIF supported Belfast to host an in between World Indoor Championships in March 2023 because the gap between 2020 and 2024 would be too big for the indoor pullers. The President is giving an update on the costs for Belfast, supported by TWIF. The total amount of this support was 25.546,86 GBP. Ralf Bräuninger (Germany) thanks TWIF to give this opportunity while the ETWF was planning to organize an European Indoor Championships in 2023, but did not have the financial budget.
  8. **Policy Plan – update new policy plan 2025-2029**  
Anton Botha gives an explanation on the new policy plan for the period 2025-2029. He shortened the subjects to 4 to give a better overview and keep it more simple. We budgeted a big amount for the new competition program and for WADA. The where abouts and anti-doping controls are costing us a lot of money. Especially in the year of the World Games. Our annual income is about 56.000 GBP. We are going to re-invest in another bank account with more interest. We try to get more development fund from IOC to cover the anti-doping tests.  
Voting on the policy plan: 18 in favor and 0 against.
- Presentation World Games Chengdu, China 2025**  
Pete Dyer gives a presentation about the World Games 2025:  
Dates 7-17 Augustus 2025. Presentation to be send out to the members.  
Arrival day 6<sup>th</sup> August, jetlag day and opening ceremony 7<sup>th</sup> August, training day 8<sup>th</sup> August, competition Men 640 on 9<sup>th</sup> August, Women 500 on 10<sup>th</sup> August,

Mix 580 on 11<sup>th</sup> August and departure day on 12<sup>th</sup> August. We had to move our competition days due to the Opening Ceremony and security reasons, so we have two competition days in the weekend and one competition day on Monday. We hope to have more spectators in the weekend, so negotiated with IWGA and the Organizers about the dates of competition.

Accommodation is about an hour by bus from the venue. All athletes and officials are staying in the same accommodation at a big complex. It is all hotel accommodation but looks like an University complex. Tianfu International Hotel Complex it is called. We hope to do the weigh-in at the accommodation on the training day and then go to the venue for training. Chengdu is a tourist destination and most likely safe to go outside the accommodation village if people like to. Payment in cash is not common in Chengdu, a lot of payment goes by phone/electronic. Payment by credit card was accepted when Pete visited the city, so was cash money.

Weather conditions in August: surrounded by mountains. It can be quite warm and humid. Not a lot of sunshine, due to the mountains around. Lower range of clouds.

Amount of athletes/coaches: 176 and 19 officials. The same as in 2022, we can't have more athletes, even we tried this discussion again. We are also not allowed to have indoor on the program. It will only be outdoor competition.

Visa will be very important: each individual will have to go to local embassy for finger prints, unless China opens the door and allow some countries to enter China without visa. They have done this in 2024. Take enough time to achieve this visa. Pete will be the competition manager for World Games Chengdu 2025.

### **Safeguard Policy**

Maaïke Hornstra gives an update on the TWIF Safeguard policy and why we implemented this and what we expect from the member countries as well. Half of the attendees have already a Safeguard officer. Maaïke will be the contact person for TWIF for these situations and hopefully never need to (re)act but we live in a different and changing world.

### 9. **Reports by the Commissions:** See Attachments (B,C and D)

10.1 Anti-Doping Commission – Pete Dyer (Attachment B in this document on page 9): Report is published and covers most of the items that were spoken on in the presentation on WADA during Congress.

10.2 Technical Athletes Commission – Jost Waser (Attachment C in this document on page 12): Jost Waser thanks Marga 't Lam (secretary of TAC) for all the work in the past years, mostly behind the screens. Caroline Kenny will take over the work and he wishes her good luck. One point Jost wants to point out, is the new member for TWIF, Mexico, and worked on the requirements for 1,5 years. He hopes for a positive vote. Jost and Pete visited Venezuela to give a course. They are not applying for membership yet but working on the paperwork and aiming for Government support. Technically the issue at this moment is the belts. Anchor vests is mostly sorted, but belts is an issue. The belt is used a lot for locking and our officials need to consider this as an infringement and act when necessary.

10.2 PR Commission- Maaïke Hornstra (Attachment D in this document on page 14): Anton Botha will leave the PR commission and we will continue with 4 members. Voting on the nominations will take place later on during Congress. As TWIF exco and Secretary of TAC, we will start to use new email accounts with @thetwif.org. Maaïke will inform all members and partners in sport and add this to the website.

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**

Mexico has fulfilled all requirements to become a TWIF member.

After 1,5 years of contact, Mexico has fulfilled all requirements and the vote is 18 in favor and 1 abstention. Mexico will be the new TWIF member and will have a vote from now on if they stay to fulfill their requirements. Maaïke will inform them officially with a letter.

13. **Proposals and question submitted by the members and all other matters which the Executive Committee wish to propose** (Attachment E in this document on page 16)

14. **TWIF Championships: voting for the WC indoor 2028 Italy**

Voting: 18 votes: 17 in favor, 1 abstention. The organizers have been honored to be part of the Congress and will work hard to bring us a very good Championship in 2028 in Morbegno, Italy.

15. **Voting on the members of the various commissions, name are mentioned per commission in the attachment:**

Attachment F in this document on page 27.

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

- Ralf Bräuninger mentions that the city of Karlsruhe (Germany) has tendered for hosting the World Games 2029 and is asking for support from TWIF Exco during the voting procedure during the AGM of IWGA on 1 May 2024.

- Signing of the contract for the World Indoor Championships 2026 and World Outdoor Championships 2026 takes place.

- Noel Hara thanks TWIF Exco on behalf of Northern Ireland for all the work.

17. **Future meetings**

TWIF Exco meetings will be in Mannheim or online before the WC outdoor.

Next Congress will be 21 and 22 March 2025 in Mossel Bay, South Africa.

18. **Closing by the President**

The Congress has come to an end and the President is thanking everyone for the past two days. It was maybe not always easy but we came to a conclusion on all the proposals. We have to think about future voting procedures during Congress. Maybe only representatives in person should have a voting right.

Thanks to the online attendees as well. A big thank you for the English

Association to host this Congress 2024, but also for the whole Exco for putting

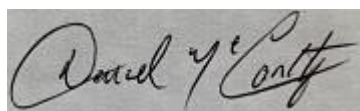
so much time and effort into their duties. Dan could not work without us and we continue working forward with an open door and always welcome to have a meeting and conversation. Also a request to support the outdoor championships in Mannheim, while they did not come an easy way to get to where they are now.

Attachment A:

### **TWIF PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

This is my first report as president of Twif. It's a Privilege for me personally to have been appointed as president. Firstly we as Exco are elected for a term by you, the members who form TWIF. Previously to become president I served as treasurer and I can say that all of the Exco members work extremely hard behind the scenes. Sometimes we are accused of having different ideas and views but I can confirm that we are open minded, honest and willing to listen to you regarding any issues that arise. When I look back I ask myself where did the past year go. My first formal meeting was at the IWGA annual conference in Madrid where I was accompanied by Senior Vice President Pete Dyer. Obviously the main focus was on the next World Games in Chengdu, China, in August 2025. The criteria regarding Tug of War was clearly stated, despite our request to have outdoor and indoor competition. IWGA (International World Games Association) were very clear that only one discipline will take place and this is outdoor. The following weights were agreed. Men 640kg, Women 500kg and Mixed 580 kg. IWGA stated that if possible they would like to have three continents participate but would be satisfied if there are at least two continents in every weight class. There is no wildcard for the host country China. In September 2023 we had the world outdoor championships in Sursee Switzerland, which overall was a great event. The weather was kind to us with four dry days for competition and the attendance and standard was of a high quality. In February 2024 we had the world indoor championships in Helsingborg Sweden , which was the first time Sweden hosted a world indoor event. This time we had a few new countries who performed really well, which looks great for the future. Unfortunately the youths were disappointed with only two countries entered, so therefore no official world championship. We all know that youths are the future for the sport so therefore development is needed. But development needs to happen on the ground and in every country, for development the countries must be willing to develop themselves, don't blame others. As I complete my review we are within weeks of congress 2025 in Nottingham England. During the seminar several topics will be discussed with an open mind going forward for the future of our sport. WE must work together to ensure that we survive and develop globally.

Yours in sport, Dan Mc Carthy President TWIF





## **Report Anti-Doping Commission**

### **1. Prohibited list.**

As is the case every year, WADA have issued the **2024 LIST OF PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AND METHODS** which came into force on the 1st January. This can be found on the TWIF website. They have also issued a 'summary of the major modifications', this can also be found on the TWIF website. One item I would like to bring to your attention is Tramadol which is now a prohibited substance 'in=competition'. You need to be clear what this means and be mindful of the 'washout' period. The "washout period" refers to the time from the last administered dose to the time of the start of the In-Competition period (i.e. beginning at 11:59 p.m. on the day before a Competition in which the Athlete is scheduled to participate, in our case, the day of the weigh-in is the first day of competition. This is different for each substance and ranges from days to weeks. You will need to check on the WADA website for the washout period for your particular substance.

### **2. Therapeutic Use Exceptions (TUEs)**

Despite providing a good number of educational presentations at Championships and Congress, Many Athletes are still not getting the message regarding TUEs!!!

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.

**Even when all the information is provided it can take up to 21 days for a TUE to be approved! I had FOUR TUE applications in the few days leading up to the World Indoor Championship. Only ONE was justified at being that late.**

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](mailto: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.

### **3. World Indoor Championships 2023**

During these championships in the Northern Ireland, 7 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; Italy, Latvia, USA, Basque Country, China, Chinese Taipei and Northern Ireland. All tests were negative.

### **4. World Outdoor Championships 2023**

During these championships in the Switzerland, 15 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; Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Basque Country, Chinese Taipei, England and Germany

I am pleased to say all tests were negative.

### **5. World Indoor Championships 2024**

During these championships 7 tests were done, again, spread across the 5 days including at the weigh-in and during the open and closed championships. The results are not available at the time of writing this report. The following countries were tested, Ireland, Italy, Chinese Taipei, China, Netherlands.

### **6. Annual Reporting Forms.**

At the time of compiling this report 29-member countries, had completed their reports. This is four more than this time last year, which is an improvement, but more should be completed by this time. The reports show, that during 2023 (2022 figures in brackets), 8 (10) countries conducted Anti-Doping tests with a total of 47 (57). This is a **huge** backward step and massively disappointing. ALL national federations need to step up and take this topic seriously and put an Anti-Doping budget in to their future financial plans and undertake some testing. All but one of these were negative, and the single positive was for recreational drugs, but still resulted in a four-year ban!

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.

### **7. 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 I am pleased to say that following the work I completed in 2023, we have satisfied WADA that the course of action to address the shortfalls are acceptable. This cannot lead to complacency as there is still work to be done to discharge those actions and continue to learn and improve our Anti-Doping regime.

### **8. 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/>

### **9. Education**

This is one of, if not the, biggest challenge at the moment. We only see athletes once or twice a year at best. This makes delivering education difficult. That is why you have all received a letter **mandating** each of you, as National Federations, to develop and deliver an education plan. This plan must be submitted to Twif as well as an evaluation of that plan after it has been delivered. This is about educating our athletes and support personnel. 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  
TWIF Senior Vice President

February 2024

Attachment C:

## **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
- c/o Secretary Mrs. Caroline Kenny/England
- 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

Another year has flown by. The challenges have not become any easier. Safeguarding, gender politics and so on, to name a few. Tug of War as a simple sport is currently heading in a totally different direction and brings us new challenges.

This year, technical support and training courses were in demand at various events. In Mexico, Israel, Switzerland, Netherlands, Venezuela, and France.

Support in questions of setting up associations and material and training information are countries like Greece, Venezuela, Gana and Tanzania.

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 need patience.

The anchor protection still is a topic of discuss. We agreed to work out a proper solution. Especially the additional parts under the protection is thought for talk. The resolution of it is to force the judges to implement the TWIF Rules Manuel during competition.

The belt guidelines still requires many resources. It causes still problems, nowadays the belt as it says is for protection and support the back, but is used as lock system and not for protection.

In the TAC, a working group is working 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;
- Development of the plan to produce a standard anchor vest with a manufacturer;
- Evaluation during competition with two judges, for two days, then changing to do judging again. Shorter days for evaluation, first test in Sweden Indoor WC;
- Briefing with the current rules, pictures of mistakes, changes in the rules and get discussions between judges to get everyone on the same level. These situations will be analyzed in this regard, the members are requested to train their referees properly. Still in progress;
- Contact with potential members and technical support in various countries underway;
- Updating the TWIF Rules Manual is an ongoing procedure;
- Something of great importance is to find judges and timekeepers for the international tournaments. This is an important challenge for each nation to contribute.

We need to focus more on the value of all of us working together, arguing fairly, and shaking hands after necessary or unnecessary arguments, just as we do after a tough fight on the tournament field, out of respect and appreciation on both sides. We need the energy for the further development of our sport.

Next TAC meeting will be Mannheim, Germany, in September 2024.

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

**Special thank you to Marga for serving and supporting me and the whole Tug of War community. What Marga has done cannot be expressed in words on paper. We wish you, Marga, all the best and good health for the future. Thank you very much for your incredible work.**

Jost Waser

Chairman TAC  
TWIF Vice President

Attachment D:

### **PR and Promotion Commission**

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

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

In 2023 the PR commission had an active year again with promoting Tug of War as best as we could. In 2023 we had two World Championships to promote and we made 4 TWIF Newsletters. A spring, summer and autumn edition and one with the highlights of 2023. Also we made one TWIF Monthly Focus newsletter.

Tug of War people are a 'down to earth' community who are not always working hard to promote the sport on social media. Of course everyone is busy training but social media nowadays is very important. Some pullers, teams and countries are very active on the social media platforms, others let it go a bit more. Tips and advice how to get everyone more active in promoting Tug of War are welcome.

We started this year with the picture/stories of athletes and officials. We ask people for a picture/story and also people send in their story and love for the sport in spontaneously. We really appreciate this and it is also nice to read how Tug of War comes into the lives of people, what the sport means to people and what their passion is. We will continue this in 2024, so please make your athletes, coaches and officials aware of this social media campaign. We only publish this on TWIF Facebook and Instagram but of course this can be a subject for a TWIF Monthly Focus or TWIF Newsletter. Katie Kruse is editing the pictures and stories and she does a great job. Thank you for your support in this Katie.

We selected Fabian Langenstein from Tug of War club Engelberg for the election of Athlete of the Year 2023 for IWGA (International World Games Association). Fabian retired during the World Outdoor Championships 2023 in Sursee after a long and successful career and is well known over the whole world. Unfortunately Fabian did not make it to the last 10 in the election, so he did not go forward to the final round of voting, but we put our sport and puller in the spotlight again for IWGA, which is very important.

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. Also ideas and tips are always welcome how to promote on social media but also in other ways.

As we will have a new PR commission from this year on, we will say goodbye to Anton Botha, as he is a member of the TWIF Exco now. We agree to have only one Exco member in a commission. You can read the nominations for the new term of 4 years in a separate document in this agenda for congress. Thanks to Anton and the other PR commission members for their support to promote our sport and for their dedication to do the PR job. Also I thank all the members who shared an article and/or pictures for the TWIF Newsletter or TWIF Facebook. Keep on doing this!

Maaïke Hornstra

Chairwoman PR Commission  
TWIF Secretary General

Attachment E:

## PROPOSALS/QUESTIONS/DISCUSSIONS FOR TWIF CONGRES 2024

### Proposal 1 by England

Seconded by: **Belgium**

When a proposal/new rule is passed at Congress it must be referred back to Congress the following year to confirm that decision (ratify). If that proposal has not been used during that year it must be deferred until the following Congress for confirmation (ratification). If on the second occasion the proposal/rule has not been used, the proposal/rule is removed.

**Reason:** This will give TWIF an opportunity to test a new rule/proposal to see if it works for the good of Tug of War. If the rule does not work and/or causes problems TWIF can decide not to confirm (ratify) it at the next Congress and it can be quickly removed, otherwise it can be approved (ratified).

If the rule is not used during the first year of being passed it can be put back (deferred) to the next Congress for a decision. If it is not used during the second year the proposal/rule is automatically removed.

Gavin Corden from England states that when we decide on a proposal, it needs time to find out if it is workable or not. If all members are happy, then the official proposal can be taken the year after and implement the rule or reject it.

Voting: 19 votes in total, 9 in favor, 8 against, 2 abstentions. The proposal has passed.

### Proposal 2 by England

Seconded by:

*The amendment on behalf of England is to add the women 500 kg, 540 kg and mix 580 kg to the proposal. This is seconded by **Wales**. England included the weights for women and mix so weights will be the same on European and World Championships. Till now we have different weight classes for women during Continental Championships (520 and 560 kg).*

At the next opportunity, the senior men's weight classes are changed to **560kg, 600kg, 640kg and 680kg**. This should apply to World and Continental Championships.

**Reason:** This would standardise the weight classes for men in outdoor and indoor competitions. It is also believed that 600kg would be a very competitive weight class to include in the programme and would attract more team entries than the heavier weights.

Voting: 19 votes; 9 votes in favour, 8 votes against, 3 abstentions. The amendment has passed. We only voted on the amendment and can't vote on the proposal of England now and move on to proposal 3.



### **Proposal 3 by Germany**

Seconded by: **Sweden**

**Introduction of the weight classes in the World Games cycle for TWIF Championships**  
for seniors, the new cycle will then start in the World Games year (2025-2028):

- 560 kg - men
- 640 kg - men
- 700 kg - men
- 500 kg - women
- 540 kg - women
- 580kg - Mixed (4/4)

#### **Motivation:**

The agreed cycle for weight classes ends 2025. The men weight classes 560, 640 and 700 bring a significant weight difference between the classes, the actual cycle showed, that a 680kg class led to "underweight" teams, filled up with lighter team members from the lower weight class where on the other hand teams with heavier athletes have been automatically excluded from participation. The period for this weight classes are fixed for the actual World Games Cycle, a decision on a change could not be made before Congress 2027, that brings an accurate planning and development for the nations.

Andreas Berl states that we have a lot of discussions about weight classes so Germany has forwarded 3 weight classes for the men with enough difference in the weights to cover all needs and considering the amount of officials we work with.

Voting: 20 votes; 11 in favour, 8 against and 1 abstention. Amendment on proposal 2 and proposal 3 have both passed.

A new vote between proposal 2 amended and 3 is necessary to get a final decision. Voting: 20 votes; 10 for amended proposal 2, 9 for proposal 3 and 1 abstention. Proposal 2 amended has passed. 560, 600, 640, 680 kg men, 500, 540 kg women and 580 mx will be on the program from EC 2025 on.

### **Proposal 4 by Germany**

Seconded by: **USA, Switzerland and Italy**

#### **Introduction of new weigh-in times for TWIF open and closed Championships:**

Adding following to TWIF Rules for international competitions 4. Weighing and Stamping Point 4.

Athletes for the open competitions the weigh-in the day before the open event starts.

Athletes for the closed competitions the weigh-in on the day before the closed event starts.

#### **Motivation:**

Actually all athletes are weight-in on Wednesday. We have a well working system to handle the weigh-in. This weigh-in procedure led to extreme weigh losing

procedures by the athletes, that we all agree are not healthy, the occurred doping causes in the actual past have also been motivated due to this. On the other hand this early weigh-in leads also to an extreme disruption between the taken weight and the real weight on the rope in the closed competitions. As TWIF confesses to the mission statement: As an International Federation our mission is to provide the structure and good governance necessary for the well-being and development of the sport of Tug of War throughout the world. Our Primary Objective is to attain a sufficiently high level of excellence and universality to expedite our acceptance by the International Olympic Committee as a sport within the program of the Olympic Games, a status held by our sport in the early years of the 20th century. As this is our highest target it is not understandable for other weight based sports how it happens that we compete in weight classes where the weight is taken up to 4 days in advance. This leads doubtless to unfair weights and distortion in the competitions. The reduced amount of athletes at the 2<sup>nd</sup> weigh-in which will compete in the closed event is also easy to handle after the last competition in the open. As a side effect the overall personal costs for the individual athlete could be reduced by only participating at open and/or closed competitions.

Andreas Berl states that with the weigh-in moment on one day gives a chance to add a lot of weight to the athletes. During closed competition none of the teams are the original weight class anymore, but a lot heavier. The IOC states that the athletes/teams need to be weighed in shorter time before the start of the competition.

On behalf of Exco: logistic we need to consider where in the program we weigh-in the national team pullers on Friday, while we have an open competition and often an opening ceremony. Other part is the health of the athletes. When we weighed in the teams every morning, some athletes did not eat proper during the competition till the day of competition in the closed.

Scotland: will there be less teams in the open competition to save energy for the closed competition?

Ireland thinks the individual weigh-in is the best decision ever on Wednesday which is disagreed by USA.

South Africa: dehydration will be a smaller problem then.

Voting: 20 votes: 9 in favor, 11 against. No abstentions. This proposal has failed.

**Proposal 5 by TWIF Exco**

Seconded by: **England**

### **Qualification procedure World Games 2025:**

The qualification requires to meet two criteria laid down by the IWGA;

1. Each of the three weigh classes (M640 W500 and Mx580) must have two continents;
2. Across the three weight classes there must be three different continents.

The qualification event is the World Outdoor Championships 2024.

For the avoidance of doubt, there are NO wildcards.

- The top 6 countries will automatically qualify in each weight class if this gives two different continents. If two continents are not represented in the top 6, the 6th country will be replaced by the highest placed country from a different continent in that weight class.
- If having two continents in each weight class does not fulfil the requirement to have three continents overall, the following will apply;
- In the weight class with the highest placed third continent, the 6th placed country, in that weight class, will be replaced by the country from the third continent.

Belgium states that if in 2 weight classes teams from a different continent end at the same position, what will be the criteria how to choose the right team. We can use the same criteria as we use now to get a final ranking except using the weight while we speak about different weigh classes. One of the criteria might be the available rooms for athletes regarding the maximum numbers we have.

Voting: 21 votes: 12 in favor, 6 against and 3 abstentions. The proposal has passed.

### **Proposal 6 by Germany is withdrawn by Germany**

#### **Qualification procedure World Games 2025:**

As at the moment of proposing the following there are external preconditions set by IWGA:

There will be 3 competitions, Men, Women and Mixed; per competition have to be a minimum of 2 different continents representing national teams; over all 3 competitions have to be a minimum of 3 continents present. (like described in the letter of secretary of TWIF).

#### **Proposal:**

At the closed WC before the World Games the teams qualify for WG due to the ranking in the Men 640kg, Women 540kg and Mixed 580kg category. The qualified national teams are members of TWIF like in the constitution described and start under their national flag. The number of free places per category results from the number of available places. If only one continent is represented in the category in the amount of available places, there will be given only given a place less then the total available amount per category to this continent, the free place will be automatically filled with the nation in the ranking from the next continent.

If the number of 3 continents across all categories is not reached, the category will be tossed in which a team from the next continent will move up.

#### **Motivation:**

At Congress 2024 should be clear how the qualification will be.

TWIF did sadly miss to avoid problems by the amount of continents participating at WG2025 by not exceeding the amount of teams per category like many other sports at the WG whom also give a wildcard to the hosting country achieved in their negotiations with IWGA. So at the time of proposing must be assumed that the number of teams per category will not exceed the amount of 6, if this could be achieved until congress the above proposal is also needed to eliminate the other given requirements of IWGA.

### **Proposal 7 by Germany**

Seconded by: Sweden

#### **Addition to Constitution Artikel 5 Members Point 4 (new):**

A commission out of 3 elected members excluding members of Exco should approve the status of members in good standing 4 weeks prior to congress.

#### **Motivation:**

Prior to congress 2023 the status of good standing was denied by decisions of TWIF Exco not covered by constitution. Rules of Good Governance, one of TWIF mission statements have not been observed.

Ralf Bräuninger states that the financial administration should be controlled by a neutral party. This has to do with members in good standing, anti-doping etc. TWIF Exco states that you can't exclude the TWIF treasurer and secretary general because the annual fee comes in at the bank account of the treasurer and the annual reports come in at the email account of the secretary general.

This is not a simple majority of votes, but change of constitution and means 2/3 of the majority is required.

Votes: 21 votes: 8 in favor, 10 against, 3 abstentions. There is no majority so the proposal has failed.

### **Proposal 8 by Switzerland**

Seconded by: **Sweden**

#### **Violations by anchors**

We request a tightening of the violations of anchors with regard to supporting on the ground with the hand.

Chapter: Rules for International Championships (page 27)

Rule 14 Violations during the competition (page 36)

Item 9 Anchor position (page 37)

### Previous text:

Any position other than that described in rule 13

### In addition to the previous text, new rules apply to the anchor :

Supporting yourself on the ground with your hand at the anchor will be penalized directly with a caution (no warning is given).

Pirmin Steinmann states that we need a clear rule about the anchor. Some of the anchors are using the ground a lot to get support for moving backwards.

England and Wales state that there are already infringements in place for this, so no need for a direct caution. The rules should be implemented correctly by the judges.

Votes : 20 votes : 5 in favor, 15 against, no abstentions. The proposal has failed.

### Proposal 9 by Netherlands

Seconded by: **Belgium**

We like to propose to stop the time recording during EC and WC. According to our Dutch timekeepers it is not often very precisely and it has a big impact on the job. In the Netherlands almost nobody looks at this data.

Fritz Brandstätter states that the time keeping is not done sufficiently by the recorders. England states that the time is important for the inactivity rule. On behalf of Exco we stated that we did not add this in the software program when we started working with an online program, but we did after one year and it is useful for several reasons, like to time ground inspections during different competitions. Marga 't Lam states that the recorders have a good focus on the rope when they record and advise the chief judge when necessary (for inactivity). Wales uses the tool for checking results as well. It is also disrespectful to our recorders.

Votes: 20 votes: 3 in favor, 16 against and 1 abstention. The proposal has failed.

### Proposal 10 by TWIF Exco

Seconded by: **Sweden**

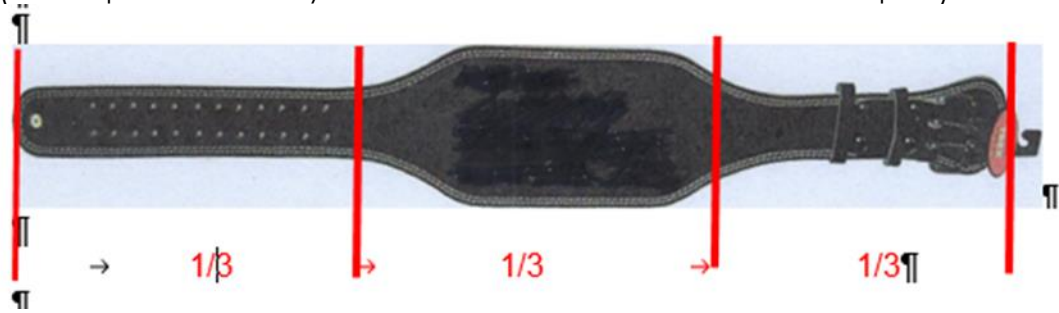
### **BELT PROPOSAL TO CONGRESS 20**

1. **One** elasticated belt made of neoprene or other similar soft material may be worn under the pulling shirt to support the back and protect the skin. It can be wrapped around the body no more than once.
2. This belt must be easily stretched in all directions and have a 'velcro' style fastening to the front.
3. **No** belt may be worn over the pulling shirt by pullers 1-7.
4. The anchor may wear a traditional leather belt or one made of a more modern material as described below:

For a traditional leather belt, the lumbar support should not exceed a third of the length of the belt and each of the sections either side of the lumbar support must be approximately equal. The lumbar support must not be any wider than 150mm and the sections either side no wider than 60mm. The picture below is of a typical belt.



(below photo currently in the Rules Manual of the leather belt p.31)



However, rigid belts made of a more modern material, such as those in the photographs below, with a similar maximum dimension of 150mm are acceptable.

(photos of belts currently in the Rules Manual on p.32)



5. The fastening must be at the front center of the anchor with the broad part of the belt, if appropriate, supporting the lower area of the back, it must not be worn to the side of the puller. The belt must be worn tight so that it cannot easily be moved and the tail end of the belt must be on the opposite side of the body to the rope.
6. No construction, hooks, grooves, modification, tape or other adaptation, professional or otherwise, may be made or added to any belt being worn under or over the shirt. Any hold using the belt that prevents free movement of the rope is a lock.

All belts are subject to the judge's approval. If they are deemed in breach of the rules the belt may be seized and retained until the end of the tournament.

Jost Waser states that we have a lot of discussions around the belt. It is used as a lock instead of a protection. Also the judges should act according the rules to prevent using the belt as a lock.

Voting: 21 votes: 9 in favor, 10 against, 2 abstentions. The proposal has failed.

### **Proposal 11 by TWIF Exco**

Seconded by:

There is an amendment to this proposal by England. Switzerland asks if the World Games is a TWIF Championship? Yes, it is. Amendment is seconded by **Switzerland**. The English Association stated that the proposal on its own could not go forward. It would mean that changes could be implemented 2 days before the start of a Championships. That is why England states 60 days prior, which is similar to implementation of TWIF proposals we have now.

### **Power of the TAC:**

(Rules Manual) TWIF OFFICIALS

#### 2 TECHNICAL AND ATHLETES COMMISSION

~~The Commission is an advisory body, at all times responsible to the TWIF Executive and Congress.~~

Amendment: The commission is authorized to be an advisory and independent body that discusses, adapts and implements new regulations for the good of Tug of War. ANY CHANGES MUST BE IMPLEMENTED AT LEAST 60 DAYS PRIOR TO THE NEXT TWIF CHAMPIONSHIP

The controlling body is the TWIF executive with veto rights.

#### 2.1 COMPOSITION

The Commission consists of not more than ten and not less than six members, appointed by the Executive Committee, from as wide a spectrum as appropriate. Member Countries may forward names for consideration by the Executive Committee, prior to the Congress when the appointments will be made. The appointment shall be ratified in conformity with Article 13 of the TWIF Constitution. The Commission can, when necessary, invite persons to attend the meeting for special advice. Such persons can only address the Commission on request and have no voting rights.

#### 2.2 TERM OF OFFICE

The term of appointment to the Commission shall be four years.

#### 2.3 TASK

The Commission shall:

- advise on all matters related to the Rules of International competition;
- advise on any aspect of Tug of War referred to it by the TWIF Executive

- Committee or Congress;
- advise on any matter brought to the attention of the Executive Committee by a Member Association, for which the Executive Committee wishes to have the view of the Commission;
- discuss any relevant matter put before the Commission by Commission members, for onward transmission to the Executive Committee;
- biannually at World Championships, stage Judges Courses for Grade 1 Judges nominated by Member Associations, were sufficient nominations. ensure a viable course;
- in conjunction with the above-mentioned Judges Courses, stage Refresher Courses for Judges from the TWIF Panel of Judges.

## 2.4 RULES CHANGES

- As necessary, independently of the membership, introduces changes and adjustments to the Tug of War rules;
- Present information and introduction of the rule change at the Congress;
- Rule changes, adjustments are tested for one year;
- They are then adopted and ratified at the following Congress or:
- The rules will be deleted if they do not work.

## 2.5 MEETINGS

The Commission will normally meet on the day before a World- or Continental Championships.

The agenda, including time and venue for the meeting will be dispatched three weeks prior to the meeting.

Voting on the amendment: 21 votes, 10 in favor, 9 against and 2 abstentions. The amendment has passed so we continue with the passing of the proposal.

### **Questions/discussions:**

#### **Netherlands:**

We like to see some discussion with all members during the congress in April 2024 about the prices of the package which is offered to the participants.

The prices are getting higher, but also the accommodations are getting on a higher level. This could also have a negative effect for some individuals for those who the costs are getting too high to join a championship, for example the juniors and people with a low income.

Can we have an open discussion and find some options in this to get more people on board?

Fritz Brandstätter (TWIF representative the Netherlands): the discussion that comes back every year, because prices of the accommodation are getting higher and higher and if we want to encourage the juniors, we need to take this in mind.

Dan McCarthy: since Covid prices are going up and changing quick. At every tender the prices of the packages are always a hot item. An idea can be to let



everyone book their own accommodation and only pay accreditation. But keep in mind a lot of things are part of the whole accommodation package.

Pete Dyer states that they used holiday parks in the past, but are more difficult to find. It took them a lot of research to find the University of Nottingham. There will be no discussion and extra costs around transport. The accommodation is clean but not luxury which is good enough to stay and keep prices acceptable.

Nicola Cappelletto: Italy is looking for cheaper accommodation for the EC 2027 to keep the costs low. They are also looking for sponsorship and support from local government.

Anton Botha states that countries should put more effort in reducing costs. South Africa is booking hostels in the city where the Championships is (so outside the packages), so why can't the organization not look for this options. Organizers should put effort in the youth and U23.

Martin Egan from Ireland states that the stay at a Championship should be shorter than the regular package, to keep youth involved and present at Championships.

### **Germany:**

Application to discuss

The annual financial statements should to be carried out as described in Article 17 or an equivalent replacement should be installed.

ARTICLE 17 - AUDITORS REPORT The Treasurer will submit the Accounts and Balance Sheet, three months prior to Congress to a firm of Chartered Accountants for their inspection and they in turn, will submit a written report (Auditors report) on their inspection to Congress.

Since Anton Rabe is no longer treasurer, the requirements of the constitution have not been full filled. For the time of Pete Dyer as acting treasurer have been handed out even none balance sheets. After the election of Daniel McCarthy as treasurer was in the beginning no auditors report was handed out to congress, again in 2023 this was missing. The out handed Auditors Report from his accountant did also not fulfill the requirements of the constitution of a certified auditors report from a chartered accountant. Continuing to ignore these requirements may lead to the tax-exempt status being revoked and investigations by the tax authorities, especially as championships will be held in Europe in the coming years.

Ralf Bräuninger states that he has his concerns about the financial situation without formal control and states that an audit should be done and agreed by the members. Dan McCarthy states that an overview was done on the accounts, but no audit. Anton Botha has asked two auditors for a quote. Also Anton Botha can bring the financial books to Congress to prove the financial situation to two member countries and they can do by turn. We are going to implement the cash control from Congress 2025 on. TWIF Exco will make a list of countries to do the control.

## **TWIF Exco:**

### **Stamping:**

Stamping is often early before the competitions.

Players enter the field, and have not yet changed, and are ready to stamp with long pants. Many of them do not have sports shorts underneath and are stamping in their underpants. Of course, this is also not 100% described.

Weighing in sports shorts, but not stamping in sports shorts the following days is not a promotion for our sport.

Suggestion: change the title of 8.3 to Dress at Weigh-in and Stamping and make two sub headings; 8.3.1 – Dress at Weigh-in (wording as now); 8.3.2 – Dress at Stamping; pullers shall wear shorts or leggings as they intend to wear during the competition to enable stamps to be clearly visible when dressed for the competition. Tracksuit bottoms without shorts/leggings is not permitted.

Pete Dyer explains that there is a rule for how to weigh-in, but we do not have rules for the stamping and it is good to discuss this with the members. Maybe we can give a dress code for stamping, but what are the views of the members? Teams should think about what to wear during pulling and already keep this in mind for stamping. Maybe not clothed proper, send them back to get the proper dress code and then start stamping. It should be forced at the national level already before coming to TWIF events.

Attachment F:

**Nominations for the following commissions:**

Appeal Commission:

1. Mrs. Jenny Wu, Chinese Taipei
2. Mr. Anders Andersson, Sweden
3. Mrs. Angelika Eiermann, Germany

We only had two applications and we think 3 is more efficient, so we asked Angelika Eiermann (and accepted) to be part of the Commission.

Technical & Athletes Commission: Chair Jost Waser, TWIF Vice President

1. Mr. Ief Smets, Belgium
2. Mrs. Jennie Andersson, Sweden
3. Mr. Nicola Cappelletto, Italy
4. Mr. Gavin Corden, England
5. Mrs. Melanie Smith, South Africa
6. Mrs. Rachel Lewis, England'
7. Mr. Ralf Bräuninger, Germany
8. Mr. Vincent Chen, Chinese Taipei

Mrs. Marga 't Lam (Netherlands) will retire as Secretary of the TAC and Mrs. Caroline Kenny (England) will become the new Secretary. She already has been introduced by Marga on the duties and worked as a side kick for one year.

Press & Publicity Commission: Chair Maaïke Hornstra, TWIF Secretary General

1. Mrs. Katie Kruse, United States of America
2. Mrs. Christine Yang, Chinese Taipei
3. Mrs. Zounica van der Merwe, South Africa
4. Mr. Alan Knott, England

Development Commission: Chair Anton Botha, TWIF Treasurer

1. Mr. Jan Barnard, South Africa
2. Mr. Dave Kruse, United States of America
3. Mr. Martin Collins, England
4. Mr. Jack Chen Chin-Kwei, Chinese Taipei
5. Mr. Sathiah Sudakaran, Malaysia

We agreed during Congress 2023 to have a bigger commission and put this on paper, but we did not get enough applications so we will start with 5 members and a chair person.

The door is open for new commission members, if necessary and required. So if someone likes to apply, that is still possible and as TWIF Exco we will see the need and duties.

Voting on all the Commissions in one votes.

Votes: 17 votes: 17 in favor, 0 against.

Marga 't Lam retires as secretary of the TAC and says a word of thank to all. Her work is much appreciated by all. Caroline Kenny now takes over the secretary of TAC and introduces herself.