



Minutes Meeting of IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group

Date: Thursday, 06 April 2023
Time: 13:00-14:30 CET
Place: by videoconference (Zoom)

Participants:

Dr Frantisek Taborsky	Chairman of IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group
Mrs Nicole Rabenseifner	Member of IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group
Mr Flavio Melo	Member of IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group
Mr Muhammad Shafiq	Member of IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group
Mr Eoin Murray	Member of IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group
Ms Viola Schmitt	IHF Office

Agenda

1. IPC reaction to the application for LA2028 PG
2. Wheelchair handball updates from IHF and the continents
3. Plans for the period 2023-2026 (IHF & continents)
4. IHF Education week in October 2023
5. Miscellaneous

Dr Frantisek Taborsky welcomed the participants of the IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group to the meeting, which was held remotely. He excused Mr Breto Leon and Mr Kaschütz who could not be present due to other obligations. Dr Hossam Mostafa, who confirmed his presence in the meeting, was not there at the beginning, but due to the limited time, the meeting started without him.

As it was the first Meeting after the IHF Executive Committee approved Mr Eoin Murray as IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group Member from Oceania, Dr Frantisek Taborsky asked Eoin Murray to shortly introduce himself.

Eoin Murray informed that he is IHF CCM Lecturer, handball coach (also for national teams in Oceania) and works as sports specialist for Paralympic Australia.

Dr Frantisek Taborsky stressed that he is very grateful to have Eoin Murray as member of the IHF Wheelchair Handball Working Group as it is very important to have someone in Oceania who is willing to develop the sport there.

With regard to the announcement of the IPC on 30 January 2023 that wheelchair handball will not be part of the paralympic programme in LA2028, Dr Frantisek Taborsky said that this decision was a big disappointment for everyone. In his opinion, the IPC did not consider enough the strong influence of COVID-19 and that wheelchair handball was only established three years ago. He informed that the IHF will have a call with the IPC to get further information about the reasons for the decision and to learn what needs to be improved for future applications. He mentioned that after the IHF Congress 2025 he will step back from his positions in the IHF and another person must take over the chair of the WG and prepare the documents for the application for the Paralympic Games 2032.

Further, he informed that the IHF Executive Committee recommended in its last meeting to focus on wheelchair handball Four-a-Side. Reasons for this recommendation include that less players (also less female players) will be needed, which not only reduces the costs for the teams and the organiser, but also might give more countries the possibility to form a team.

Muhammad Shafiq appreciated the proposal to focus on Four-a-Side as the players have more space on the court. He mentioned that the variant is very feasible for the AHF. The only problem he sees is the mixed team, as some countries, especially Iran, do not allow women to play in the same team as men. The Asian Wheelchair Handball Championship is planned to be held in November 2023.

Dr Frantisek Taborsky thanked for the update from Asia and mentioned the problems Pakistan was facing in Portugal at the World and European Wheelchair Handball Championship when the team did not have enough players (in general and women) and equipment which was not in compliance with the IHF Rules and Regulations. As teams from Europe currently still prefer the Six-a-Side variant, he considered the possibility of having another joint event for Six-a-Side this year (EHF & IHF). The next IHF Wheelchair Handball World Championship Four-a-Side will be held in 2024 and the IHF Office is preparing the bidding for the organiser. Dr Frantisek Taborsky would like to offer BRA to host the event as it was not possible for them to host the event in 2022, but they did a lot of work in advance. He suggested that the next WCh will be played with 8 teams, 2 each from SCAHC, EHF and AHF, host and 1 wild card.

After these updates from the IHF, Dr Frantisek Taborsky asked the representative from the continents to report about the current status of wheelchair handball.

Nicole Rabenseifner explained that the EHF is preparing a European Wheelchair Handball Championship Six-a-Side this year, which was not initially planned, but as the IHF will organise the WCh in 2024, they could not have another European Championship (ECh) until 2025. The EHF EXEC decided in its meeting to continue the European Championships in wheelchair handball Six-a-Side. In order to be able to provide teams for the IHF Wheelchair Handball World Championship Four-a-Side, they will organise a qualification tournament on the fringes of the ECh. However, a joint event as was held in Portugal in 2022 will not be possible this year.

In regard to the number of active teams, Nicole Rabenseifner said that France is currently creating a team, Italy plays at club level and Sweden wants to come back to competitions but it is not sure yet.

Nicole Rabenseifner talked to different teams and they told her that they do not like the Four-a-Side variant because it is more exhausting for the players. An idea might be to adapt the size of the playing field or increase the number of players. She recommended to discuss this topic again in the WG.

Flavio Melo shared a presentation he had prepared for the meeting showing the activities in South and Central America.

- The Rules of the Game for Wheelchair Handball Four-a-Side and Six-a-Side have been translated into Spanish and will be published in April.
- SCAHC will organise a referees and technical delegates course with the aim of establishing an SCAHC Wheelchair Handball Team.
- SCAHC need wheelchair handball classifiers for their continent as the classifiers currently come from Europe. In general, classification must be an important topic as changes take time to be implemented.
- The South and Central American Wheelchair Handball Championship is planned to be held in BRA in November/December 2023

Eoin Murray had to confess that wheelchair handball does not yet exist in Oceania and they might not have teams for the next 5-10 years. In general, most likely only Australia and New Zealand will be able to establish a team in the future. Distances are too long and thus too expensive for regular travel between the islands. He hopes that athletes from other paralympic sports who will not qualify in their sport for Paris2024 can be attracted to play wheelchair handball in Oceania.

As Dr Hossam Mostafa did not join the meeting anymore, no updates from Africa were shared with the Working Group.

Dr Frantisek Taborsky asked the members to send the plans for wheelchair handball activities on each continent to him and the IHF Office (Viola Schmitt) in written form within one week.

The IHF Education Week in October 2023 will focus on wheelchair handball. The following dates are confirmed: 6-8.10.2023, 13:00-15:00 Basel time. The core subject should be coaching. For each day two sessions of 45 minutes each plus questions/discussion are planned. Dr Frantisek Taborsky would appreciate the input from the WG Members to propose suitable lecturers for this education week. Proposals

shall be sent to Dr Frantisek Taborsky by email. The programme for the IHF Education week shall be finalised by the end of April.

Finally, Dr Frantisek Taborsky thanked all attendees for their active participation in the meeting and closed the session.

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