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Le Secrétaire Général

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Fédération Européenne Softball

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Activities Carried Out and Planned: ESF President 2008 Report

The ESF Executive are coming to the end of their four-year appointment and in this final report I look back at the last year and forward to what may follow.

Our year started with the unwelcome news of Patrice's illness, which combined with the uncertainty surrounding the 2008 Congress in Athens presented a big challenge to us all. Francesca Fabretto in particular responded to the demands of the situation, and became responsible for many new tasks. She did a great job organising the EC and maintaining contact and timely correspondence with all Federations. Patrice, health much improved, was able to resume his role later in the year.

Other events involving ESF people included the recent sad news of the death of Kenneth Lindberg, a previous EC member, who will be missed by all who knew him. Our sympathies go out to his wife Geri and to his children. We also heard of Guller Eriksen's decision to relinquish her role in the TC after many years' service: we thank her for all her efforts, not least for the much-appreciated birthday cards she sent year by year to all our umpires

The new website has helped us to keep in touch, with quarterly reports on activities published as promised at Athens. With Chiqui as Webmaster, the site holds the ESF Directory, now including individuals as well as Federation contact details, and has been extended to provide flags and official anthems for Competitions organisers. It also now provides space for discussion Forums and a facility within the Calendar to advertise non-ESF events where the organisers want to attract other ESF or indeed ISF members to send teams.

TC members at all 2008 competitions were able to use a direct and immediate upload process provided by Chiqui to report daily on all games results: this saved time and effort previously spent on faxing results to a central point for subsequent loading onto the site. It is our hope that the incoming EC will build on the new foundation and continue to add functionality to the site.

Our finances, as we promised at Athens, were a particular priority in 2008. Eddy and Ami were tasked with resolving questions left by our previous Treasurer. They followed up with a meeting at which outstanding items were discussed and clarified. Eddy will report on the detail of their outcomes, but in summary we now have much greater confidence in our financial health, we are recovering our reserves and have made a healthy 2008 surplus. Not only are we now better able to report our financial position, but upon receiving Eddy's positive reports at the EC meeting in November we were able immediately to allocate funds to Development again.

Development is addressed in detail in the report from Gabriel & Youri, but in essence we were able to maintain some activity, albeit below the level we would have preferred, because of the lack of known funding.

We look to the larger-membership Federations to make good their promises to provide resources to other countries in order to help them develop. Italy, Netherlands, Italy and Great Britain all have provided or will be providing coaches and / or facilities to train coaches and spread expertise across Europe. We are grateful to the ASA for sending an expert coach / player team to run clinics in GB and Italy. They and we hope this initiative can be repeated early in 2009, when we hope to host them in two more locations, in both Northern and Southern Europe. The ISF continues to provide starter-pack equipment, and we look forward to Gabriel's successful re-negotiation of a joint ESF / ISF Development agreement again for the coming year.

The integration of Development activities / clinics within a new format for Regional competitions was proposed and explored over the last two years: so far, the continuing debate over the competition format required has held this initiative at the discussion stage. We hope that the issues can be resolved to allow the development opportunities to be realised, and that the Elite Group competition can be instituted as planned.

Future development expenditure and all our supporting activities must be seen to support one or all of our priorities: to encourage school-level athlete recruitment; to maintain a structure of Cup competitions available to every member Federation; and to develop top-level Elite teams to improve European standings on the world stage.

In organising a full range of Cups and Championships the ESF provides its most visible service to its member Federations. Lead by Tottoni, over the last few years we have extended the age-range of our Championships so that our athletes can now enjoy the challenge of international competition from Minime all the way to Senior. The addition of the U22 grouping bridges the experience gap above the Juniors level, keeping top level athletes active in ESF Competition whilst they await full membership of their Senior squads.

This year's competitions again broke new ground, with Jersey appearing for the first time. 25 ESF countries sent teams to 13 Competitions; Bulgaria uniquely hosted two Cups at the same time, allowing fastpitch and slowpitch players to see each others' disciplines on adjacent fields. The Junior Girls' Championship with 15 teams required two pools. In all, 94 teams entered 2008 Championships and Cups (2007: 90), with 393 games played. This represents more *international* competitive Softball activity annually here in Europe than on any other continent. This is a statistic we should all be impressing upon our IOC representatives, many of whom are not aware of the level of keen competition we provide every year.

There can be no competition without a TC, and no game without an umpire. We acknowledge again all the efforts of our TC's and umpires officiating at the record number of games this year, and through Bob we thank Marlies and Gilbert, and all the others who ran our events. Special mention and congratulations go to Gianluca Magnani and Rob Veldkamp for their appearance representing Europe as umpires at the Beijing Olympics.

In addition to the scheduled ESF competitions, many Clubs and Federations regularly stage their own Tournaments to which other ESF and intercontinental teams are invited. One such event planned for 2009 is the Haarlem Softball Week, in which 5 Beijing 2008 teams will compete. Featuring Japan, USA, Canada, Australia, Italy and host Netherlands, this event will again demonstrate top-quality inter-Continental Softball in Europe, and give us another opportunity to showcase our sport to IOC decision-makers.

On the Marketing front we have made significant steps in collecting the full and meaningful data we require in order to publicise our sport and to effectively inform sports funding bodies. Sponsors ask: How many play Softball? How fast are you growing? (President Rogge asked: 'How many ISF members run competitive leagues within their country?') Without good data, collected over years to provide evidence of progress, we cannot answer with any confidence. That is why we are asking the questions: it is a shame that some members even now have not responded.

From a global perspective the ISF have recently re-emphasised the need to separate Softball and Baseball where organised within joint Federations and have created a Transition Commission to take the process forward. We have responded by requesting all joint Federations in Europe to document exactly what process (if any) is open to them to separate and the likely consequences, in financial and organisational terms. This data will be used as input to the first meeting of the Commission in Plant City in January 2009, to which several individuals from ESF Federations have been invited.

The Constitutional Commission announced at Manila, charged with preparing changes to the ISF Constitution for debate at the ISF Congress October 2009 in Venezuela, has not yet met despite repeated prompting by the ESF-appointed representatives and others. The full ISF Council did not meet in 2008. The election of the new ISF Council will take place in Venezuela: one of our tasks in Lausanne will be to decide on our strategy for appointing the two European VPs.

The funding issues surrounding the ISF Junior Girls Championship, at Enschede in 2007, continue to distract us: hopefully we will be closer to resolution by Congress. More immediate issues such as BackSoftball should have our complete concentration as we enter the last 10 months available to us to gain re-instatement in the Olympic programme. We have invited Dale McMann, co-Chair of the BackSoftball Taskforce, to join us at Lausanne to update us on progress on their efforts and to set out the action plan for all to follow between now and October.

I wish Good Luck to you all for 2009, and I look forward to meeting all those who come to Lausanne in February as delegates and guests, courtesy of the Swiss Federation.

Mike Jennings

President



*European Softball Federation
Fédération Européenne Softball*

Antwerpen, 30 November 2008

After a lot of contacts with various federations, clubs and others, I have been able to trace most financial question marks.

I have to thank everybody who whelped in this matter.

Where possible, outstanding amounts have been paid to the ESF or refunded by the ESF.

Finally this summer we achieved to have a meeting with Fredy Steger, Ami Baran and myself in Switzerland.

Fredy Steger then gave us some missing files and more information and details.

He also admitted to owe some amount to the ESF, for which amount we agreed a refund schedule, which has now started.

That is why the result 2008 and the balance 2008 start looking much better and much more clear now.

Although it was not in the budget for 2009, we can and should start spending some amounts for development.

For this reason the Executives have decided in the 2008 November meeting to budget the amount of 10.000 euro for development in 2009.

Once again I thank everybody for their help and support in the last year.

Eddy van Straelen

ESF treasurer



British Softball Federation

Motions to ESF Congress 2009

Rule Change 1

For the Technical Commission

The Technical Commissioner for a tournament has the right to over-rule an umpire **during a game** if the Technical Commissioner deems the weather to be unsuitable for further play, either because of rain or excessive heat. Prior to a game commencing it is solely the decision of the Technical Commissioner if a game is to be delayed due to inclement weather.



British Softball Federation

Motions to ESF Congress 2009

Rule Change 2

Current Rule

09.00. Teams subscribing to European Competitions are constituted into Divisions in each Competition. The minimum number of teams in one Competition Division will be four, not including the possible Defending Champion. The maximum number of teams in one Competition Division will be twelve, including the possible defending Champion. The Defending Champion is the Holder of the Title of Division "A" in Cup Competitions.

Proposed Rule Change:

09.00. Teams subscribing to European Competitions are constituted into Divisions in each Competition. The minimum number of teams in one Competition Division will be four, not including the possible Defending Champion. The maximum number of teams in one Competition Division will be **seven**, including the possible defending Champion. The Defending Champion is the Holder of the Title of Division "A" in Cup Competitions.

Date of Proposed Effect of Rule Change: For Competitions commencing in 2010.

Reason for the Rule Change

This year was the first time there were two pools in the European Junior Girls' Championships, but many of the coaches and managers present felt that it made no sense to have a 10-team A Pool and a five-team B Pool when there were self-evidently three or four A Pool teams who would have been at a more suitable competition level in the B Pool. This mirrors the discussions at the 2008 Congress about the desirability of smaller pools in the EChW. But there seems no reason why the same logic and the desirability of more even competition should not apply to any ESF Championship or Cup competition with sufficient teams to create two (or more) pools.



British Softball Federation

Motions to ESF Congress 2009

Rule Change 3

Addition to Competition Regulations

14.06.04

For the competition European Cup Co-Ed Slowpitch (ECCS) for the period 2009 – 2011 the maximum number of "Pick-up Players" on a team's final Competition Roster is 6 (SIX) with the limit of 3 (THREE) female and 3 (THREE) male. From 2012 and beyond the maximum number of "Pick-up Players" shall then be 4 (FOUR) limited to 2 (TWO) female and 2 (TWO) male.

Date of Proposed Effect of Rule Change: For competitions in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Reason for change/addition

In 2005 the player eligibility rule was changed to allow a maximum of 6 "Pick-up Players" for the first three years of competition in the ECCS only. The first ECCS competition took place in 2007, but at the ESF Congress that year the player eligibility rule was changed and the arrangement for the ECCS was inadvertently deleted as a result of the change. This rule will redress the error.



British Softball Federation

Motions to ESF Congress 2009

Rule Change 4

Amendment to Competition Regulations

Current Rule:

09.02. Promotion and relegation of teams occur in the following cases:

09.02.01. As a consequence of the final standing of a team in Competition:

09.02.01.01. Between Divisions A and B of Championship Women Fastpitch only:

09.02.01.01.01. If thirteen teams or less are ranked: the last ranked team of Division A is relegated to Division B and the first ranked team of Division B is promoted to Division A;

09.02.01.01.02. If fourteen teams or more are ranked: the two last ranked teams of Division A are relegated to Division B and the two first ranked teams of Division B are promoted to Division A;

09.02.01.02. Between the other Divisions of Championship Women Fastpitch, and all Divisions of other Competitions, the last ranked team of a Division is relegated to the immediately lower Division and the first ranked team of a Division is promoted to the higher Division.

09.02.01.03. Such promotions and relegations take effect immediately after the completion of the Competition.

Proposed Rule Change:

09.02.01.01. Between Divisions A and B of **all Championship and Cup Competitions**, where such divisions exist, the two last ranked teams of Division A are relegated to Division B and the two first ranked teams of Division B are promoted to Division A.

Articles 09.02.01.01, 09.02.01.01.02 and 09.02.01.02 should be deleted and subsequent clauses modified as necessary.

Effect: Promotion and relegation between A and B Pools will be two up and two down in all European competitions with two pools, not just the Women's Fastpitch Championship.

Date of Proposed Effect of Rule Change: For Competitions completing in 2009; that is, two up and two down will come into effect after Competitions completing in 2009.

Rationale: The same rationale that brought about the change in promotion and relegation from one team to two in the Women's Fastpitch Championship applies to other competitions as well. More teams will play at an appropriate level in each competition, and there will be incentive for more B Pool teams. The one disadvantage – that the Grand Final in the B Pool is slightly devalued because both teams are already promoted – does not outweigh the benefits.

Please note that the British Softball Federation would want this amendment to be considered if the numbers of teams in pools remains as at present or is reduced to eight or seven teams per pool, but not if the number of teams in pools is fixed at six.

Secretary General ESF

De: Jacques Reinenbergh [jacques.reinenbergh@skynet.be]
 Envoyé: samedi 22 novembre 2008 16:33
 À: Patrice BIENFAIT
 Objet: Doc1

Belgium Softball Division

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2009 E.S.F. Congress Amendment to the Rules and Regulations

Proposed change:

Concerning Competitions Regulations: Promotion and Relegation 09.02

Current version 09.02

09.02 . Promotion and relegation of teams occur in the following cases:

09.02.01. As a consequence of the final standing of a team in Competition:

09.02.01.01. Between Divisions A and B of Championships Women Fastpitch or
 09.02.01.01.01. If thirteen or less are ranked: the last ranked team of Division A is relegated to Division B and the first ranked team of Division B is promoted tot Division A

09.02.01.01.02. If fourteen teams or more are ranked: the two last teams of Division A are relegated to Division B and the two first ranked teams of Division B are promoted tot Division A

09.02.01.02. Between the other Divisions of Championship Women Fastpitch, and all Divisions of all other Competitions, the last ranked team of a Division is relegated to the immediately lower Division and the first ranked team of a Division is promoted to the higher Division.

New version proposed in order to avoid semantic discussions

09.02 . Promotion and relegation of teams occur in the following cases:

09.02.01. As a consequence of the final standing of a team in Competition:

09.02.01.01. Between Divisions A of Championships Women (this is Elite, Seniors Under 21, Junior, Cadette, Minime) Fastpitch only:

09.02.01.01.01. If thirteen or less are ranked: the last ranked team of Division A is relegated to Division B and the first ranked team of Division B is promoted tot Division A

09.02.01.01.02. If fourteen teams or more are ranked: the two last teams of Division A are relegated to Division B and the two first ranked teams of Division B are promoted tot Division A

09.02.01.02. Between the other Divisions (this is Divisions B, C, etc.) of Championship Women (this is Elite, Seniors, Under 21, Junior, Cadette, Minime Fastpitch, and all Divisions of all other Competitions (all divisions Men Fastpitch and all Slowpitch Competitions), the last ranked team of a Division is relegated to the immediately lower Division and the first ranked team of a Division is promoted to the higher Division.

Jacques Reinenbergh
 Manager Belgium Softball Division

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MOTION FROM THE BULGARIAN SOFTBALL FEDERATION

On the following rule of the competition regulations...

14.07.02 “8 years for Minime, 10 years for Cadette, 14 years for Junior, 17 years for Under-22 and Senior”.

... the Bulgarian Softball Federation suggests the following change:

14.07.02 “8 years for Minime, 10 years for Cadette, 14 years for Junior, 15 years for Under-22 and Senior in B Pool competition and 17 years for Under-22 and Senior in A Pool competition”.

Justification:

The level in B Pool play is much lower than the level in A Pool competition, so the possibility of danger and injuries is also lower. After serious inspection* of the physical abilities of Junior players we came to the conclusion that players at 15 years of age are capable of playing games in Under-22 and Senior B Pool competitions without any more risk of injury than older players.

There are a number of 15-year-old players who give similar or in some cases even better performances than women at B Pool level.

* The physical tests that allowed us to reach our conclusion were performed for us by the Bulgarian National Sports Academy, a sports authority with worldwide recognition.

We propose the change to be put into effect immediately, if accepted.

Gergana Handjiyska

Secretary General
Bulgarian Softball Federation





ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ADMISSIBLE NOMINATIONS

Position	Candidate		Nominated by :
PRESIDENT	Michael JENNINGS	(GBR)	GBR
	Jacques REINENBERGH	(BEL)	BEL
	André van OVERBEEK	(NED)	NED
SECRETARY GENERAL	Patrice BIENFAIT	(FRA)	FRA
TREASURER	Eddy VAN STRAELEN	(BEL)	BEL
VICE PRESIDENTS (6 seats - including First Vice President)	Ami BARAN	(ISR)	ISR
	Michael JENNINGS	(GBR)	GBR
	Robert MILOSAVLJEVIC	(CRO)	CRO
	Giovanni SANNA	(ITA)	ITA
	Michael SCHMIDT	(AUT)	AUT
	Slava SMAGIN	(RUS)	RUS
	Gilbert TOBBACK	(BEL)	BEL
	Maria Jesús VÁZQUEZ	(ESP)	S.4.5.2.3.
Gabriel WAAGE	(CZE)	CZE	

ALL NOMINATIONS ACCORDING TO ARTICLES 2.2.2 & 4.5.2 OF THE STATUTES OF THE ESF