

ESF Congress 2015 - Summary

ESF CONGRESS LOOKS AT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

The 2015 ESF Congress was held in Dublin, Ireland on 6-7 February together with the CEB Congress, with representatives from the ISF, IBAF and WBSC present. This article will look at the most important and interesting news from the Congress.

WBSC Session

Delegates from both Congresses met for a joint session on Friday afternoon, 6 February, and heard from WBSC Vice President and International Softball Federation President Dale McMann and World Baseball Softball Confederation and International Baseball Federation President Riccardo Fraccari that the logic of potential Olympic reinstatement means that baseball and softball “not only have to be together in the WBSC, but have to be seen to be together”.

On a world level, and from a public point of view, this means that the International Baseball and Softball Federations will now be known as WBSC Baseball Division and WBSC Softball Division.

Dale McMann went on to commend the development work that has taken place in European softball.

Presentations

Some special guests made presentations at the ESF Congress.

Michelle Smith and Kevin Smith, representing the Clearwater (Florida) Sport Commission (<http://www.sportsspc.com/>), are working on plans to improve level of softball in Europe by offering more clinics and much needed know-how, both for developing countries and the top softball countries in Europe. The Clearwater Sports Commission was one of the sponsors of the ESF Congress, along with Musco Lighting, a company that provides lighting solutions for sports facilities. Musco has developed a special type of lights for softball and baseball fields that create the best possible conditions for players (<http://www.musco.com/>).

Petra Cizmic from Croatia presented ideas and experiences from working with European Commission programs such as Erasmus Plus and Erasmus Plus Sports. Petra has already implemented player and coach exchange programs and recently secured European funding to organize an event for 60 players from three countries. Petra (pcizmic@gmail.com) can provide information and advice on securing European funding for softball projects, along with Mette Nissen-Jakobsen (mnissen@europeansoftball.org).

Coaches Committee

Mattias Grimstoft from Sweden has been asked to start an ESF Coaches Committee to connect coaches in Europe and to establish a European Coaches Convention that can be held on a regular basis.

As softball grows in Europe, there is a pressing need to improve coaching skills and knowledge to help our players develop.

Development Commission

The Development Commission heard presentations on how softball participation has been grown in European countries.

Anton Kops talked about the impact that Beeball has had in the Netherlands and elsewhere, and John Austin talked about slowpitch development. A European All-Star Team was invited to play at last year's Border Battle that pits the best men's slowpitch players from the US and Canada against each other, and a European team should continue to attend the tournament in future.

Marketing Committee

The ESF Marketing Committee presented a new look to the ESF logo and introduced a new photo contest project [ESF 2015 Photofest](#). The main prize will be a trip to the final two days of an ESF competition of the winner's choice.

The ESF website also now features a new [Competition Locator](#).

Championship Draws

Draws took place at the Congress to allocate teams to pools for the European Women's and Cadette Fastpitch Championships, and you can review the draws [here](#). Or watch the draw at our [YouTube channel](#)

It was announced by the Technical and Competitions Committee that individual awards will no longer be presented by the ESF at its tournaments, as these awards have proved controversial in the past and it is difficult to find a formula for deciding them over the course of a short event. However, tournament organizers can present individual and other awards as they choose.

Members and Awards

The Lithuanian Softball and Baseball Federations have parted ways and the newly-established Lithuanian Softball Federation was approved as an ESF member.

Jens Terkelsen from Denmark was elected to the ESF Hall of Fame and the Czech Republic was recognised as the Little League country of the year.