

IFF President's report from SOWG in Los Angeles July 24-27, 2015

Participants: Tomas Eriksson, IFF President

Report on present issues

1. Invitation to SOWG in Los Angeles July 24 – August 2

Mr. Eriksson was with Mr Liljelund invited as Honorary Guests to attend the SOWG. Mr Liljelund was not able to attend the games.

My hosts during my stay were Mr Mariusz Damentko (Sports Director), and Mr Krzysztof Krukowski (Director Organisational Development), both from Europe/Eurasia region office placed in Warsaw. Europe/Eurasia is one out of seven regions, the regions are Africa, Asia Pacific, East Asia, Europe – Eurasia, Latin America, Middle East North Africa, and North-America. The organisation of the SOWG is “exactly” like the Olympic Games, or the Universiade, hence you are provided with a host and driver (car) of the duration of my stay.

2. The Special Olympics World Games

2.1. General information on the SOWG

The SOWG has been organized since the 1968, founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The SOWG is organized for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Today the Chairman is Timothy Shriver, and the HQ is located in Washington. The Winter and Summer WG are organized every four years. Together the SO offer some 30+ Olympic and non-olympic sports, where Floorball is on the Winter Games.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Since 1988 the www.specialolympics.org is recognized by the IOC. The SO have some 21 sport federation partnerships, out of which Floorball is one. Floorball is on the winter games, appearing next time 2017 in Austria.

3. Report from meetings during SOWG 2015 in LA

3.1 Mr. Jon-Paul St Germain, Director World Games and Competitions

- Jon-Paul stated that Floorball, and co-operation with IFF, is a role model example within SOWG how co-operation should work, with arranging seminars, and educational workshops (on eland latest). SOWG conveyed many thanks to IFF and to Merita and John, for effective and fruitful co-operation. He mentioned that IFF and SO have ongoing discussions how to monitor playing unified.

3.2 Professor John Nagarajan (from Chennai, India) Sports Manager Asia Pacific region

Mr. Mariusz introduced me to Professor John, who gave me a hand written letter stating that Floorball is growing within his territory that is in 27 countries, where we in IFF could have another roughly 10-15 potential new members. Professor John asked how is situation with potential support, with seminars/clinics and with equipment. I conveyed the message how IFF is working with seminars today and promised to take it up with my secretary general responsible for development within IFF. Presently Floor Hockey is on the program, but according to Professor John, Floor Hockey have problems getting materials and is quite expensive, and hence Floorball is gaining raise in popularity.

**Report on
present issues
(Cont.)**

3.3 Mr. Greg Epperson SO North America region, Senior Director Sports and planning

Mr. Mariusz introduced me to Mr. Greg Epperson, it was a very short meeting. Mariusz conveyed the message that it is hard to implement in the Americas, but a seminar could be to move things forward.

3.4. Meeting SO Norway President, vice President and Secretary general

Norway is since 1993 one sports body, (Sports Confederation and NOC and Paralympic all together) and is working with their 54 NSA having "outsourced" the sports to the respective NSA. Norway is a good example how to integrate all para activities within respective NSA. I meet with Mr. Tom Tvedt (newly elected President), Mrs. Kristin Kloster Aasen vice President (responsible SO and Paralympic), and with secretary general Mr. Inge Andersen. One subject might be to have NIF do a presentation to IFF members as best practice.

3.5. Badminton World Federation Mr. Ian Wright Director of Development

Mr. Ian right is stationed in Kuala Lumpur, and has dedicated his last well twenty + years coaching badminton (12 years in France, 5 in Norway as few examples), now in his capacity as director of development. Mr. Wright was more interested how is SO and Floorball working.

3.6. Meeting Mr. Brian Quinn working for SOI Unified division

I meet with Mr. Quinn who works at SOI for the Unified sports, at a workshop held at USC University of Southern California, at basketball. The Olympian Sam Perkins and the Olympian Michael Phelps gave their input from basketball and swimming respectively, how fruitful unified is within SO. Mr. Quinn asked much about Floorball and IFF, and Mr. Quinn himself stated "Floorball playing unified with four players, should not the goalie be an athlete?" I said that my IFF SO Floorball team have these talks with SOI, SOI wanting 2 players + 2 partners, but IFF wanting 3+1 respectively in order to have good involvement from all players. I believe these talks were good that more SOI guys could learn even more about Floorball both or not unified.

3.7. Meeting Mr. Jan Coolen, secretary general International School sports Federation

I meet shortly with Mr. Coolen from ISF. ISF has a new very active President from France, Mr. Laurent Petrynka, and it seems that the MoU between ISF and FISU leads to that some ISF sports winners can take part in FISU University Championships (e.g. in Triathlon, Orienteering, Cross Country). I asked about the future of Floorball School Championships but Mr. Coolen was not that updated. 2007 was organized in Czech Republic, 2009 in Slovakia, and in 2011 in Czech Republic again. ISF has some 21 different sports (Floorball included) that they recognize.

4. Taking part in Opening Ceremony and at Prizing Ceremony as Honoured Guest

As an Honoured Guest (HG) you are chosen, very strict protocol, to join in and walk in to the stadium with the Athletes at the Opening Ceremony. This decision lies with the SOI, and is connected with your nationality, so hence I walked in with the Swedish SO Athletes, and it was only I and our Swedish Minister of Sports, Mr. Gabriel Wikström who were chosen. The Opening ceremony was broadcast live on www.espn.go.com with the First Lady Michelle Obama attending as Patron, with lots of world star singing and dancing, as the Olympic Games. Hence the security was extremely strict.

I was also chosen to attend Aquatics and Present awards, medals to SO Athletes.

5. Attending other Sports

I attended with Mr. Mariusz table tennis, badminton, bocce, powerlifting, basketball, and aquatics.

Report on present issues (Cont.)

Upcoming meetings and issues

- Follow-up on how to organise “Unified” in Floorball (Merita/John)
- Follow – up on how start co-operation with Asia Pacific region (Professor John, Senior Manager Sports) through advice Mr Mariusz (John)
- Follow up on maybe invite Mr. Greg Epperson (The North Americas senior Director Sports) to the WFC U129 in Belleville Canada (John)
- Follow up on Norway NIF how to as best practise to join forces Floorball and Para Floorball within respective country to get more Para Floorball activities nationally as well as internationally (John)
- Follow up with Mr. Coolen on future ISF Games in Floorball (John)
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Issues that need to be discussed or decided upon or taken action upon

New ideas, etc...