

IFF – ICEWH (International Committee Electric Wheelchair Hockey) Meeting 4th of October 2008

Report on present issues

1. Participants:

Ms. Anja Wouters (ICEWH Executive Member, NED)
Mr. Kenny Verbraekel (ICEWH Secretary, EWH player, NED)
Merita Bruun from the IFF

The meeting was held in connection with the international Electric Wheelchair hockey tournament for club teams (12 teams from 6 nations played) organised by the Iron Cats from Zürich.

2. History and Organisation of ICEWH

- International development from the 80's.
- First International Sports Assembly in 2002 when the international committee was founded.
- 1st World Championships in Helsinki 2004, European Championship in Rome.
- ICEWH is Working under IWAS since 2005 (International Wheelchair & Amputee Sports Federation) the governing body of several wheelchair sports.
- IWAS is under IPC (Para Olympic Committee).
- ICEWH pays Membership fees are paid to IWAS and some economic support is received from IWAS that has a big contact network, news & events and examples from other sports & regulations.
- The EWH is aimed for persons who are not able to play with manual wheelchairs (if you can play wheelchair basketball, you do not play EWH). The target group is the team sport players who only can do sport in electric wheelchairs.
- At the moment there are 12 nations participating in the ICEWH activities on two continents (Europe, Australia) and 2 nations are on their way.
- Strongest countries: Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Italy, Australia and Czech Republic.
- Other potential countries are: Canada, USA, Estonia, Slovenia, Sweden, Norway and New Zealand.
- The nations wanting to participate in the ICEWH events need to become members of IWAS to join EWH. Some countries are playing EWH, but are not yet members of IWAS and do not have the contact with the organisation for disabled in their country.
- ICEWH organises Biannual Sports Assemblies (4 years in between in the future), World championships, European Championships (for Adults) with a maximum 12 teams (new proposal to have only 8 teams with qualifications) and Development events.
- Executive Board with three members (trying to get five in the future), ICEWH is a sport section of the IWAS and the ICEWH Executive Board functions in the IWAS for the EWH sport.
- ICEWH has a Medical Committee, which is working on the classification system (now using the German system) according to IPC system, already minimal disability system with 5-6 criteria. ICEWH has a Rules & regulations committee (rules can be changed in Sports Assemblies).

3. Different versions of the game around the world:

- Power hockey (USA & Canada).
 - Influenced by ice hockey. More contact, off sides, protection, high balls, but also they are starting to use Floorball equipment more and more (ball, most of the sticks). Not recognised by IWAS.
- Electric hockey in low chairs (Denmark, Norway, Sweden).
 - They play with specially designed low chairs, 3 versus 3, only t-sticks are allowed. There might be only one company building the chairs, fewer possibilities for top sports and playing opportunities. Not recognised by IWAS.
- Manual Wheelchair hockey (not yet internationally organised)
- Australia has yet one additional model of playing, but in Sydney they also play EWH.

4. Why move into Electric Wheelchair hockey?

- Possibility for Floorball to have an internationally recognised sport for disabled persons.
- EWH is the most potential electric wheelchair “hockey” sport, since it is already internationally established.
- A lot of similarities with Floorball: Floorball equipment, almost same amount of players (4-4 + goalkeeper), played in a rink, similar rules (16x26 size of the field, because of the lack of power).
- Players who still can use hands can play as both hand sticks and T-sticks are allowed to play with a minimum of two T-sticks on the field at the same time.
- ICEWH is a member of IWAS and game rules accepted by the ICEWH Sports assembly.
- Potential to grow worldwide as more countries are adopting the ICEWH rules.
- Players can play with their own daily life chairs although special sport chairs are becoming more popular.
- EWH organisations & clubs already in close cooperation with Floorball organisations (Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Slovenia and Spain). Only in the Netherlands the EWH clubs have contact with the National Field hockey Federation.

5. What else could the cooperation deliver both parties:

- Change of information within the organisations and connect the sports in the mutual member countries.
- Information & marketing on website. Promotion on website, shared events (sport presentation). Logos, Links.
- Exchange of Rules & Regulations.
- Information letter.
- Shared education materials and events (also within the national sports federation (as in Finland)).
- The name to change to Floorball???

6. Aims of ICEWH

- The ultimate aim is still to reach Para Olympic Status. The original plan was to become a demonstration sport in 2012, but demonstration sports are no more included in the Para Olympics program.
- Not only focusing on becoming a Para Olympic sport
 - To play together with EWH nations that want international competitions.
 - To have a regular sporting organisation, Field hockey or Floorball.
 - EWH has similarities with Field hockey, ice hockey and Floorball.
 - Pros and cons of Field hockey: EWH need to be integrated with an Olympic sport to become a Para Olympic sport, but there is already field hockey for walking disabled and mentally disabled and there are no real similarities with field hockey except the name hockey. Field hockey is not so interested towards the cooperation, because of the lack of similarities.
- The cooperation question is still open, but Floorball most potential partner because of the similarities.

Upcoming meetings and issues

- The cooperation with IFF is only yet an idea of the ICEWH. Executive board and is to be presented as an item in the Sports Assembly on November the 16-17th 2008, where every country inside IWAS is invited, mostly only EWH countries (7-8 countries usually).
 - If the ICEWH Executive board receives positive feedback and the IFF CB supports the cooperation, the cooperation should increase.
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Issues that need to be discussed or decided upon or taken action upon

- To discuss the future cooperation within the IFF CB and inform the ICEWH of the decision.
 - The ICEWH to present the idea of cooperation at their Sports Assembly in November 16th – 17th 2008.
 - If the ICEWH Sports Assembly supports the cooperation with IFF, the ICEWH is to put forward a cooperation proposal to the IFF.
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New ideas, etc...