

2023 IFAF ANNUAL CONGRESS MINUTES

Paris, France
November 25, 2023



Introductory Note

The 2023 IFAF Annual Congress was held at the Stade Jean-Bouin in Paris, France

IFAF Representatives and Meeting Administrators

- Pierre Trochet, IFAF President
- Jim Mullin, IFAF General Secretary
- Michael Eschlbock, IFAF Financial Director
- Mak Koshi, IFAF Director of Development
- Scott Hallenbeck, IFAF Vice President
- Roope Noronen, IFAF Director of Competitions
- Andy Fuller, IFAF Managing Director
- Parliamentarian: Jason E. Robinson, CP (Sport Law, Canada)
- Minute Taker: Michael Preston

Pre-Congress Addresses

Opening Remarks

IFAF President Pierre Trochet

- Welcomed participants to Paris, France

Presentations

IFAF welcomed support and presentations from the following contributors and partners:

Keynote Speakers 1

Jonny Turner, Sport:80

Cam O'Riordan, etrainu

Keynote Speaker 2

Ed Hawkins, ITrustSport

Keynote Speaker 3

Max Koessler, IFAF Academy

Keynote Speaker 4

Afia Law, International Flag Football Development & Youth Marketing Manager, NFL

Keynote Speaker 5

Aer Lingus College Football Classic presentation

Conclusion

Andy Fuller, IFAF Managing Director

--CONGRESS BREAK--

Roll Call of IFAF member Federations in Attendance. The list was read in order of registration.

Participating Nations

Full Members x3 votes	Assoc Members x1 vote	Allied Members
Israel	Czechia	Nicaragua
Sweden	New Zealand	Ghana
Switzerland	Cameroon	Tunisia
Denmark	Turkey	Ivory Coast
Panama	Belgium	Georgia
Japan	Netherlands	Malaysia
France	Serbia	Luxembourg
Italy	India	El Salvador
Norway	Ireland	
Germany		
Finland		
Austria		
United States		
Canada		

There were 42 full member votes present plus 9 associate member votes for a total of 51 votes.

IFAF Congress Called to Order: 13:22 CET

- Meeting was called to order by IFAF President Pierre Trochet
- Jim Mullin was nominated to chair the meeting and there were no objections.

Member Nations had been invited to send delegates to attend in person.
Member nations eligible to vote were able to do so at the Congress venue.

Voting

Voting was managed by an independent third party: Sport Law.

- 23 voting delegates representing 51 votes were confirmed by Managing Director Andy Fuller
- IFAF General Secretary Jim Mullin declared a quorum – meeting is duly called.

IFAF President Pierre Trochet delivered his opening speech, thanking the French federation for their hospitality in the city of Paris, where IFAF established its headquarters 25 years ago, and the city that brought the Olympic flame back to life more than 100 years ago.

President Trochet reviewed the growth of the sport and how since the period of the pandemic, IFAF has looked to the future. He underlined how IFAF is continuing compliance under French law, while encouraging federations to build relationships with their communities and governments and presented highlights of IFAF during its 25th year.

President Trochet outlined resources that have been launched and are being established to benefit IFAF members and summarised successful IFAF competitions. He spoke of the rise in popularity of flag football and the vision for the sport since its inclusion by the IOC in the 2028 Olympic Games programme, remembering the spirit of partnership and humility that achieved that goal. He explained that IFAF's role is to protect, cherish and return the game stronger to the next generation.

Appointment of Scrutineer

Jason E. Robinson was appointed as meeting scrutineer by General Secretary Mullin with no objections.

Appointment of Minutes Reviewers

General Secretary Mullin invited nominations for delegates who will read these Congress minutes for review:

Norway
United States
India

Approval of 2022 Congress Minutes

The Minutes from the 2022 Congress were approved.

Report of the Executive Board

Report of the Executive Board covering the period of the last year by IFAF Managing Director Andy Fuller.

- A momentous year for IFAF
- During 2024, the IOC will approve the qualification principles for the Olympic Games and once those are in place, IFAF will confirm the competition structure and qualification system.
- Competition overview of flag and tackle football championships in 2023 in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Oceania.
- History is going to be made in 2024 with the largest iteration of a flag football championships in Finland and the U20 Junior World Championship in Canada.
- The World Championships will serve as the road to Chengdu for The World Games 2025.
- The reason for only the women's flag football competition being included in The World Games was explained. The performances of the teams at the 2022 World Games and the development of IFAF competitions was recognised by the 2025 organisers for their quality.

- Recognised the late Wolfgang Geyer for his impact on the game of flag football and his contribution towards IOC inclusion.
- IFAF will explore IOC eSports development opportunities.
- IFAF received full recognition of the IOC on October 16, 2023, following a robust multi-year assessment during which IFAF was scrutinised.
- IFAF is now committed to continued improvement to meet expectations and develop the sport.
- Recognised the CWA agency that IFAF engaged on the journey to the process of LA28 inclusion, Janie Soubliere who works with IFAF to ensure WADA compliance and medical compliance, and Billy Gannon from the Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport.
- Thanked the IFAF federations for the invaluable work that they do as core partners and recognised that their actions are the reason flag football has been included on the LA28 programme.
- From here, IFAF will transform to enable its members, sport, and athletes to thrive.
- IFAF prioritised and will continue to prioritise its core processes to benefit the sport and members: Control, Integrity, Development, Democracy, Transparency.
- IFAF members will now be called upon to embrace Partnerships, Robust Governance, Data Capture and Reporting to meet stakeholder expectations and increase future opportunities.

Competitions presentations

Javier L'Episcopo, Continental Director for the Americas

- Outlined challenges and opportunities that arose from the 2023 tournament hosted by the United States.
- Outlined long term planning of competitions in the Americas.

Roope Noronen, Director of Competitions

- Provided an overview of men's and women's tackle tournaments; flag football men's, women's, youth, and mixed tournaments; and U19 competitions in 2023.
- Confirmed that the competition format for tackle football has proved to be effective.
- Explained some of the challenges associated with hosting tournaments and games.
- Outlined long-term planning of competitions in Europe.

Erin Brown, Commissioner, American Football Ireland

- Provided a brief review of the successful 2023 IFAF European Flag Football Championships hosted in Limerick and encouraged smaller nations to consider hosting events to benefit their development and profile.

Fabio Tortosa, Board Member, FIDAF

- Thanked all federations that attended the IFAF Youth Flag Football tournament in Italy and IFAF for the opportunity to host the event.

Russell McConnochie, Continental Director for Asia-Oceania

- Reviewed the inaugural Asia-Oceania Flag Football Championships, explaining meeting the requirement to deliver a quality competition to create ambassadors for the sport to aid development in each participating nation.
- Highlighted the continued focus to ensure consistency among officiating.
- Declared that there is considerable potential for flag football in the region.
- Explained that the distance within the region between countries creates challenges in terms of travel and cost, so the athletes themselves invest considerably when participating.
- Outlined planning of competitions in Asia-Oceania at adult and youth levels.

—CONGRESS BREAK—

IFAF Congress resumed at 15:19

Membership of Nations

Managing Director Andy Fuller provided an update.

- IFAF received requests from two Allied members for Associate membership for 2024:
 - Argentina: long-standing members whose team competed in the IFAF Americas Flag Football Championships, provided relevant documentation, are well-governed and have put processes in place to become a member of IFAF
 - Andy Fuller endorsed their bid, with the provision that they transition finances to a corporate bank account through 2024.
 - Austria proposed
 - Canada seconded
 - Vote: Unanimous
 - Argentina approved as an IFAF Associate member
 - Georgia: have provided substantial documentation in addition to a letter that they should be recognised by IFAF from the Georgia Olympic committee.
 - Andy Fuller endorsed their bid
 - Austria proposed
 - Israel seconded
 - Vote: Unanimous
 - Georgia approved as an IFAF Associate member
 - Georgia representative thanked the IFAF membership and promised to enter all future IFAF international tournaments.

Presentation of Financial Statements

Delivered by Managing Director Andy Fuller

- IFAF has transitioned all accounting to France.

- Grateful for the extensive and diligent work performed previously by Connie Fisher.
- Two IFAF accounts were merged and audited to ensure IFAF is fully compliant with standards expected of a federation in France and best practice within the Olympic movement.
- A fully independent audit has been certified to French standards via Accord Sport.
- The finances were distorted by income and expenditure relating to The World Games – where IFAF received payments from nations intended for the LOC.

- Income
 - Grants
 - Membership fees
 - Competition entry fees
 - World Games accommodation fees collected on behalf of BHM LOC
 - Foreign exchanges gains
- Expenses
 - Investment in governance
 - The Rematch Event in Los Angeles in partnership with USA Football
 - World Games accommodation expenses on behalf of participating nations
 - Annual debt repayment to our creditor members
 - Foreign exchanges losses

- Net income of +214 257€, allocated to reserves for the 2023 financial year.

2023 Financial Activity

Delivered by President Pierre Trochet

- The fiscal year remains from January to December.
- We need to change the way we present our operating budgets. The annual end-of-year congress cannot seriously vote on a budget that is already +95% complete.
- The great variability of our revenues over the 2023-2024 cycle demands a high degree of flexibility, and the Board will monitor the execution of the finances.
- Working with legal counsel, IFAF will determine the best strategy for 2024.
- Fiscal 2023 is a year of campaign investment as part of Flag Football's inclusion in the 2028 Olympic Games program.
- 2024 will have to be a continuation of the campaign but also an investment in our competitions. Our mission is to create new sources of revenue

- *Principle revenues* – 920 000€
 - Grants
 - Memberships
 - Entry Fees
 - Contingency
- *Principle expenses* – 972 100€
 - Legal
 - Staff
 - Vision 28 – Los Angeles Olympic Games
 - Digitalisation
 - Debt
 - Support of competitions
 - Governance

- The year 2023 could see a substantial budget deficit (- 52 100€), albeit a controlled one in a campaign year. This deficit will be absorbed by the federation's reserves from 2022.

Consideration of submitted Motions / Proposals

MD Andy Fuller presented the motion to include a member of the National Football League on the IFAF Executive Board.

- Speaks to the progressive relationship the two organisations have formed.
- This work will be critical to the success of IFAF and provides multiple opportunities to the benefit of IFAF members and the growth of the sport worldwide.

Neal Lachmany from Earvin and Lew presented IFAF Statutes revisions required:

Motion One

That the IFAF Executive Board have a designated Board Member role with voting entitlement, for a representative of the National Football League.

- Proposed USA
- Seconded Finland
 - Austria asked if it would be smarter to create an alternative to means to include an NFL representative in case another league such as the CFL wishes to join?
 - Pierre Trochet replied that this is more than a membership; it is underlining the support of the NFL and its partnership with IFAF.
 - Canada asked if the motion would create two members for the United States?
 - Pierre Trochet replied that it will not and that IFAF cannot have a federation with two members, explaining that the member from the United States is USA Football.
 - Andy Fuller clarified there is only one member federation, but that there may be two Board members of the same nationality on the IFAF Board.
- Vote: Unanimous
- IFAF will adopt the statutes revisions.
- Pierre welcome Brett Gosper Head of NFL in Europe spoke and noted that he is pleased with the outcome and the investment here is important to the NFL and that they have seen great commitment from Pierre Trochet and IFAF. He said that the NFL is committed to development in key NFL markets and all markets across the world and that the IOC recognition is an important win for the NFL, which now has to ensure that flag football becomes a core Olympic sport.

Motion Two

IOC or WADA recommendation

A Member may be suspended from membership and / or be subject to other sanction upon formal recommendation by the International Olympic Committee and / or the World Anti-Doping Agency. Where a recommendation is made by either of these bodies the IFAF Board have full jurisdiction to implement the decision.

- Norway Proposed
- Canada Seconded
- Japan Requested a clearer explanation of a potential suspension and enquired if the federation has a legal opportunity to defend its case.
- Andy Fuller explained that mandates and similar requirements were put in place before teams could compete in the IFAF World Championships 2021 (Team Neutral) so this is not without precedence. This change to the statutes allows the IFAF Board to resolve issues more effectively.
- Andy Fuller added that all parties will be afforded the opportunity to state their case before a suspension is passed.
- Vote: Unanimous

Motion Three

That the IFAF Statutes be amended to reflect stronger compliance with the legal and financial requirements of its French Legal Seat and to reflect better governance practice.

- Proposed: Austria
- Seconded: USA
- Switzerland questioned why the original two motions were split into three parts during the Congress.
- Jason E. Robinson explained that there was no concern regarding splitting the motion.
- Vote: Unanimous

Election of Board Members for period of 2023-2026

Continental Roles: Africa, Asia, Europe

- Three positions were vacant:
 - Africa
 - Asia
 - Europe
- Africa: Awasum E.M. Jr proposed and introduced himself
- Jim Mullin approved
- Tunisia Seconded
- Vote carried
- Asia: Daryll Nathaniel proposed and introduced himself
- Jim Mullin approved
- Japan seconded
- Vote carried
- Europe: Gregor Murth proposed and introduced himself
- Jim Mullin approved
- Switzerland seconded
- Vote carried

Any other business

- None

Congress 2024

- Pierre Trochet requested that IFAF meet in 2024 in the IOC home of Lausanne and requested that the membership approve.
- Motion approved

Final remarks

- Pierre Trochet noted that sport is back in the heart of IFAF and that is very enjoyable.
- Michael Eschlboeck, Austria, suggested a meeting to be held by European federations present the following the Congress.

- Namdev Shirgaonkar, India, congratulated the IFAF Board on the successes of 2023.

Closure of Congress by Jim Mullin at 16:34 CET

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