



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

CONGRESS 2020



**INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION**
OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Introductory Note

The 2020 IFAF Congress was held virtually due to travel restrictions relating to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Congress Date

Congress was held on December 5th, 2020.

Registrants

Pichet Sithi-Amnuai	Thailand	Robert Sundberg	Sweden
Pete Ackerley	Great Britain	Pierre Trochet	France
Cesar Barrera	Mexico	Steve Leibowitz	Israel
Peter Horváth	Hungary	Michal Rosival	Czechia
Aleksandr Ilichev	Russia	Darrin Mitchell	Australia
Suyoung Chang	Korea	Aidan Maguire	Ireland
Goran Nisavic	Serbia	Jaime Mejia	Colombia
Timothy Jim	PNG	Claudio Spescha	Switzerland
Plante Kibadhi	Congo	Koichiro Hirasawa	Japan
Abednigo Mashuka	Zimbabwe	Yurii Hundych	
Marco Antonio Cobar	Guatemala	Moses Ondeng	Kenya
Juan Raskoff	Honduras	Luis Palma Pantoja	Chile
Isai Bulnes		Mishaal Al Sabah	Kuwait
Richard Vogt	Norway	Christophe Olenaed	Belgium
Yonah Mishaan	Israel	Namdev Shirgaonkar	India
Jaime Mejia	Colombia	Jim Mullin	Canada
Tristan Genêt	France	Carsten Dalkowski	Germany
Fabio Tortosa	Italy	Tarik Mouh	Morocco
Guillermo Suarez	Panama	Cynthia Cedeño	Panama
FECOFA (COLOMBIA)	Colombia	Erika Wiman Snäll	Sweden
Steven George Okeng	Uganda	Robert Huber	Germany
Michel Straehl	Switzerland	Stephane-Frédéric Mboua	Ivory Coast
Anders Skovgren	Denmark	Felipe Pereira	Brazil
KK Park	IFAF	Hussam Yaseen	Jordan
Javier L'Episcopo	Argentina	Christoph Seyrl	Austria
Eduardo Cordoba	Nicaragua	Shaun Dove	Australia
Russell McConnochie	New Zealand	Ali Rafeek	Egypt
Den Polubinsky	Ukraine	Ryan Horning	USA
Monica Saldias Medina	Chile	Lars Carlsen	Denmark
Javier Carrasco Jiménez	Spain	Roope Noronen	Finland
Branko Vucinic	Serbia	Jake Kerr	Jordan
Stephen Radebe	South Africa	Marko Garay Osorio	
Michal Slastan	Slovakia	Benedick Sejour	Haiti
Artemiy Rogovoy	Russia	Steve Agreda	El Salvador
Makoto Koshi	Japan	Eric Mayes	USA
Andrei	Belarus		

Additional Attendee

Nick Flowers South Africa

IFAF Leadership Present

Richard MacLean	President
Scott Hallenbeck	Vice President
Mac Kaneuji	Director of Development
Marie Solhaug	Director of Finance
Dr Gregor Murth	Continental Director
Dr KK Park	Continental Director
Michael Ryan	Continental Director
Jaime Carrizo	Continental Director
George Alwanga	Continental Director
Andy Fuller	Managing Director

Apologies

Kasper Linden Director of Competitions

Opening Speech of the President of IFAF

Richard MacLean called the meeting to order at 10:01 EST and proceeded to give a Welcome Address.

The Welcome Address is contained in Appendix One.

1. Appointment of two scrutinisers.

Prior to nominations being accepted for the scrutineers, Andy Fuller highlighted that the voting process would be online and captured on video. The video would be kept as a record of the meeting should validation be required.

Felipe Pereira (Brazil) offered. Mr Pereira was seconded by the United States.

Javier L'Episcopo (Argentina) offered. Mr L'Episcopo was seconded by Australia

Norway endorsed both candidates.

2. Appointment of three delegates to whom the Minutes must be submitted to for review.

Eric Mayes (United States) offered. Mr Mayes was seconded by Brazil and Germany.

Aiden Maguire (Ireland) offered. Mr Maguire was seconded by Great Britain and Haiti.

Erika Wiman Snäll (Sweden) offered. Ms Wiman Snäll was seconded by Israel.

3. Approval of the Minutes from the 2019 Congress.

President MacLean asked nations whether or not they had any issues to raise regarding the published Minutes from the 2019 Congress. These had been circulated and published on the IFAF website.

No issues were raised by the Members.

Members were asked to vote on approving or rejecting the Minutes.

The Minutes were approved by Majority decision.

4. Report of the Executive Board covering the period of the last year.

The Report of the Executive Board was delivered by Vice President, Scott Hallenbeck.

Mr Hallenbeck echoed the sentiments of President MacLean in his opening speech.

Mr Hallenbeck outlined the Strategic Plan's core pillars and thanked members for taking part in providing feedback on the Plan and for contributing to its delivery. Mr Hallenbeck outlined the challenges that the pandemic has raised in the delivery of the Plan, both for IFAF and for its collective membership.

Mr Hallenbeck identified key areas of progress to celebrate. Firstly, the area of governance was addressed. Mr Hallenbeck reaffirmed IFAF's commitment to good governance and ensuring that this was benchmarked against best practice identified by key stakeholders like the IOC.

The inclusion of Flag Football in The World Games was celebrated, ensuring IFAF's presence in global multisport events. This was in part a testament to the standard of recent IFAF events and the competitiveness of our member nations.

Mr Hallenbeck emphasised that IFAF was delighted that the NFL are partnering for the event.

Mr Hallenbeck went on to address that:

Over the course of 2021 IFAF will launch a new brand which is digital-first.

IFAF will continue to focus upon its championship portfolio.

Spain is scheduled to host the 2021 IFAF Flag Football World Championships. The standard of bidding was very competitive and speaks to the high standards our members set and aspire to.

IFAF is committed to growing its continental activity to build the universality of the sport both for tackle and flag football.

IFAF is committed to supporting nations becoming recognised by their governments and / or their National Olympic Committees.

IFAF is committed to seeking inclusion in the Olympic Programme.

IFAF is committed to supporting nations in enhancing their development plans, focusing upon Long-Term Athlete Development and the strengthening of coaching, officiating and administrative programmes. Where members have strong offerings IFAF can facilitate working relationships between members to share these.

IFAF will report at the 2021 Congress on strategic partnerships. These are currently under review, largely due to the changing landscape caused by the pandemic. Nations were encouraged to identify potential local stakeholders that could play a role in that.

President MacLean invited questions for Mr Hallenbeck and the IFAF leadership.

No questions arose.

5. Presentation of the latest financial statement.

Richard MacLean introduced the financial statement.

President MacLean thanked Marie Solhaug (Dir. of Finance) for her work in managing the finances along with the Managing Director.

A statement has been provided by IFAF's accountancy firm which covers the prior two years of activity. This had been circulated in advance.

In regard to the current year, finances had been impacted by the effect of the pandemic and IFAF was cautious with expenditure due to ongoing legal matters.

President MacLean invited questions on the 2018 and 2019 report. No questions arose.

Mr Fuller provided greater detail on the 2020 financial situation.

Membership fees are the primary source of revenue (given the lack of competition revenue) and there are three core expense areas:

- Clean Sport and anti-doping
- Legal fees (notably defending the current legal claim)
- Branding and digital platform

Mr Fuller highlighted that the branding project was linked to invested from the IOC as a recognised federation grant.

Wider expenditure related to items such as insurance and meetings.

The review of the financial statement led into Agenda Item 6 – budgeting and activity.

6. 2021 budgeting and activity

Mr Fuller presented a top line budget for 2021.

The budget proposal was presented as a spreadsheet detailing projected income and expenditure. Mr Fuller first drew the attention of Congress to the summary section which highlighted overall projected income versus expenditure.

This section showed a budget deficit of c€114,000.

Mr Fuller highlighted that this related specifically to a line in the budget which had a worst-case scenario figure for the outcome of the ongoing legal case with representatives of Mr Wiking. Such a figure would see IFAF having no working capital left over although it would meet its other core obligations. Ideally, the legal case figure would not exist (due to a successful hearing) or be lower. As such, IFAF's working capital would increase although IFAF would still be operating at a deficit.

Mr Fuller went through each budget line.

Primary income comes from membership fees with a secondary income from competition entry fees – notably the World Flag Football Championships. The IFAF fee was confirmed as being €1,500 per team.

The ITC programme is set to be relaunched and represents a modest income stream (given most leagues are still shut down). The ITC system is online and is managed by the player themselves. All revenue is IFAF-specific. Federations can charge their own fees for issuing clearance for transfers.

IFAF receives a grant from the International Olympic Committee annually. In 2021 this will focus upon supporting clean sport initiatives. Where we have had historic investment from the IOC and due to our legal situation have not been able to invest it all, there is a clear commitment to ring-fencing that money for future delivery.

The primary areas of expenditure relate to core services – notably contracted anti-doping services, insurance and consultancy fees.

There are specific line items for loan agreements – to the United States, Canada, Japan and Australia. Australia relates specifically to the postponed 2019 World Championship.

When future 'profit' is made it should be spent against delivery plans on a global level – ideally supporting our committees in their work.

President MacLean invited questions. No questions were raised.

The United States moved to accept the budget.
Australia and India seconded this.

The Financial Report and 2021 Budget were accepted.

A question from Chile arose which was deferred to Motion 5.

7. Membership of Nations - confirmation of status

Four nations wished to be considered for Associate Membership for 2021.

Chile

Argentina propose Chile. Brazil and Italy seconded Chile.

Chile were accepted by majority.

Kenya

The Board propose Kenya (in the absence of African proposal). Ivory Coast and Uganda seconded Kenya.

Kenya were accepted by majority.

Ukraine

Ireland propose Ukraine. Italy and Serbia seconded Ukraine.

Ukraine were accepted by majority.

Poland

Ireland propose Poland. Italy and Slovakia seconded Poland.

Poland were accepted by majority.

South Africa joined the meeting.

8. Consideration of any Motion sent according to the Statutes and proposals by the Executive Board.

No Motions were received from the Membership.

The following Motions were proposed by IFAF.

Motion One

The Statutes make specific reference to the address of IFAF. This was a location shared with the French Federation – an address no longer used.

Current text:

2.5 The Legal seat of IFAF is located at 79 rue Rateau, 93120 La Courneuve, France. It may be transferred to any other place by a decision of the Council.

To become:

2.5 Following instruction from Congress, the IFAF Legal seat will be registered at an address under advisement from IFAF's retained Legal Counsel. The address may be changed within

the legal jurisdiction of the seat as needs must by the Executive Board under advisement from IFAF's retained Legal Counsel.

The Motion was seconded by Canada and Argentina.
The Motion was accepted by Majority.

Motion Two

In order to reflect IFAF's Strategic Objectives the Game Development Committee should be renamed the IFAF Game Development and Sport for All Committee.

The Motion was seconded by Brazil.
The Motion was accepted by Majority.

Motion Three

In order to reflect IFAF's commitment to Gender Equality and Diversity the following should be added to the Statutes under Section 2.1 The Organisation's fundamental purposes are:
m) to promote within its structures, gender equality and a commitment to effectively represent the diverse communities which support the sport of American football.

The Motion was seconded by India, Great Britain and Ireland.
The Motion was accepted by Majority.

Motion Four

It is proposed that the Discipline and Ethics Committee becomes two distinct committees – A Disciplinary Committee and an Ethics Committee.

The Motion was seconded by Great Britain.
The Motion was accepted by Majority.

Motion Five

At present the way in which nations engage with IFAF is through a four-tiered membership system:

Full Member; Associate Member; Allied Member and Inactive Member.

This system requires certain amendments to properly reflect the status and development of federations and to ensure access to IFAF competitions. Those organisations which may have historically been considered Allied Members but are not actually merging federations will be considered partners with a relationship defined by contract. Membership will solely be a term used for national federations.

To avoid the confusion which existed over entry to certain international competitions under these proposed terms, both Full and Associate Members should be able to compete in IFAF-sanctioned tournaments as the proposed definition allows.

Secondly, the proposed definition recognises that Full Member nations should have a commitment to both the tackle and flag disciplines of the game – from grassroots through to high performance.

This is then reflected in the vote weighting.

Section 3.2.1 has a proposed amendment to reflect the commitment to both versions of the game.

The two-year period prior to membership status will ensure that there will have been the opportunity to compete in an existing IFAF-sanctioned Championship. The scope also now states 'sanctioned fixture' so where an event has been a challenge, an officially-sanctioned game will suffice.

In accepting this proposal, it is anticipated that existing Full Members who currently do not have either a tackle or flag national team programme will be 'grandfathered' as having the opportunity to be Full Members (subject to meeting other criteria) until the start of membership year 2023 to give sufficient time for participation in either an event of sanctioned game.

From:

(j) it must have recognised national teams competing in the current cycle of at least two of the principle World Championship Disciplines and working towards participation in all disciplines; these teams must have taken part in an event approved by the Organisation (i.e. World Championship, Continental Championship or qualifiers for; or an approved international competition which consists of no less than three (for tackle events) or four (for non-contact events) Member nations of either Full Member or Associate Member status) within the last cycle for the World Championship Discipline.

To

(j) it must have recognised national teams that have competed in an IFAF sanctioned international fixture in two calendar years preceding the start of the new membership year. These teams must encompass both Tackle Football and Flag Football (not exclusively one format) in the following categories:

Tackle Football: adult women; adult men; U20 men.

Flag Football: adult women; adult men

Pursuant to the above the following section of the Associate Membership section would be amended:

From

3.3.1 Membership Criteria. Any National Association (or other entity) that is not a Full Member may be eligible to be an Associate Member upon meeting the following requirements: it has been charged with the leadership and management of the sport in their country (as per Section 3.2.1.c) and meet the requirements laid down in Sections 3.2.1.d, 3.2.1.e, 3.2.1.f, and 3.2.1.h.; and it must pay all Associate Member subscriptions.

3.3.2 Associate Membership Rights and Benefits

3.3.2.1 Associate Members are entitled to host and/or participate in all non-World Championship recognised International Events subject to meeting the agreed criteria in the Championship Regulations.

To

3.3.1 Membership Criteria. Any National Association (or other entity) that is not a Full Member may be eligible to be an Associate Member upon meeting the following requirements: it has been charged with the leadership and management of the sport in their country (as per Section 3.2.1.c) and meet the requirements laid down in Sections 3.2.1.d, 3.2.1.e, 3.2.1.f, and 3.2.1.h.; it must pay all Associate Member subscriptions.

3.3.2 Associate Membership Rights and Benefits

3.3.2.1 Associate Members are entitled to host and/or participate in all IFAF-recognised International Events subject to meeting the agreed criteria in the Championship Regulations. From there is it proposed that IFAF changes the definition of Allied Member and removes Inactive Member.

Allied Membership becomes solely for emerging national federations only and allows them to take part in major events (supporting their development) but without the right to compete for Championships.

From

3.4 Allied Members.

3.4.1. Allied Membership Criteria.

The Board may assign the category of Allied Organisation to any organisation, other than National Associations for American football.

Allied Members must pay all Allied Member subscriptions.

8 3.4.2 Allied Membership Benefits.

3.4.2.1 Allied Members may send non-voting members to Congress.

3.4.2.2. Allied Members may bid to host tournaments.

To

3.4.1. Allied Membership Criteria.

The Board may assign the category of Allied Organisation to any organisation working to become a recognised national federation.

Allied Members must pay all Allied Member subscriptions.

8 3.4.2 Allied Membership Benefits.

3.4.2.1 Allied Members may send a non-voting representative to Congress.

3.4.2.2. Allied Members may bid to host tournaments, may take part in IFAF-sanctioned fixtures, and may be able to take part in IFAF-sanctioned events if there is a designated 'Allied Membership' component.

3.4.2.3 Allied Members have the option of paying their membership fee at any point in the calendar year.

3.4.2.4 Allied Members have to be accepted by Congress in order to gain Associate or Full Membership status.

The Inactive Section would be removed and the following would be amended in regard to the status of a federation that did not meet its obligations:

From

3.8 Suspension and expulsion from membership

3.8.1 Subject to Article 3.8.2, a Full Member that fails to pay its annual subscription by 31 January of any year will be automatically become an Associate Member and an Associate Member that fails to pay that subscription by the end of that calendar year will be automatically become an Inactive Member

To

3.8 Suspension and expulsion from membership

3.8.1 Subject to Article 3.8.2, a Full or Associate Member that fails to pay its annual subscription by 31 January of any year will be automatically become a non-member. They would then be required to apply for Allied Member status and be accepted by Congress in order to regain Associate or Full Member status.

Congress debated the merits of the Motion and its respective changes.

Congress agreed the following changes (below) to the Motion and approval of editing of terminology and associated numbering as proposed by Argentina.

Clarification was requested by United States regarding U20 age definition. It was highlighted that U20 was an inclusive reference to sanctioned games at any 'youth' age bracket – U20, U19, U18 etc.

Clarification on the payment schedule in 3.8.1 was proposed by Serbia and India.

Clarification was requested by Australia on section (j).

The Motion (with amendments) was seconded by United States
The Motion was accepted by Majority.

Changes:

3.8.1 Subject to Article 3.8.2, a Full or Associate Member that fails to pay its annual subscription by 31 January of any year will automatically have their membership frozen resulting in all rights being withdrawn until full payment is made. This period expires on July 31 of that membership year by which time the fee payment must be settled for that year.

Failure to meet the July 31 payment will result in their losing membership status. Any late payment from 31 January will be subject to a single 10% surcharge.

Failure to meet the 31 January deadline in two consecutive years will result in the federation losing membership status and having to reapply to Congress. Any debts must be repaid before readmittance as either Full or Associate Member.

(j) it must have recognised national teams that have competed in an IFAF sanctioned international fixture over the two preceding calendar years preceding the start of the new membership year. These teams must encompass both Tackle Football and Flag Football (not exclusively one format) in the following categories:

Motion Six

For the purpose of development given the interest in The World Games 2022, for the sole focus of the 2021 IFAF Flag Football World Championship, Allied Members may compete. For the purposes of definition, an Allied Member must meet the new criteria for membership (if approved above), have the consent of the IFAF Executive Board (at its sole discretion) and support from either or both the National Olympic Committee and / or the National Government from that nation.

The Motion was seconded by Canada.
The Motion was accepted by Majority.

9. Any Other Business.

Australia raised issues relating to officiating and divergence from NCAA rules.

Andy Fuller highlighted that there would be a restructure of the Rules Committee in 2021.

Finland requested that Rules should be reviewed by the Marketing Committee to assess 'market impact'.

Switzerland raised an issue relating to rankings.

Andy Fuller highlighted that rankings were a challenge at global level as certain nations which had a global ranking could retain this through entry to global championships purely due to lack of continental activity. Rankings require effective weighting and this needs reviewing.

10. Congress 2021 and 2022 announcement

Richard MacLean announced that Congress in 2021 would coincide with the World Flag Football Championships in Spain and that Congress 2022 would coincide with The World Games 2022 in Alabama.

11. Closure of Congress.

Argentina proposed a Motion to close Congress.

President Richard MacLean closed the Congress at 12:39 EST.

Appendix One

I would like to start our annual Congress with a moment of reflection.

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected every nation and each and every one of us in different ways. Over the course of the past year many of you will have been worried about and lost people close to you – amongst your family and friends and within the football community. We mourn those that have passed away and send a message of comfort to their relatives and friends.

Whilst all lives are precious, I would like to make a special mention of Jorge Orobio. Jorge served Mexico and IFAF with distinction and he will be sadly missed.

The pandemic has meant you as nations and we as IFAF have faced unprecedented challenges. The entire IFAF Board and I have been struck by the resilience, optimism and selflessness of the football community; from players training in isolation in living rooms, gardens, and bedrooms; leaders keeping federations afloat, and teams coming together to raise funds for the vulnerable, the dedication, commitment and goodwill has never been more in focus. I am proud of everything that you and your members have achieved this year.

The impact of the pandemic has obvious consequences for IFAF, notably the reduction in revenue which is generated by tournaments has meant we have been limited in terms of our ability to invest in services and activity.

It has been however, an opportunity for us to review all our activities, especially our policies and procedures, with a view to strengthening our federation – raising the standards of governance, minimising the risks to the organisation for the future, and providing a wider and higher standard of service to you, our members, and to our global partners.

I have asked our Managing Director, Andy Fuller, to compile a report to members for release in early 2021 which summarises these areas of work and the impact they will have – just as a document was prepared outlining the impact the 2021 Anti-Doping Regulations. However, to give one example, we have recently established a relationship with the internationally renowned 'Sport Resolutions'.

Sport Resolutions is an independent, not-for-profit, dispute resolution service for sport, based in the United Kingdom, and operating globally.

They were established by the main stakeholder groups in sport. Their aim is to provide an expert, speedy and cost-effective alternative to internal appeals processes and court-based litigation. We provide sport specific arbitration and mediation services and operate the National Anti-Doping Panel (NADP) and National Safeguarding Panel (NSP).

Sport Resolutions will handle our Anti-Doping Tribunal process and we are currently exploring with them the establishment of new Disciplinary and Appeals processes and an Ethics Panel.

The expertise and independence will underpin a process which will be benchmarked against the highest standards within International Federations.

Over the past year IFAF has also made strides in populating its committees. There is still some way to go – we need to fill more, we need to address the gender balance, and we need to ensure expertise from both within and outside the sport. However, we are grateful for the time and commitment of these volunteers.

It does need to be noted that whilst we have made strides in moving on from the schism of the past we are still left with its legacy. We are currently subject to legal action from the law firm that represented Mr Wiking as they seek their costs from us. Andy Fuller, along with our German law firm, represented us in court in Munich earlier this year. As the court case remains open IFAF will make no further comment on this matter but as you can imagine, the fees are significant and given our limited capital, we have had to limit investment and will continue to do so until an outcome is reached and we can plan effectively.

As we look forward to 2021 we have much to be positive about. In particular I am delighted that in October Spain will play host to the IFAF Flag Football World Championships. After such a long period of inactivity, having this to look forward to is exciting. It will allow all of us to concentrate on what binds us – the sport of football.

ENDS