

IPRO Director's Message May, 2022

Impressions from Bolivia

The April 'Message' discussed the recent Pan American Championships held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. I made a prediction that the home court advantage would enter the equation. I was CORRECT. Bolivia won the Overall title in team play. Although Argentina's female doubles team defeated Mexico in the final; both players are from Bolivia. This is truly a testimony to the quality of play throughout the country, and the quest to remain in the top tier on the international stage. Review from Santa Cruz:

HOTEL *The Radisson Hotel had comfortable rooms and infrastructure. The commute to/from the club was between 20 and 40 minutes. Having a full-service restaurant for all meals was HUGE. Thanks to Osvaldo Maggi for providing 3 daily meals to our staff.*

NEW SCORING/REGLAS NUEVAS

The officiating staff and the federations (12) adjusted well to the new scoring. One objective of the rule change to 'rally scoring' was to shorten match length. This did not work using the 15-point games in part one (individual) of the tournament. On average, matches required more than 1-hour for completion. For part two (team), 11-point games were the standard. Many feel these matches are too short! Some suggestions for implementation in the near future:

- 1. Matches to be the best of three games instead of the best of five games.
Each game played to 15 points.
Each game requiring a 2-point margin for the winner.*
- 2. Matches to be the best of three games.
Games 1 & 2 played to 15 points with an 11-point tiebreaker.
Each game requiring a 2-point margin for the winner.*
- 3. Either (1) or (2) above; only the tiebreaker requiring a 2-point margin.*
- 4. Matches to remain: best of five games; each to 11 points.
Each game requires a 2-point margin for the winner.*

OFFICIATING/ARBITRAJE

Each tournament the quality of our officiating staff improves. We have developed continuity, professionalism, and a rapport amongst the group. We now refer to the staff as 'Professional' referees; as each is paid a stipend, is reimbursed for expenses incurred, and is part of a 'select' group having earned the opportunity.

SCOREBOARDS/MARCADORES

The new R2 Sports system scoreboards were implemented for this event. They replaced the old system, developed by Amafra from Argentina. There is definitely a learning curve to traverse; the screen presentations were unclear at times, and important player/team information was not listed. Hopefully there will be adjustments in order to make them more 'user friendly'.

STREAMING/EMISION

I was disappointed that the LOC decided to stream only in Spanish. However, I applaud each of the broadcast teams that assisted with the production. A local television station (Bolivian par with ESPN) teamed with Pablo Fahre of the IRF. I elected to use my cell phone to access a personal Facebook account in order to broadcast in English. Viewers from seven countries tuned in over 7 days.

VENUE/COMPLEJO

We were fortunate that the Bolivian Federation re-opened the Complejo Publico after a two-year hiatus (due to Covid 19). Reliable sources have indicated that the venue will remain open to the public and be a primary site for national events. We offer kudos to the staff for providing a clean facility and maintaining a safe court environment. An indoor restaurant served food and beverage each day.

OTHER/OTRAS COSAS

All of us need to seek an answer to the unlimited number of 'towel time-outs' used by the players. We agree that the number one priority on the court is safety! Yet, these 'extra' time outs are disruptive; and, they are counter-productive to the IRF mission for making the production more streamlined and engaging the audience.

Finally, Bolivia is a great place to hold an IRF event. I hope to return soon for my 15th trip. I am thankful to have re-kindled relationships which began during my first visit in 1988. We have some goals for elevating Bolivian racquetball to even a higher standing than it now enjoys. It is through pursuing a grant from the US embassy in La Paz. If successful, assistance will be available for training administrators, coaches, instructors, and other professionals serving the industry.