

EPFA Congress Thursday 30th August 2018 Ramada Encore Hotel Geneva 8pm (GMT+2)

In Attendance: Donal Byrne (Acting President) Nathalie Fadhlaoui (Treasurer) Brian Dix (Director of Partnerships)

Martin Bevan (Head of European Referees) David Lewis (WFA England) Magli Deleschaux (Swiss Powerchair Football Association)

On WebEx: Erik Lundell (Finland Powerchair Football) Michael Kiefler (Austrian Powerchair Football) Kasper Petersen (Danish Powerchair Football)

Acting President Donal Byrne (DB) opened the meeting welcoming everyone and introducing who was in the room and who was on WebEx. The Presidents Report was delivered: In summary below

2. Presidents Report:

Our last Congress took place two years ago in 2016 at the development event in Kent in England. Since that time we have had a Champions Cup in Denmark 2016, a World Cup in Florida 2017 with the winners of the World Cup, France coming from our zone. A Home nations cup event again in Kent 2017, and engagement with new countries and continuing to develop the partnership with UEFA. Following the restructuring of FIPFA, EPFA too has gone through some changes with the departure of Nicolas Dubes and Sam Bull and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nico for all his work for the European zone since it's foundation and to Nico personally for helping me as I try to fill his shoes in his previous role as President. I would also like to thank Sam Bull for all his work in our Sports Department down through the years with EPFA. I would also like to thank those that have recently come on board Nathalie Fadlaoui, Ewa Lundell, Sebiane Brahim who along with Brian Dix and Adam McEvoy work to try progress and strengthen the Executive...

3. Commission Updates: DB invited the various commission reports to be delivered or read. As Adam McEvoy was not able to be in attendance, the Sports Report was delivered in summary by DB.

EPFA competition cycle

Following the 2016 Champions Cup the association developed a competition cycle for 2017-21.

Following the 2016 Champions Cup and the FIPFA World Cup being moved to 2017, EPFA introduced a new 4 year competition cycle:

2017 - FIPFA World Cup

2018 - EPFA Champions Cup (Hou, Denmark)

2019 - EPFA Nations Cup (Finland)

2020 - EPFA Champions Cup (TBC - Expressions of Interest OPEN)

2021 - FIPFA World Cup (Australia)

****Please note - If Powerchair Football is successful in its bid for 2024 Paralympic Games inclusion, the cycle post 2021 may need to be reviewed.****

In addition to the main competition cycle, each year EPFA will work to deliver:

- A major competition (i.e. Nations Cup or Champions Cup) **Apart from WC Year**
- A developmental event (i.e. a development/youth competition, officials developmental event or extended developmental support for a NOPF)
- A visit to a new country exploring powerchair football

Champions Cup

As powerchair football continues to develop across Europe it is only right that we offer the opportunity for NOPF's to participate in our premier club competition. In comparison to 2016, this years competition features league winners from Finland and Switzerland, alongside two teams from England, France, Ireland and Denmark.

As our game grows across Europe, with more nations hopefully participating, it may be that only one team from each country enters into the Champions Cup. This is, of course, a long term aim and would be planned for in advance.

We envisage the Champions Cup remaining as a 10 team competition, primarily due to costs and sourcing accommodation for the host association leading on the organisation of the event.

Champions Cup Tournament Regulations and Schedule

Following the 2016 Champions Cup, EPFA conducted a review of the competition. We are currently working to confirm the competition schedule and finalise the regulations. EPFA must work in partnership with the host organisation (and the tournament venues) to create a schedule that is equal and fair to all teams, but this has to work within the restrictions placed on the host, i.e. Venue availability etc

EPFA will confirm the Tournament Regulations and circulate to all participating Teams by 14th September 2018.

Player eligibility

This will be covered and discussed in more detail later on the Agenda.

FIPFA Sports Department Updates

Speed testing

Since the 2016 congress FIPFA has introduced a new speed test process, first introduced at the 2017 World Cup. The process has seen a great reduction in the time it takes to test players equipment prior to games. Whilst not without flaws, it is another example of the improvements made within the game.

Ball specification

The use of the current generation of powerchairs has seen an increase in the speed and velocity of moving balls. This was resulting in balls frequently lifting from the floor, which can be a danger to our playing community. As a result FIPFA has also introduced a new ball specification, resulting in heavier, lower bounce balls. All EPFA events will use the new specification footballs.

Laws of the Game

FIPFA are currently undertaking a review of the laws of the game. Whilst no new changes have been proposed as yet, any new proposals or introductions would be followed by EPFA. EPFA would be willing to use our development events as potential test events for any new rule changes. Once any Law changes are approved by FIPFA, any future EPFA events will be played using the updated version/interpretations.

Referees report

DB invited Head of European Referees Martin Bevan for a summary report on Refereeing.

Martin spoke about the great clinic that was organized in Scotland in May of this year, the recent International Referee training in Cheltenham in the UK and that there was currently a referee clinic taking place at the Geneva's Cup event and he intended to appoint a Head Referee from that for Switzerland.

Martin spoke about a wish to get all the lead referees together for a conference in Finland before the Nations Cup and spoke of EPFA's plans for a European Exchange Program to support improved standards of the application of the laws of the game.

Finance Report

DB invited Nathalie Fadlaoui Director of Finance to give a summary of the financial position. Nathalie apologised that she did not have all the documents that she had prepared but she was able to give a summary about the yearly UEFA funding

20% had been spent on the Home Nations event in Kent UK in 2017

20% had been budgeted for the Next Generation event due in summer 2019

20% had been spent on new countries/ development/initial contacts and meetings

20% on Equipment to new countries

20% on flights for officials and staff.

Nathalie stressed the need for forward planning and early decisions on events in order to save money and get good prices on flights and accommodation.

The final report was from the Development Commission as Sebaine Brahim was only arriving in to Geneva on Friday 31st, DB read out a brief summary on his behalf:

Development Report

Sebaine Brahim now takes a lead in organizing our demonstrations such as at the Football for All opportunities in the cities around UEFAs flagship events and also our youth events. Brahim and I recently attended a UEFA Study group seminar in Zeist where we had an opportunity to demonstrate powerchair football to 43 football associations and develop many contacts with key people in new and existing countries. Our concentration over the next year will be on helping Spain and Italy move forward and work towards being able to enter international development events, and also to make that initial contact with some new countries.

4. UEFA Partnership

DB gave a summary of the continuing and strong partnership with UEFA:

The partnership with UEFA remains very strong and there is a great mutual respect between us and UEFA. UEFA remains our main source of funding enabling us to organize our events and develop powerchair football in the zone. We are now in the first year of the renewed four year cycle. The access we get to requests as for example the main board room of the headquarters in Nyon for this referee clinic demonstrates the great working partnership we share. It continues to be a work in progress throughout each funding cycle.

5. EPFA Constitution

The EPFA Constitution was first created and ratified in 2008, ten years on it was recently reviewed and updated and sent out to the membership to review and to ratify it again in Geneva, DB opened it to the floor and on WebEx if there were any comments suggestions or issues. All replied that they were happy with it. DB requested a proposer to ratify the EPFA Constitution in Geneva 2018 (David Lewis) proposed and (Magli Deleschaux) seconded.

6. Election of the EPFA Executive

The departure of Nico and Sam warranted a necessitated a restructuring of the EPFA Executive with new people coming in and existing people moving to other roles. Nomination forms went out to the membership to formally elect the positions of President, Director of Sport, Director of Finance, Director of Communications and Director of Development. No further nominations were received other than those nominated to the current roles so DB requested that the current EPFA

executive be formally deemed elected and has the mandate to continue its work. (Michael Kiefler) proposed and (Magli Deleschaux) seconded.

7. IPC Update

DB informed the Congress that Nico Dubes had hoped to be in Geneva as the FIPFA representative but due to personal family circumstances he had had to return to the south of France.

DB gave a brief update on the IPC bid. The bid was submitted by the deadline in July. Ricky and Sam were to be attending a meeting in Madrid in September which might give some further clues but the ultimate outcome will be known in January 2019. DB asked to put on record our thanks to Ricky and Nico and Sam, Herve for the huge volume of work that they put in to the bid submission and indeed our thanks to all the European NOPFS too for providing the information we asked about regarding activity in your countries. DB emphasised that this is still an ongoing process so it is important that NOPFS continue to promote and communicate activity in their countries on social media and on their websites because IPC will be looking and checking all of this as they make their final decisions.

8. FIPFA Congress Update - Denmark

FIPFA asked if they could hold a Congress at the EPFA European Champions Cup event in Denmark which we agreed to. Again unfortunately Nico was unable to attend to give some further insight into what is planned for discussion but all should have seen the draft agenda and had a chance to add topics to it. The election of the restructured FIPFA executive seems to be the main part of it along with updates from the various departments.

9. EPFA - Future Competitions

DB spoke about the next European Champions Cup which is being held once again in Hou Denmark, with teams from France, England, Ireland, Denmark, Switzerland and Finland.

The next European Nations Cup will take place in Finland next May 2019 21st to 27th and EPFA is working closely with the Finnish FA and local organizing committee to deliver another great event. EPFA are just waiting on one final confirmation from Austria to confirm eight teams participating. EPFA have sent out to all the NOPFS bidding information for hosting the European Champions Cup in 2020 it is hoped that an announcement as to where the next Champions Cup can be made at the conclusion of the Champions Cup in Denmark.

New Generation and Next Generation are names for EPFA's future development camps for rising stars. New generation will be for emerging countries and new developing countries to run a camp for individuals or teams just starting to play the sport. Next generation will be for a groups of individual players at an underage level who are already playing powerchair football in their countries.

Recently EPFA put out information about a partnership with the Football For All Leadership Program. EPFA have offering to sponsor one individual to participate on this academic program. EPFA have a had a couple of responses but DB urged NOPFS to send it out to their membership again before the Sept 30th deadline.

10. Rule Change for future Champion's Cups

DB spoke about a recurring issue around the Champions Cup and players from other clubs that have not qualified requesting or being asked to play with a team just for the duration of the tournament. As there was no written rule there has been confusion about whose decision it was to sanction that or not and has been generally left to NOPFS to decide. EPFA proposed that it will become a written EPFA rule that all players from qualified clubs must be registered players with that club, or if a player from another club wishes to play for a qualified team for the Champions Cup, that player must sign and play for that club then for the season. Martin suggested that there may need to be clarification or further thought on what a season is and maybe it should be a ruling for example that a player has to register for a club for the following six months. DB proposed that the EPFA Executive would discuss this further but it would be the EPFA Executive who would ultimately decide on these decisions of participation of players not registered with a club participating in the Champions Cup. This was proposed by (David Lewis) and seconded by (Erik Lundell)

AOB

David Lewis (WFA England) voiced a concern that the EPFA Champions Cup could start to lose its quality and interest if too many new and just developing countries were entering it and that they should have to gain experience in development competitions or tournaments at their own level. He stressed that he was all for new countries developing and gaining experience.

It was also noted EPFA should support coaching at development events.

DB asked the floor and those on WebEx if there was any further comments and as there were none concluded the meeting, thanking those attending and those online. The Congress was concluded with the next one scheduled for 2020.