



INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS COMMITTEE FOR DISABLED
A Standing Committee of the International Paralympic Committee

AFRICAN-MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL TABLE TENNIS ASSEMBLY

Minutes of an informal meeting of the African-Middle East regional table tennis assembly held on Thursday 8 December 2005 at 20h00 at the Royal Palace Hotel.

PRESENT: Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Palestine, South Africa

IPTTC SAEC: Alison Burchell (Chairperson), Jiri Danek, Aart Kruimer, Nico Verspeelt

BY INVITATION: Dr Nabil Salem (President, ASCOD and IPC Governing Board), Dr Hossam Eldin Mostafa Saad (Secretary General, ASCOD)

WELCOME: the Chairperson welcomed all present to the meeting which was an informal meeting as no mandates had been requested. This would be the last meeting of the Africa-Middle East region.

The Assembly was also welcomed by the President of ASCOD (also the president of the Egyptian Paralympic Committee) to Egypt and he wished all a pleasant stay in the country as well as good luck for the tournament.

1. POSTAL VOTE: the Assembly noted that the IPC had sent out documents for a postal vote (by email) for table tennis and that the intention to participate in the vote form had to be returned to the IPC by the next day, 9 December 2005. In explanation of the postal vote, the Assembly noted:

1.1 there had been an agreement signed between the IPC and IOC in which it had been agreed that there would be no sports or other assemblies held during the Paralympic Games. As a result, there had been no table tennis assembly held in Athens and this required the NPCs widely practicing table tennis to decide whether to support the proposal that the term of office of the Chairperson, Medical Officer and Athlete Representative be extended until elections were held during the IPC Table Tennis World Championships in September 2006.

1.2 the IPC Governing Board had decided in late 2004 to re-align the IPC regions to the same as used by the IOC and other international sports federations. As a result, from 2007, Africa would be a stand alone region with the Middle East nations moving to Asia. Thus the NPCs were asked to decide whether to support the proposal that the term of office of the regional representatives be extended until the regional elections to be held during the regional championships in 2007.

1.3 in the last table tennis Assembly held in 2002, the Assembly had asked a working group to investigate and report on introducing a "rating system" to replace the current "ranking system" which had been done and the comparative results could be seen on the IPTTC website. In order to take the investigation further, the working group had asked the NPCs to allow them to use the rating system to determine seedings in some events in 2006 identified for the purpose.

1.4 in the last table tennis Assembly held in 2002, the Assembly had asked the Classification Committee to develop minimum eligibility criteria for sitting and standing classes. Thus the NPCs had been asked to approve the proposed definitions.

In brief discussion on this item, the Assembly noted:

- the postal vote had been sent out by email and could be returned by email;
- from 2007, Africa would have its own table tennis committee and the same would apply to Asia;
- Asia should, from now start consulting the Middle East nations as part of Asia;
- the postal vote system was “legal” and had been used successfully in other sports where urgent decisions were required;
- all nations participating in the Africa-Middle East Championships had been invited to send umpires but had not done so.

2. NANISM (dwarves): the Assembly noted the following report from the Medical Officer:

- nanism referred to “small people” namely dwarves;
- in the 1980s, table tennis had introduced dwarves within the sport but then decided that a dwarf had to have another disability over and above nanism;
- the Classification Committee would be recommending to the Assembly next year, after having investigated the matter, that dwarves be accepted in their own right;
- the Classification Committee had considered all issues and believed that it would be fair to give a place to dwarves in our system and that in general, they should be placed in class 8.

In brief discussion, the Assembly heard that:

- it may be better to have dwarves in class “9 ½” but the Assembly next year would decide this;
- the effect on the ranking or rating system would be a consequence of the decision to encourage dwarves to play table tennis rather than a determining factor;
- the IPC wanted to reduce the number of classes rather than increase by adding a special class for dwarves;
- in the IPC, dwarves are generally included as nanism is considered a disability as this had an impact on the skeleton and muscle power;
- “little people” were not dwarves;
- in athletics, there was a separate class for dwarves, in powerlifting the definition was by weight class but in table tennis, the inclusion of dwarves would be on the basis of ability.

3. SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2006: the Assembly noted that a separate meeting would be held for this on 9 December 2005 at 07h00 (Jordan and South Africa attended).

4. RECOMMENDED SELECTION PROCESS FOR THE PARALYMPIC GAMES 2008: the Assembly noted that a separate meeting would be held for this on 9 December 2005 at 07h00 (Jordan and South Africa attended).

5. REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS FOR 2007: the Assembly noted that the Asian Championships (with Oceania likely to be included) would be held in Korea and the African Championships would be held in Algeria during the All Africa Games.

6. OTHER COMMENTS: the Assembly noted the following comments:

6.1 cheating:

- the IPTTC did not approve of things being done which were unfair;
- doping affected one person but cheating in classification affected the whole class;
- in the short-term, cheating may succeed but in the longer-term, the player would be found out by the classifiers;
- this had led to a player being disqualified in the Asia-South Pacific Championships;
- “if you want to kill table tennis, go on with cheating” but players should look at their own hearts and at the other players who wanted to play fairly.

6.2 women’s participation:

- NPCs should be encouraged to ensure that more women participate in courses and competitions available;
- for example, if two delegates were sent to a meeting or course, one should be a woman;
- this should be encouraged in the IPTTC and NPCs as the IPC had set a target of increasing the participation of women to 30% in all its structures by 2009.

6.3 improving the standard of table tennis: a few days should be added on to competitions to allow for a training camp and/or coaching clinic to be held.

6.4 increasing the number of countries playing table tennis: for the All Africa Games in 2007, governments paid for the costs of participation of all athletes in their teams and so 2009 would be a more critical year to ensure increased participation for the African Championships.

6.5 best players’ awards:

- the IPTTC would be recognising the achievements of the best players in the men’s and women’s sections and standing and sitting classes (4 awards);
- the SAEC members present could decide, or the decision could be made by vote of the players but this could become a “popularity contest” or the player who won gold in the open, class singles and/or team event could be selected objectively;
- consideration could be given to the best behaved player, at ways to encourage new players, on the basis of “sport for all”, the young players, players with potential and the best sportsperson;
- another option would be to have a “players’ player” i.e. a player voted for by the other players but the criterion of “best player” would not necessarily be met.

6.6 entry fees: as per the IPTTC policy, these had to be paid before the Championships began and €500 was the entry fee per person with an additional €36 per team member for capitation tax.

6.7 training venue: disappointment was expressed about the training venue not being set up appropriately.

6.8 umpires: some players who had entered the Championships were acting as umpires.

6.9 toilets: were found to be very dirty in the competition venue.

6.10 water: was not freely available in the competition venue.

The Assembly noted that the comments above would be addressed by the SAEC and for those issues related to the Championships, they should have been addressed at team managers' meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 22h15.

READ AND CONFIRMED AT THE MEETING

HELD ON

CHAIRPERSON

AMB/

19 December 2005