

Member Update following the INF Board Meeting – 17 & 19 July 2020

The INF Board met on the 17th & 19th of July 2020, via videoconference. President, Liz Nicholl highlighted the challenges that all of our Members and Regions continue to bear, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in regard to returning to play.

Liz welcomed Gaby Hochbaum to her first meeting of the year, following a short sabbatical as the Regional Director for Asia. The Board were delighted to note Gaby's return.

Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, the Board has held additional interim monthly meetings in April, May and June 2020. These have helped the INF to be more agile with decision-making to ensure appropriate continued support for Members in this challenging environment.

A positive outcome for INF from these recent times is the new ways of working which have been established and embraced. The INF has quickly adopted new technologies and platforms such as Zoom - the video conferencing platform, which has enabled us to communicate and consult more regularly with Members, without the restrictions of geographical barriers.

The meeting on 17 & 19 July focused on the following discussion and decision areas:

Review of World Class Officiating Programme

- Board received the report from Stuart Cummings MBE, Independent Chair of the Working Group on the review of the World Class Officiating Programme.
- Stuart Cummings identified key themes reflected in the report and the Board welcomed the findings. Board thanked Stuart and the Group for the quality of the work presented.
- Board has requested that the World Class Officiating Programme Review Working Group, together with Christina Davidson International Umpiring Manager, prioritise the recommendations included in the report. The Group is also asked to consider cost implications, and challenges of implementation.
- The Board will consider the subsequent work (detailed above) at its next interim Board meeting on the 12th of September.

Update on Managing the Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic -Umpiring

Since the last Board meeting, several surveys have been undertaken with Members and the officiating community; including one specifically focused on return to play. The Board;

- Deliberated on the results of these surveys and held a very detailed discussion, where it considered umpire appointments in view of the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Discussed the varying views on the appointment of non-neutral umpires, where neutral umpire appointments are not feasible, and whether the match(es) should be eligible for World Ranking.
- Acknowledged the importance of the duty of care to our officiating community
- Discussed **key principles** that should be reflected in its decisions with regard to officiating, during this exceptional time. Board agreed that the decision should
 - **Enable and encourage** return to play as we emerge from COVID.
 - Support the **delivery of thrilling international events**.
 - **Protect the integrity** of competition through the appointment of umpires.
 - Be understood as solely to manage in these **exceptional circumstances**.
 - Be reviewed at least every 3 months or as circumstances change.
 - UAP and Umpires' costs will be shared equally between the National Associations involved.

- Following these discussions, the Board agreed a short-term policy for the appointment of umpires, in these exceptional circumstances. This policy will be issued in a separate note.

NWYC 2021

- Board received an update from the Director for Oceania and the appointed Technical Delegate for the NWYC 2021.
- Board considered the risk factors for the successful delivery of the competition.
- Board acknowledged the ongoing commitment of the Fiji Government in relation to hosting the NWYC.
- Further discussions were to take place with Fiji Government representatives. Following this, Board will communicate and consult with the 20 Member nations who have qualified a team to participate at the event. This will be a key item on the agenda for the Board's interim meeting on September 12th.
- Sharon Kearney, Medical Committee Member was appointed INF Medical Commissioner for the event.

Beyond Netball 2020 Strategic Plan

- Board acknowledged the excellent way Members engaged in the consultation discussion on the draft new strategy during the recent INF Regional Roadshows. The President emphasised the importance of the strategy being co-created and summarised the key points that were particularly made in relation to the Vision and Mission. This enabled the Board to reflect and then to refine the strategy by revising the wording of the vision and mission statements. This wording will be shared with Members once more prior to the strategy being finalised for launch.
- The secretariat team will now develop goals and KPIs for the strategies of 'Grow', 'Play' and 'Inspire' for review by the Board.

Governance and Risk

- The Finance Director provided an update on new legislation in the Isle of Man, the country of residency for INF Limited.
- This legislation is likely to have taxation implications for the INF.
- The Board heard the possible options available and that specialist advisors have been asked to provide recommendations for the Board.

World Rankings Review

- The Board received an analysis of a recent survey that has been undertaken with Members, with key recommendations.
- A programme of work is to be developed as part of the strategic plan.
- The Board noted the positive feedback received following the recent webinar, featuring David Kendix, a statistician who created the model for World Ranking on behalf of INF. (This webinar can still be accessed by Members).

Voice of the Athlete

- Following positive feedback from Members, plans will be progressed to develop a voice of the athlete 'forum' to provide input and consultation on matters of importance.
- The Director for Europe and Director for Asia will be working collaboratively to develop recommendations on the process and structures for this consultative group.

The Board received progress reports from the INF Regions, Committees and Working Groups as follows:

- Regional Federations - noting the excellent work being progressed across all Member Countries and Regions
- Audit & Risk committee - including budget assumptions for 2021 and updated delegated authority policy that has been approved by the Board. Board noted that a letter of thanks had been sent to Gordon Padley MBE, a recently retired member of the Committee.
- INF Foundation Strategy Working Group – including interim report from Tarnside Consulting who will now be developing a business plan.
- Governance Committee - including a review of the INF Regulations relating to eligibility, safeguarding training planned for INF Board members and the vacancies for independent members of the Audit and Risk and Nominations Committees which have now been advertised through the membership. The Board is looking forward to welcoming applications for these positions and filling the posts.
- Medical Committee - working with advisors from GAISF to assist in updating the INF anti-doping rules, ready for the introduction of the new WADA code in 2021.
- Commercial Committee – noting further development of commercial strategy in conjunction with agencies CSM and SPORTFIVE.
- National Federation Development Programme Working Group - noting the work that has been undertaken by the Group on the national development framework.
- NWC2023 Legacy Programme - noting that a legacy programme will be developed with learnings from the NWC2019 legacy programme.

Next Meeting

The INF Board will hold an interim meeting on 12th September by zoom. The next full Board meeting will be held by Zoom on 30th Oct – 1st November 2020.

Clare Briegal
INF CEO

Appendix – Record of decisions made by INF Board in 2020

Appendix – Decisions of the INF Board 2020

Date	Format	Decision
Feb 2020	E-mail	Deadline for submission for bidders for NWC2027 delayed to 30 th June 2021.
Mar 2020	Board Meeting	The Board agreed to extend the deadline for completion of the NWYC2021 Qualifiers to 31 st October 2020.
Mar 2020	Board meeting	The Board agreed to take legal advice on the draft INF Charitable Foundation Articles of Association.
Mar 2020	Board meeting	The Board agreed in principle, to proceed with a broader Fundraising Strategy Development Project, subject to affordability and approval of budgets.
Mar 2020	Board Meeting	Terms of Reference for the National Federation Development Programme Working Group were approved.
Mar 2020	Board Meeting	Terms of Reference for the Netball Family Engagement Working Group were approved.
Mar 2020	Board meeting	The Board agreed the guiding principles and team composition for the Review of the World Class Officiating Programme.
April 2020	E-mail	Membership and revised TOR of Review of the World Class Officiating Programme approved.
April 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board agreed to establish a 'Back to Netball Task Force' with appropriate input from the Members to address issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic by sharing knowledge and to provide advice across all levels including the grassroots and elite game.
April 2020	Interim Board meeting	The INF Board considered the implications of COVID-19 on its budget for 2020 and its forecast position for 2021, including the medium-term cash forecast and approved a plan for investments.
April 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board considered its draft strategic framework and agreed the next stage is to undertake Members consultation on the contents.
April 2020	Interim Board meeting	A request from a Member to extend the NWC 2027 bid submission was considered. The board agreed not to grant the further extension requested.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board approved the membership and TOR for the Back to Netball Task Force.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board received results of a Member survey regarding the impact of COVID-19 and agreed to host INF roadshow in late May /early June to explain how the Task Force would support Members in the return to play.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	Board agreed to consult further with Members on plans, particularly regarding membership fees and the possibility of establishing a hardship fund.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	Board agreed that the outstanding qualifying events for the Netball World Youth Cup 2021 in Africa, Americas, Europe & Oceania be cancelled and that the remaining 12 qualifying places be awarded on the basis of INF senior World Rankings.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board agreed to publish the latest INF World Rankings which include all matches played in 2020 before COVID-19 restrictions began.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board ratified the recommendation from David Kendix the INF's statistician, to proceed with the annual update for 2020, including as a temporary measure for this year only to reduce the minimum threshold to 6 matches.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	Agreed the need for a short-term policy on umpiring as countries emerge at different times from lockdown and whether matches should count for World Rankings, particularly in situations where it is not possible to appoint a neutral umpire.

May 2020	Interim Board meeting	Board agreed the following elements of the "Beyond Netball 2020" strategic plan for consultation with Members through a further virtual roadshow in July: purpose, vision, mission, strategies - based on grow, play and inspire themes, values based on ETHICAL acronym and a new possible rebrand option. The framework for the next layer will capture the agreed priority projects for INF.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board approved the draft commercial strategy aligned to INF's strategic vision, including possible extended event portfolio and aligned calendar, which would be used as a basis for opening discussions with the relevant stakeholders, such as event organising committees and those nations with commercial domestic leagues.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	Following an appeal by a Member regarding the decision not to grant an extension to the bid submission deadline for NWC 2027, the affected Member countries joined the Board meeting to provide their views. The Board agreed to uphold its decision not to grant an extension beyond the 30 June 2020 deadline.
May 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board agreed alternative arrangements for the July Board meeting, as it will be unlikely that it will be able to meet face-to-face for the foreseeable future.
June 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board approved new ways of working in light of travel restrictions and difficulties with holding face-to-face Meetings, caused through the COVID-19 pandemic.
June 2020	Interim Board meeting	The Board requested a resolution be created for approval by INF Members to recommend a change to Article 6.3.5 regarding face to face meetings.
June 2020	Interim Board meeting	Taking into account a Member survey the Board unanimously approved a 50% reduction of fees for 2021 (for those Members who had paid their 2020 fees in full) and the creation of a £60,000 COVID response fund to support Members across all Regions (which would be divided equally and administered by the five regional Federations).
June 2020	Interim Board meeting	Annual workplan agreed for INF Board under the headings of Grow, Play & Inspire.
June 2020	Interim Board meeting	Board agreed to implement a data collection initiative, to enable a greater understanding of INF's diversity performance across all protected characteristics including gender and race. This will inform the development of workforce strategy - a project identified in the strategic planning process.
July 2020	Email	Updated delegated authority policy approved by the Board
July 2020	Board Meeting	World-Class Officiating Program Review Working Group, with Christina Davidson International Umpiring Manager, to prioritise the recommendations made in their report, consider cost implications, and challenges of implementation.
July 2020	Board Meeting	Board agreed a short-term policy for the appointment of umpires to international matches played as the world emerges from lockdown which takes into account the current exceptional circumstances.
July 2020	Board Meeting	Following further discussions with Fiji Government representatives, consultation will take place regarding options for the NWYC2021 with the 20 Member nations who had qualified a team to participate at the event.
July 2020	Board Meeting	Sharon Kearney, Medical Committee Member was appointed INF Medical Commissioner for the NWYC2021.
July 2020	Board Meeting	Based on feedback from Member roadshow, Board agreed revised wording for the vision and mission statements in the new strategic plan.
July 2020	Board Meeting	A programme of work to be created to develop the World Rankings as part of the new strategic plan.