



SUMMER 2023

Foreword from our new President . . .



DAN MCCARTHY

Twif President

Congress 2023 in Mannheim saw the departure of our President Anton Rabe, but obviously the election of another person for the next four year term.

Overall it was a good congress with several items discussed.

The European federation was discussed with the following outcome:

It was concluded that all initiatives to develop the sport worldwide at all levels need to be supported, but that formal structures are not required at this stage. It was agreed that a **Development Commission be constituted at Congress 2024** with the task of co-ordinating and guiding development within a global context. **Transgender was discussed** this is a very complex issue still in its Infancy and must be handled carefully.

WADA is for sure another minefield and as Senior Vice President Pete explained Education is a very big part of this and must be complied with. The Vice President Jost gave an update on his research into the amount of teams competing who are under the weight category, he also explained that youth's weight affect the junior weights as they then compete in senior.



The World Games were discussed - Tug of War will most likely be included but the final decision will be taken at the upcoming World Games AGM in Madrid.

Twif also welcomed **Azerbaijan** as a full member who will have voting rights at Congress 2024 (see article on pages 9 and 10). Upcoming championships were discussed with a concern regarding prices, unfortunately we're living in a different world since Covid with costs on the increase and hotel closures.

For me as the new president my first official function was to attend the **World Games AGM in Madrid**. I was accompanied by our Senior Vice President - over the two days several topics were discussed - especially regarding Wada and the problem of the One-Fits-All aspect. Pete certainly made an impression when he discussed this - so much so that he was asked to submit his CV for a position. We also met with a company who livestream events - further discussion will take place regarding this.



On my return Twif got an email from FICS who stated that Tug of War International Federation has been chosen as a recipient of a **FICS 2023 International Sports Federation of the Year**. This is surely an honour and the presentation was accepted on our behalf by Secretary General Maaïke Hornstra at a dinner in Paris (see article on page 8).

For now everyone is looking forward to the upcoming **Championships in Sursee Switzerland**. I'm sure, as in previous ones it will be another well organised event. Personally this will be the Fifth Championship I will attend in Switzerland and I'm looking forward to meeting you all there. So to conclude, I wish all competitors the best of luck, and may the best team win.

Yours in Sport, **Dan McCarthy** Twif President

twif

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TTV FAM. JANSSENS RETIE CELEBRATES

TTV Fam. Janssens Retie celebrated its 30th Anniversary on the Ascension weekend of 19th and 20th May.

Just like in previous anniversaries, we brightened up this event by organizing an international tournament in Retie, Belgium. Two days of international Tug of War at the highest level! More than 800 pullers from 12 different countries were present!

The years of dedication and participation in both domestic and international tournaments,

the presence at European and World Championships, and the recognition at international events have earned TTV Fam. Janssens Retie its reputation and established them as a significant force in the world of Tug of War. An appealing programme for youth, women, and men in various weight classes also served as a great incentive for attending our tournament.

A beautiful competition field was surrounded by all the necessary facilities. Catering and refreshment options were provided alongside our training facility. The sunny weather and ideal tug of war conditions made it a memorable event that we will never forget!

On behalf of the entire TTV Fam. Janssens Retie, we express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone for your presence! Without tug of war athletes and referees, it would be impossible to engage in the sport! I would also like to thank the board of TTV Fam. Janssens for their excellent work, positive attitude, and their ability to align the entire club in the same direction. Last but not least, I would like to thank all the volunteers, partners, children, and sponsors for making this tournament the true celebration that it has ultimately become!

WIM JANSSENS *Fam. Janssens*

*Top: Fam. Janssens
Centre: Garvagh Tug of War
Club (Northern Ireland)
Below: Okia (Netherlands)*





RAIVITA TUKA
reports . . .

On 3rd June, 2023
Tug of War club
Velkonis celebrated
its 30th anniversary
with a tournament.
An ambitious inter-
national competition
took place in the field
near the track and
field athletics arena
of the Olympic Center
"Ventspils", in which
athletes from five
countries competed.

The competition was held in four weight classes up to 680 kg, up to 720 kg, in the 'Mix' class up to 600 kg, as well as up to 400 kg for women. Seven teams competed in the weight category up to 720 kg and the winners were the **Family Janssens** team from Belgium, the second place was taken by **Allgau Power Zell** from Germany, and the third place was **Jelgava Novads. Velkonis** remained in 7th place.

Family Janssens also remained unbeaten in the weight category up to 680 kg, **Brunnsbergs IF** from Sweden took second place, and **Allgou Power Zell** from Germany took third place. The guests from Germany **Allgau Power Zell** won in the weight category 600 kg 'mix' and 400 kg for women. **Velkonis** took 5th place in 600 kg 'Mix' and 3rd place in 400 kg for women.

During its 30 years of activity, the athletes of the tug-of-war club **Velkonis** have achieved a lot to be proud of, having won four World and two European Championship titles, as well as the European Champion - and 79 Latvian championship titles!

Thank you to all those who took part in competitions. It was a great experience.





AFRICAN TUG-OF-WAR CHAMPIONSHIP – KIMBERLEY, SOUTH AFRICA



ESMÉ BESTER
reports . . .

*(Esmé is the Recorder for
South Africa and TWIF)*

It was with great excitement that I embarked on this 9th African Tug of War Championship in Kimberley, Northern Cape. It had been some time since I last visited Kimberley so I was looking forward to the event.

At 4 am on 2nd May, I met up with my colleagues, to travel the 900+ kilometers. The drive there was quite entertaining but that I commend to the company I had. Many laughs and numerous stories by our colleague Willa kept us all in good spirits throughout the trip, while Franna (Francois) drove us safely to our destination.

After we booked into our accommodation, we paid a visit to the competition field and were quite surprised by its condition and all the effort that must have gone into preparing the arena.

Wednesday morning we had the opportunity to visit the biggest tourist attraction in Kimberley and learn more about the mining of diamonds and the history around the 'big hole'. A nice trip down memory lane to see the mock town and shops as it was in the days when mining was at its best. Then it was back to the field and back to business! Everyone had his game face on, and we started with some of the weigh-in until time for dinner, prepared by the local staff at the Pirates Club Facilities. Judges and recorders were there in full force and the team soon started to gel and get into action. The local judges and recorders were prepared and everything was in place. First weigh-in session went well, with no serious hiccups.

Thursday morning started with weigh-in and stamping of all athletes. The judges of Zimbabwe were of great assistance during the stamping process. It again became clear that this is a development opportunity, as we had to guide athletes and coaches through the process of compiling team entries and weight categories. I was quite surprised by the patience and professionalism of my fellow recorders as this was quite a task. Our junior U/23 teams took the field at 11 am and kicked off the day's activities with some great tug of war. A very successful day ended in high spirits and lots of excitement for the rest of the competition.

Friday was the day for the open club's competition and the field was busy. After a short welcome by Anton Botha, president of South African Tug of War, it was time for the competition to start. Our judges did an excellent job and recorders Beryl and Chantel took control of the table with great success. Chief Judge for the day, Keith Rance had everything under control and for a change I could sit back and enjoy watching tug of war. Zimbabwe was on the field in full force and soon proved themselves to be fierce competition. They managed to finish in the medals category in every weight class, except for the 600 kg 'Mix'. A very welcome surprise was the team of Lesotho, who was first time contenders. After a little guidance off the field by some

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*Thank you to
ANUSCHKA MARITZ
for all the photographs
for this article*



Willa Bartz TWIF Judge



Johan Koen SA Grade 1 Judge



Francois Bezuidenhout
SA Grade 1 Judge
(TWIF ICT Member)



SA President's team proudly singing the National Anthem.

of the local judges, they came back to the field and proved to be a force to be reckoned with at future competitions. Second day finished, a lovely dinner and everyone down to rest for the next day.

Saturday we started early with stamping for the closed competition whereafter we commenced to the field for the opening ceremony. The MEC (Provincial Minister of Sport), Northern Cape, welcomed everyone with encouraging words, and we were ready! Countries participating for the day were Lesotho, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Now the war of tugging was on, and teams were determined to make their mark. You could feel the atmosphere of serious competition.

Our chief judge for the day was Derick Smit and we started off the day, with a hint that rain was on its way for the afternoon. That was no hint!! We saw the clouds rolling in and the next moment the heavens opened up and gave us all a good

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17 Clubs at the African Open Club Championships.



The SA 720 kg team in action.



Gold, silver and bronze medals awarded at the 9th African Tug of War Championships.

shower. We had to hang onto gazebo's not to be blown away through lightning flashes. Recorders tried to save their paperwork. Laptops got shoved into jackets to protect them from the rain, and for the next 30-40 minutes it was chaos.

But like the saying says, every cloud has a silver lining. The next moment the rain stopped and we were ready to continue. Apart from being wet to the bone, everyone was in good spirits and I personally must say, it was if the thunder and lightning channeled through to the pullers, as we saw some of the best tug of war of the weekend. Wet and muddy, the teams were fighting with brute force. Nobody was giving up without a fight. We carried on under spotlights, and ended the 9th African Tug of War Championship on a high note!

What an awesome experience! Well done to all involved with the organizing and our athletes but most of all, congratulations to the small team of judges and recorders facilitating this event! You are great!



The team of officials from South Africa and Zimbabwe.

AFRICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

a story engraved for the South African Tug of War history books!



GIDEON ROUX
reports . . .

(a South African athlete)

It began as an itch to pick-up the rope after 17 years, when I last pulled for THS Drosty Worcester in 2005. It quickly became second nature and the drive to give birth to a new region started.

A new-found buddy and I started to train athletes to work at participating in the yearly national South African Championships, where we were able to land the next big participation called the African Championships.

For us, new to senior competitions, this was a huge achievement, not only for ourselves but for our newfound region, who has little-to-no footprint of Tug of War. The anticipation grew towards the event with only one goal in mind - that was to bring back the gold in the 720 kg heavy weight men's division after a 3-year beating - and by the grace of God we managed to achieve that goal!

My experience from the start to the end of the event was a delightful and eventful adventure! When we arrived in Kimberley everyone had such a positive spirit. Our neighbouring countries, Zimbabwe and Lesotho were humble and generous on their arrival and we exchanged a lot of jokes, photos and handshakes - we, as a representing country, made sure that our neighbours felt welcome - a precedent that is maintained in this sport and when we get serious, we take it to the rope!

What fascinated me the most was the sportsmanship that was seen and felt throughout the whole spectrum of participants and audience - even when we walked off that battlefield after the hard battles we tugged, a cheering chorus of "yie-lie-lie" from the foreign neighbours could've been heard back to their homeland, cheering our victory. Zimbabwe took a beating, and they humbly handed over the Gold and Silver back to South Africa. We can also confirm that Lesotho brought an immense hard pull to the field and could see that we were up against the best of the best.

I have never experienced this much love and brotherhood in any other event, as I felt at the yellow team's tour, and this also for the organisers and leaders who made it possible. Throughout this all, our long trip to the northern parts of South Africa which we made safely back home, to the gold that we brought back home, and my new-born baby girl that was born the same morning we won the gold, made this a very, very special event for me. I can not explain in words the friendships and new partnerships that were

built at this event. It is as if a new chapter has unfolded with new possibilities for everyone who participated.

In the end, my belief is that our Creator had a purpose with the event by bringing people closer together, making us aware that we are all one unit in sport - and that brings fulfilment in each and everyone - not only to achieve a personal goal, but to be the greater person and to bring change into your community.



FICS AWARD

MAAIKE HORNSTRA

(Twif Secretary General)

On Saturday 17 June 2023, TWIF Exco was invited to attend a network dinner from FICS (International Federation of Sports Chiropractic) during their two annual symposium, which was held in Paris. On behalf of TWIF Exco, Maaïke Hornstra, attended the dinner and received the award from FICS.



*Maaïke and Rob Scott
with the awards,
handed out by FICS.*

The award was handed over by Simon Lawson, International Sporting Federations Commission Chair of FICS, in recognition and appreciation of TWIF's commitment to ensuring that *'every athlete has access to Sports Chiropractic'* and for the long relationship between both Federations.

The relationship between FICS and TWIF started in 2009 during the World Games in Kaohsiung (Chinese Taipei), when Glen Johnson (former TWIF Secretary General) met Brian Nook from FICS. In that same year Brian Nook signed an agreement with former TWIF President Cathal McKeever to provide chiropractors during TWIF events.

The first event where FICS was active, was the World Indoor Championships in Cesenatico, Italy. Since then at every TWIF championships we have a team of Chiropractors to treat our athletes. It is a service used by a lot of pullers and officials as well.

Our 'home' chiropractor, Rob Scott, received an award as well during the network dinner. He was chosen as 'volunteer of the year', due to the lot of work he does for TWIF at Championships.

**We hope to continue this relationship for many more years
and feel very honoured to have received the award.**

ANJA POORTERMAN RETIRES

Maaïke Hornstra hands over the TWIF clock to Anja Poorterman as a tribute for the years she served as TWIF recorder. Last year Anja retired in Holten.



Republic of Azerbaijan

Tug of War Sports Society Public Association

According to the decision of the European Tug of War Federation dated March 10, 2022, the sport of Tug of War has been promoted in Azerbaijan since April 2022 under the supervision of international sports master and judge Dr Elnur Shikhaliyev.

In a short time, seminars and competitions were organized in schools and sports clubs.



Jost Waser right hands over a TWIF 60th Anniversary magazine and TWIF penset to Elnur Shikhaliyev - the Azerbaijan representative.

April 2022 - the first indoor school championship was held in the capital city of Baku based on the OCEP project of the National Olympic Committee. The first race caused great interest in the capital. Twelve teams competed in the competition. The competitions we organized were covered by state television and other media.

May 2022 - the regional inter-school indoor championship dedicated to the Independence Day of the Republic of Azerbaijan was organized. Twenty teams from different schools participated in the championship.

June 2022 - we organized an international seminar for coaches and judges for the first time in our country with the support of the Polish Tug of War Federation.

June 17-18, 2022 - the sport of Tug of War was presented in the programme of the Galaba Sports Festival dedicated to the memory of the martyrs of the Patriotic War, a project of Dr Elnur Shikhaliyev.

August 2022 - we organized a Tug of War Beach Championship among teenagers by the sea in Sumgayit, Azerbaijan.

September & October 2022 - Competitions and seminars were organized in several schools.

September 16, 2022 - the sport was registered with the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan based on the petition of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan.

November 2022 - our national team participated in the Friendship tournament organized in the Republic of Turkey.

December 10, 2022 - the 1st Indoor Azerbaijan Championship among teenagers, young people and adults dedicated to the memory of National leader Heydar Aliyev was organized in Baku.

March 19-20, 2023 - Dr Elnur Shikhaliyev participated in the meeting of the General Assembly of the European Tug of War Federation organized in Berlin.



Regional Inter-schools Indoor Championship 2022 Baku, Azerbaijan

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April 4-5, 2023 - with the support of the National Olympic Committee, the Ministry of Science and Education, we organized an indoor championship among teenagers. 36 teams competed in the championship.

April 18-20, 2023 - Dr Elnur Shikhaliyev participated in the Congress of the International Tug of War Federation in

Mannheim, Germany. According to the decision of the board of the International Tug of War Federation and the participating countries, the Republic of Azerbaijan Tug of War Sports Society public association was accepted as an official member.



*Pics right and below:
Regional Inter-schools
Indoor Championship 2022
Baku, Azerbaijan*



April 30, 2023 - the Indoor Tug of War Azerbaijan Cup was held with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Sports Association.

May 25, 2023 - a competition between children and teenagers with special care needs was organized with the support of Azerbaijan Autism Association.

According to the calendar of 2023, we plan to organize the Tug of War Beach Championship, Outdoor Azerbaijan

Championship and Indoor Azerbaijan Championship among teenagers, young people and adults.

Today, as the Tug of War Sports Society in our country, our goal is to support the sports and anti-doping policy of our country, promote physical education, sports, healthy lifestyle, healthy competition in sports - keeping teenagers and young people away from bad habits and prohibited drugs. We support gender equality in our country. And we wish to represent our country in international competitions.

I hope that in the near future we will form a team that will represent our country in the World Games and the World Championships and the Continental Championships. We already have experienced and strong staff for this.

MISSION STATEMENT

As an International Federation our mission is to provide the structure and good governance necessary for the well-being and development of the sport of Tug of War throughout the world. Our Primary Objective is to attain a sufficiently high level of excellence and universality to expedite our acceptance by the International Olympic Committee as a sport within the programme of the Olympic Games, a status held by our sport in the early years of the 20th century.