

Dear BISFed Member,

As 2017 draws to a close, I am writing to give you some of the highlights of what has been another busy and successful year for your Federation:

- Boccia remains the fastest – growing Paralympic sport, and BISFed’s membership has continued to grow during the year;
- We implemented a new Competition System and have sanctioned more competitions than ever – 9 World Ranking events during 2017;
- We have implemented a world-class Competition Management System which combines and automates the management of all competition activities with real time publication of scores and results on the internet;
- Following detailed discussions with the International Paralympic Committee, boccia was awarded 8 additional athlete slots for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games;
- We have invested in operational support to provide a more efficient service to our Members;
- In May we held BISFed’s second General Assembly during which a new Board was elected; and
- Throughout the year we have once again been entertained and amazed by many outstanding and exciting displays of boccia by our athletes.

Membership and Growth

Participation in boccia continues to grow rapidly around the world. During 2017, we welcomed fourteen new Members to BISFed: **Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Peru, Saudi Arabia and Uganda**. Many of these new members have already attended a BISFed-sanctioned competition.

BISFed now has 70 Members and 468 athletes on the World Ranking list. Our target is to have 80 National Paralympic Committees as BISFed Members by 2020.

Competition System

During the Rio quadrennial (2012 – 16), BISFed sanctioned 18 world ranking events. Following consultation with our Members during 2016, we have now implemented a revised four-tier Competition System for the Tokyo cycle. The four tiers are:

- Paralympic Games and World Championships (once per quadrennial)
- Regional Championships (every two years)
- World Open Championships (every year)
- Regional Open Championships (every year)

During the current quadrennial (2017 – 20) we plan to sanction at least 10 sanctioned boccia competitions every year, **meaning that there should be more than 40 world ranking boccia competitions during the Tokyo cycle**. The introduction of the Regional Open Championships is particularly important as these competitions provide an entry point for new athletes wanting to gain experience of International competition.

The BISFed competition schedule for 2018 has been announced, and we are currently reviewing bids for competitions in 2019. We are grateful to those Members who have offered to host competitions.

We rely on our Members for support in this regard, and we encourage all our Members to consider hosting a competition in the near future.

Technical Officials

One of the challenges presented by the significant increase in the competition schedule has been the development and availability of experienced International Technical Officials. In response to the challenge, during 2017, we have run the following initiatives:

Technical Delegates: 12 new TDs were trained;

Referees: 6 new International Referee Trainers were accredited, so that we now have 8 experienced Referees who can run training courses for International Referees. During the year we also ran two International Referee courses, with 16 new International Referees accredited;

Classifiers: four training courses for National Classifiers were held during the year, with a further 50 National Classifiers trained.

We will continue the development of ITOs during 2018, with a particular focus on training International Referees and Classifiers.

Technology

BISFed's strategy for growing and developing boccia relies heavily on having effective technology which allows us to interact with our Members in an effective way and which allows us to run the affairs of the Federation (including BISFed competitions) as efficiently as possible.

During 2017 we implemented the BISFed Competition Management System (BCMS) at all sanctioned competitions. BCMS is designed to be a world-class system which together with the Event Management System manages: athletes' registration for competitions; transport and accommodation arrangements; competition draws; timing, scoring and results during competitions; publication of real-time results on-line; interaction with the World Ranking System. The final piece of software (the automated World Ranking System) will be implemented in time for the 2018 competition season, allowing the World Ranking lists to be updated automatically after each competition.

Importantly, the new systems are designed to eliminate the use of paper at all times.

Boccia Rules

Following consultation with Members during 2016, an updated and revised set of Boccia Rules was implemented in 2017. Significant changes included introducing a new penalty box and a new Roll Test for boccia balls. The Roll Test in particular has been an important step forward in creating fairer competition between athletes by eliminating the very soft balls which were possible under the previous Rules. The Rules Committee is currently reviewing feedback from Members regarding the changes which were introduced in 2017.

Members are reminded that, as announced at the General Assembly in May, from 2018, Boccia Rule 3.2 will no longer require that a player with Cerebral Palsy is on court at all times during Pair BC3 competition.

Governance

BISFed held its second General Assembly in May 2017, kindly hosted by NPC Hong Kong. Members elected a new Board of Directors as follows:

Secretary General: Martin Lam (Hong Kong)

Treasurer: Jon Morgan (Great Britain)

Members at Large: Marta Mascarenhas, (Portugal), Marcella Ramon (Colombia), Dina Sotiriadis (Greece).

I am grateful to the previous Board Members who retired at the General Assembly (Elsa Matthee and Dom Tremblay) and I thank them both for their considerable contribution to BISFed's formative years. My special thanks go to Joaquim Viegas our retiring Vice President, who for more than 30 years has committed himself to furthering the sport. In recognition of Joaquim's outstanding service, he has been appointed BISFed's first Honorary Vice President for Life.

Your Board has continued to meet regularly by telephone conference call to discuss important business and to review the progress of our projects. During the first meeting of the new Board, there being a vacancy, Martin Lam was appointed Vice President of BISFed in addition to his role as Secretary General.

We were delighted to be able to retain the consulting services of Dom Tremblay in an operations capacity during 2017. Dom's work has enabled us to develop more quickly and has freed other Board Members to be able to concentrate on BISFed's strategy for 2018 – 20. We will publish our new Strategic Plan early in 2018.

Following the General Assembly we also reviewed the structure of BISFed's Committees and appointed new Chairs for each Committee. Committee Chairs now participate in all Board calls to provide updates on their progress and to give the Board direct access to their knowledge and experience of boccia.

As in previous years, I can report that your Federation remains in sound financial health due to prudent management of our resources, and I thank our Treasurer and the Board for their support in this regard.

Anti-Doping

Random anti-doping tests have been carried out at all BISFed-sanctioned competitions. Regrettably there have been two cases of adverse test results. BISFed will remain completely intolerant of violations and I want to remind all our Members and their athletes that it is their responsibility to ensure compliance with the Anti-Doping Code.

Starting in with the World Championships in 2018 we will hold education meetings on Anti-Doping to reinforce the importance of this subject.

2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games

We were delighted to learn in August that the International Paralympic Committee had awarded BISFed 8 more athlete slots for Tokyo than were available to us in Rio. This is an exceptional outcome,

bearing in mind that there were only 50 additional slots available to all 22 Paralympic sports. I believe this reflects the progress we are making in growing and developing boccia around the world.

Turning to the Games themselves, we have appointed Carrie Leung as Technical Delegate for the 2020 Games. Carrie and I attended our first meetings with the Tokyo Organising Committee in November.

We held detailed and constructive discussions with the Organising Committee on a wide range of important matters including transport; accommodation; the venue and field of play; the competition schedule; and sport presentation (including television coverage during the Games.) I am pleased to be able to report that we were impressed by the level of detailed planning already in place, and that there were no significant issues at this stage. We will continue to meet the OCOG regularly until the Games in order to ensure the best ever experience both for athletes and spectators.

2018

2018 will be another important year in our development. I believe BISFed is now a mature International Federation after only 5 years in existence, with strong processes in place, a growing membership, and ever more opportunities for athletes. Significant milestones during 2018 will be:

- **March:** Implementation of the computerised World Ranking System
- **April:** Launch of the BISFed Coaching Manual, prior to rolling this out to all our Members who want to take advantage of a standard coaching methodology. I would like to thank those members, particularly Canada and the United Kingdom who have helped by contributing coaching material to this initiative. We have used funds from the annual IPC Sports Grant which is provided to International Federations to facilitate the work of this project.
- **July:** Publication of a BISFed Code of Ethics for guidance on what your Federation expects by way of behaviour in and out of competition;
- **August:** The World Championships in Liverpool, England. 192 athletes are due to participate in what will be the biggest ever World Boccia event. I am convinced that the World Championships will also be the most exciting boccia event yet. The venue will be spectacular: there will be an innovative field-of-play layout; overhead cameras to provide a better spectator experience and for refereeing use; and live streaming of show courts with live commentary. We are attempting to arrange television coverage of the event which could also be streamed to other interested countries outside the UK.

In conclusion, it remains only for me to thank you, together with our many volunteers who make what we do possible, and to wish you all the best for the festive season.

With kind regards,



David Hadfield
President

December 2017