

Dear BISFed Member,

2018 was in so many ways the year in which BISFed came of age. Now 6 years old, we have established boccia as a truly global sport with a full complement of international events. Some of the many highlights of the year included:

- The most exciting and spectacular Boccia World Championships ever with innovative sport presentation including full time television coverage by two national TV networks and overhead cameras to help with refereeing and spectator engagement; 12 of the 32 participating countries won medals, demonstrating the wide appeal and success of our sport;
- Further growth in BISFed's Membership (we now have 74 Members);
- Confirmation by the International Paralympic Committee that boccia will be one of 22 or 23 sports competing in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games;
- A full programme of 12 sanctioned world ranking boccia competitions – the most ever in a single year;
- Implementation of a fully automated World Ranking system which is updated following every sanctioned competition;
- Completion of a new Classification Database which holds all the relevant information in a safe and secure way and removes the need to keep paper copies of Classification information;
- Roll-out of a new Level 1 Boccia Coaching programme; and
- Certification of 12 more International Referees and 5 International Classifiers.

During the year I have been fortunate to have been present at many of our competitions and I continue to be amazed at the ever higher level of skill of our athletes.

Membership and Growth

Boccia remains the fastest-growing Paralympic sport and is also more widely practised as a leisure activity than ever before. During 2018 we welcomed the following new Members to BISFed: **Austria, Cyprus, Mongolia, Panama and Timor Leste.**

BISFed now has 74 Members and 620 athletes on our World Ranking list. We still aim to have 80 National Paralympic Committees as BISFed Members by the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Competition System

The current four-tier Competition System has been fully implemented 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 will have sanctioned around 10 boccia competitions every year with a total of 44 planned during these four years. We are particularly pleased with the take-up of places in the Regional Open Championships which provide an entry point for newer BISFed Members and athletes wanting to gain experience of International competition.

It seems invidious to single out one event amongst so many great competitions during 2018, but the highlight of the competition year was the 2018 World Boccia Championships held in Liverpool, England. 32 of our Members qualified for the World Championships of whom 12 won medals. The entire event was televised and streamed live to the world on the internet by the BBC and by NHK in Japan. The quality of boccia on display was outstanding and both television viewers and spectators were treated to some extraordinary sport. We were honoured that Andrew Parsons, President of the International Paralympic Committee was able to join us at the 2018 World Boccia Championships. I want to thank the Host Organising Committee, lead by Boccia UK with the support of UK Sport, for helping us to set a new benchmark for boccia events.

We are of course grateful to all of our Members who have helped by hosting a competition, especially those who have done so for the first time during 2018. BISFed stands ready to help Members wishing to host events, and we encourage all our Members to consider hosting a competition.

During the World Championships in Liverpool we held a meeting with the Members present to discuss whether we should consider modifications to the Competition System for the next Quadrennial. As a result we will survey our Members during early 2019 so as to gather a wide perspective of views regarding possible changes to the Competition System.

We are now able to give more notice of forthcoming competitions and having already announced the schedule of events for 2019. We will announce the events for 2020 as soon as possible. Early in the New Year we will also call for expressions of interest in hosting the World Championships in 2022.

Technical Officials

I am pleased to be able to report that we have trained more Technical Officials to International level, and I thank all our Members who have nominated individuals for our courses. The demand for places remains intense, and the courses are stretching because it is essential that BISFed's Officials are as well trained as the athletes over whom they officiate. During 2018 we have made further strides in developing our team of Technical Officials:

Referees: 12 new International Referees have been trained and certified at courses in Ise and Dubai; and

Classifiers: 5 new International Classifiers have been trained and certified, and a further 40 completed our basic Classification at courses in Lima, Seoul, Chinese Taipei and Dubai

We will continue the development of ITOs during 2019 and will offer courses in conjunction with several sanctioned competitions.

Development

The BISFed Development Committee has designed and piloted a new Level 1 Coaching Course which will succeed the earlier 'Making Boccia Accessible' (MBA) course. The course aims to provide a standard method for coaching boccia, including a common language for the terms used in the game; boccia rules; how the game is played; strategy; and guidance on how to coach. The Committee has already delivered the new MBA course to over 65 people in Copenhagen (Denmark), Port Elizabeth (South Africa) and Lima (Peru). The course is available to all BISFed Members, subject to our capacity to deliver. If Members would like to benefit from the course they should contact admin@bisfed.com.

Technology

As I have reported previously, our ability to deliver services to our Members as cost-effectively as possible depends on having effective and up-to-date systems in place. We have designed our operating model so as to maximise the opportunities which modern technology provides. During 2017 and 2018 we have implemented fully the Boccia Competition Management System (BCMS), the automated World Ranking system and the Classification database. As planned, we have now eliminated the need for paper records at competitions. I am also pleased to report that we plan to extend our contract with our technology partner Sport:80 very shortly.

Boccia Rules

It is our practice to review the Boccia Rules at the end of every Quadrennial and to limit any changes during each cycle to an absolute minimum. The Rules Committee meets regularly to consider potential improvements and modifications. The only significant new change which will be implemented from 2019 will be to clarify that adding any 'after-market' substances (such as sticky compounds) to boccia balls will not be allowed.

Governance

In an important initiative to broaden representation of athletes in the running of the sport, we held an election for BISFed's first Athlete Representative during the 2018 World Championships. Kwan Hang Wong from Hong Kong was elected by the athletes to be their representative, and now joins our regular Board Calls. Kwan is designing a process to form a full BISFed Athlete's Council which will be asked to provide BISFed with a representative perspective of athletes' views.

We have also recently invited Mr Seung Hee Kang to join our Board. Mr Kang is the President of the Korean Boccia Federation for the Disabled and also the Chairman and CEO of Autech Group in Korea.

Finally, Members have been notified of the dates for the **2019 BISFed General Assembly (3rd – 5th November 2019 in Povoá de Varzim, Portugal)**. The General Assembly will be held, immediately after the 2019 BISFed World Open Championships in Povoá. In accordance with BISFed's Articles of Association, there will, amongst other important business, be an election for the role of BISFed President. I encourage all Members to hold the date and to take part in the meeting which is BISFed's highest decision-making authority.

Your Board continues to meet regularly by telephone conference call to discuss important business and to review the progress of our projects. We also held our annual face-to-face Board meeting during the 2018 World Championships in Liverpool, kindly sponsored by Boccia UK. All the BISFed Committees continue to meet regularly by telephone conference call, and most were able to meet in person during the 2018 World Championships. I want to pay tribute to the dedicated work of all our Committees.

Importantly, we have recently published for the first time a Code of Ethics as a guide to how we expect the BISFed Family to conduct themselves at all times, and especially during competitions. The Code is a short document and I encourage you to read it – we will take any exceptions that do occur very seriously.

When we established BISFed in 2013, we undertook to appoint full time staff as and when we were able, financially, to do so. I am pleased to report that we have reached this point and so, in addition to the consulting services already provided by Dom Tremblay as our Operations manager, we have

appointed Katie Ribeiro as BISFed's General Manager and Gustavo Alvarim as Technical Manager. Katie will oversee all of our secretariat functions as well as support the Board (Katie's email will be admin@bisfed.com). Gustavo will attend all of BISFed's competitions (diary permitting) to ensure the smooth running of the BCMS and to support the Technical Delegate in what is becoming an ever more demanding role. Both Katie and Gustavo bring a wide range of sport-related experience and we look forward to their contributions. Accordingly, we say farewell (but not goodbye) to Rich Mallon who has provided such valuable support to us over the past five years. Rich will be returning to a full-time role with Sport:80 but will continue to support BISFed's technology in the background, so he will not be far away.

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. We will commence the independent annual inspection of our 2018 accounts early in 2019 and will report back to Members in due course.

Anti-Doping

Anti-Doping has become an even more important subject in sport generally. Members may be aware that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) required all its signatories to complete an extensive questionnaire during late 2017, as a result of which each signatory received a full report on their compliance with the WADA code. As previously reported, and in common with most sports and NPCs, BISFed received a critical report requiring us to rectify a number of shortcomings. I am pleased to report that we have now complied with all WADA's criticisms. In addition, we have taken the following actions:

- During the 2018 World Championships we ran an education programme to help athletes and team members understand their responsibilities;
- From 2019 we will include 'out-of-competition' testing at all competitions, thus broadening the likelihood that athletes will be tested;
- From 2019 we will establish a 'Testing Pool' which consists of the top two ranked athletes in each Classification (i.e. 8 boccia athletes every year who will be required to notify their local Anti-Doping Agency of their whereabouts and submit themselves as required to a random testing programme); and
- From 2019, BISFed will continue its anti-doping education programme by requiring all athletes wishing to enter a BISFed-sanctioned competition to have taken WADA's ALPHA course. This is a very effective on-line course which is part of WADA's anti-doping e-learning (ADeL) programme.

BISFed remains committed to delivering clean sporting opportunities for all its athletes.

2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games

Athletes and teams are of course busy preparing themselves to be selected for the Paralympic Games in 2020. There are still many opportunities to earn valuable World Ranking points towards qualification, including direct qualification for the Gold Medal winners at each of the three 2019 BISFed Regional Championships. The Technical Delegate for Tokyo 2020, Cannie Leung and I have now made two technical visits to Tokyo to prepare for the Games. I can assure those of you who do qualify of the most spectacular sporting experience. We are working hard to make sure the facilities on offer

are second to none. The boccia venue is very close to the Athletes' Village, and being brand new will be an exceptional arena for our sport. We continue to work closely with the Tokyo Organising Committee on all the detailed preparation which is needed for the 2020 Paralympic Games.

BISFed's Partners

It would be difficult to achieve as much as we do without the support of our many partners, and I want to thank all of them publicly for all their generous help; in particular:

- Hogan Lovell's who provide all of our legal advice
- Sport:80 our Technology Partner
- Gerflor, who are our preferred supplier of floors for boccia competitions (and who supplied the 'Taraflex' floor for the 2018 World Championships)
- NHK, the national TV broadcaster in Japan who covered the 2018 World Championships ahead of the 2020 Paralympic games
- Giant Arc our branding consultants.

In addition, many of our Members have provided us with help in many ways, (including supporting our ITOs and helping with our Committee work.) We are most grateful to all of them as well as to all our many volunteers.

2019

As we look forward to 2019, I am sure most athletes and Members will be focusing on the short term goal of doing well in next year's competitions with a clear view of what is needed to qualify for the Games in Tokyo in 2020 (or perhaps in Paris in 2024.) Whatever your plans, I wish you every success as well as health and happiness in 2019 and I look forward to seeing you at a BISFed competition soon.

With kind regards,



David Hadfield
President

December 2018