

Report to November 2022 AdminCom Meeting from Andy Harris.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone here in a few weeks time. Please note that I won't be at the hotel on Friday evening [11/11], but Gavin and Kylie from the BSW Office, who have been brilliantly supporting the hosting/organisation will both be there holding the fort. Please find time to thank them both for all their hard work on your behalf. I will arrive first thing Saturday morning.

On a sombre note, together with Gavin Kelly, I attended the funeral of our dear friend Mike Waterman back in early September. It was a really good 'send-off' for Mike; Vera van den Bossche, her husband and a few other international friends made the trip over to say farewell. A great turnout from the Brits as you'd expect, including former World Champions Kim Lumley and Steve Moore. There was a lot of old memorabilia on display at the 'wake' afterwards and we all spent time drinking a toast to Mike and looking through everything, reminiscing and remembering all the work he did on behalf of the sport, Racing in particular. We'll all miss him – that's for sure.

It's been great getting **back out on the water again** this year after the long-drawn out CoVID hiatus. The Europeans in Chartres, FRA was great, as was the inaugural World Barefoot Masters in Texas, USA – fantastic skiing from all the 'oldies' (all 80 of them – oldest 82; youngest 36). It was regrettable that our federations' athletes did not support the event at all, apart from 1 skier from HUN – who lives in the US. A sign of the times perhaps?

The true impact of the damn virus is clear and has damaged the World massively. What with everything else going on in UKR and the energy crisis, we really are in a big MESS! Recovery - in all its forms will be long, slow and difficult; 10-15 years I reckon. We must be prepared for some difficulties that lie ahead for our sport.

I noted some **4-Year Plan conversations** in the minutes of the last meeting: it will be interesting to see how that plays out into something more tangible other than just playing lip-service to it.

All that said, our sport, in all its forms soldiers on and we must be grateful for that, but I am starting to see some **concerning trends in participation numbers at titled events**; not in the athlete ranks so much but our officials are struggling to justify the costs of travel. Organisers are understandably looking at any and all options to save on obligations. What really bothers me is that we're seeing less officials willing to commit to attending titled events and in turn, organisers attempting to curtail their obligations in providing what's required when hosting them.

Participating athletes are being used as officials – is that really the way we want it? This needs to be checked right away and I believe the time has come for us, the IWWF and everyone involved to take positive, affirmative action in the form of better financial support for all our officials and organisers who commit to attending and hosting titled events. If we don't then I fear that many events will suffer and our sport will be on a very slippery slope - downwards.

We have an ageing skills/experience set that will begin to flounder if we don't step up and make an assured commitment to our people that **they will be supported** properly and above all financially when agreeing to take part in titled events. We need action on this now so we are better prepared for 2023 and beyond and I expect our Confederation to lead the way. I have already had conversations about this with Jose-Antonio and he agrees with my thoughts. If it means raising our subscriptions then we must do that to cover the increased costs that have to be absorbed. Entry fees are high enough – competitors cannot be expected to dig any deeper into their pockets. Better financial support has to come from us/IWWF via the Federations.

I am very happy with the **progress being made with EMS**. It works well, particularly in the run up to the start of a competition and initially saves a lot of time in the set-up phase. Using it fully for the first time this year has been interesting but I have some concerns. The process of making adjustments to entry lists needs streamlining. Right now, it is cumbersome and creates the burden of an extra and unnecessary workload on organisers and calculators. The end-of-competition actions also need more refinement. I'm sure these items are on the 'to do' list so we must be patient and in time they will become much improved.

I must however, repeat my continuing mantra and remain convinced that we need to keep the rankings lists and results on the separate platform [as we do currently] and not merge the two together under EMS, which is the intention. I really do not see any point in doing that other than to save money – but it's not a worth whatever savings it will make. Again, I believe our Confederation will be the biggest loser if the two platforms do merge into one and would like to see us actively lobbying IWWF to stop it from happening until **EMS is much better** placed to take over from what we currently have. Right now, in my opinion it is not. We need to see a more viable alternative before supporting any further merging of all the data.

That's about all for now. See you all here in London soon.

Andy

16 October 2022